



CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

ST PETER | ST MARGARET | ST JOHN

Health & Safety Policy

A. General statement of policy

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the regulations made under it. The policy is in three sections:

Section A – General statement of policy

Section B – Organisation and responsibilities

Section C – Arrangements

Note

To all employees, voluntary helpers, contractors and members of the congregation:

The success of this policy will depend on your co-operation. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for health and safety.

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, casual labour and voluntary helpers, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We will also endeavour to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, contractors, visitors and others who may visit the church, churchyard and any associated buildings.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed annually¹, or more often if necessary, and the appropriate changes made.

In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review, an item on health and safety should be included in the agenda for all meetings of the Parochial Church Council, sub-committees, such as the Church Leadership Teams and the Church House Committee, and also training sessions for sidesmen/women which should take place at least once a year. Employees, voluntary workers and other church members will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health and safety matters, an opportunity for which will also be included in every 'church forum'.

¹ As stipulated in the parish Safeguarding Policy (15/7/2020) which includes the need to 'ensure that health & safety procedures and risk assessments are in place and.....reviewed annually'.

The policy will be displayed in each church and parish office, and be available to anyone using any of these buildings. Any concerns about day-to-day health & safety should be reported in the first instance to:

- one of the appropriate church wardens if concerning a church; or
- the Parish Administrator, either on telephone number 0118 996 8836, or email at admin@ctmparish.org.uk.

Questions about the policy should be raised with the H&S Coordinator, who can be contacted also through the parish office.

B. Organisation and responsibilities²

The Rector and other clergy

The Rector (or deputy) is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for ensuring good health and safety practice within the parish.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC)

This has overall responsibility and legal liability for ensuring that an effective health and safety policy is implemented, reviewed annually, and amended as the need arises. This policy must cover all parish premises. All those to whom day-to-day responsibility is delegated, as set out below, are accountable to the PCC.

The Churchwardens³

The Churchwardens have day-to-day management responsibility for ensuring that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary with respect to their particular church, though they may delegate responsibility for specific aspects to a third party, normally the Church Leadership Team concerned.

The Parish Properties Committee

This is responsible for ensuring that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary with respect to:

- Church House
- The Parish Office (adjoining the Rectory)
- 25 Ilkley Road
- 6 Gosbrook Road (former Parish Room).

This includes coordination between all occupiers and other users of the premises, and, in the case of those let to third parties, also with any managing agent employed by the parish.

The Fête Committee

This is responsible for organising the annual fête, usually in Caversham Court, ensuring that any risks to health and safety are assessed and managed.

² These are set out in principle in 'Church Health and Safety Policy with Guidance Notes' (version 6) published in 2016 by the parish insurers, 'Ecclesiastical'.

³ 'A Summary of Churchwardens' Responsibilities', published by the Diocese of Oxford (downloaded 24/8/2021), stipulate, under paragraph 2, 'Administration', that Churchwardens 'with the incumbent and the PCC...should use their best endeavours to ensure that....the PCC has a health and safety policy and ensure that it is implemented...'. This guidance, under paragraph 6, 'Buildings and Contents and Property', stipulates also that 'Churchwardens are responsible for ensuring that the PCC cares for and maintains the church and its contents and *other buildings in the parish* and the churchyard and grounds'.

Health and Safety Coordinator

A Health and Safety Coordinator is appointed by the PCC to be responsible to it for:

- keeping the Health & Safety Policy up to date, in accordance with current regulations as they affect church and other parish premises, staff, volunteers and other users;
- ensuring as far as possible, in collaboration with other relevant people, that
 - any necessary safe systems of work are formulated and followed
 - the overall policy is observed;
- acting as a source of relevant information and advice
- assisting with and supporting training.

Employees and voluntary workers

All of these have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this health and safety policy, and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises. They must therefore:

- comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures
- use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person
- report as soon as possible any accident (however minor), injury, near miss and other potential safety hazard
- not misuse anything provided to facilitate good health and safety.

Responsible persons

Responsibility for safety in the areas and types of activity designated is as follows:

To the appropriate Churchwardens (who may delegate as appropriate):

- church building overall, including vestry, kitchen and toilets
- churchyard and any other associated ground (unless otherwise specified)
- fire extinguishers and other precautions
- portable electrical appliances
- fixed electrical system
- hazardous substances
- condition of floors and steps
- light bulb changing
- working at high levels
- food preparation
- manual handling
- condition of building and glazing
- personal safety
- public events, such as fairs, sales, and craft events (other than the Caversham Church Fête)
- safety of machinery
- supervision of outside contractors
- any other activity not covered below.

For the following functions:

- **bell ringing, including church tower, access door, steps, ringing chamber and bell chamber:**
St Peter: Tower Captain and Steeple Keeper
St Margaret: Tower Captain and Steeple Keeper
- **work with specific groups (such as young people) on or away from parish premises:** person in charge.
- **accident reporting:** anyone involved in an accident or other adverse incident, or who is in a position of responsibility with regard to where and when it occurred.
- **emergency evacuation:**
 - **churches:** churchwardens, sidesmen/women (stewards) and members of the clergy;
 - **other buildings:** senior person present
- **display screen equipment:**
 - **in Parish Office and Church House:** Parish Administrator
 - **in churches:** Churchwarden(s)
- **safeguarding:** Parish Safeguarding Officer
- **organ, choir and music:**
St Peter: Churchwardens
St John: Churchwardens
St Margaret: Churchwardens
- **health and safety training:** Churchwardens, in collaboration with H&S coordinator.

The management of the churchyard at St Peter is the responsibility of Reading Borough Council, but the PCC (normally through a Churchwarden) must inform the Borough Council of any defect that comes to light, especially if it poses a risk to health or safety, and keep a written record that this has been done.

C. Arrangements for implementation of the policy

This section sets out our arrangements to minimize as far as reasonably practicable risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, visitors and outside contractors.

1. Accidents and first aid

Locations		
	First aid kit	Accident book
<i>St Johns's Church</i>	Kitchen	Vestry
<i>St Margaret's Church</i>	Ground floor of the tower, at the back of the church.	Ground floor of the tower, at the back of the church.
<i>St Peter's Church</i>	Kitchen - in left hand upper cupboard to the right of the sink.	Kitchen - on working top, behind fire extinguisher, to the right of the door to cleaning cupboard.
<i>Church House</i>		Haslam Hall Kitchen
<i>Parish Office (Rectory annexe)</i>		

Details of any accident, other adverse incident or "near miss" occurring **on any CTM Parish premises must be reported as soon as possible** by the person (or one of the people) involved, or someone else

appropriate, using if possible the approved Accident Report Form which can be downloaded from the parish website (scroll down to 'Policies' where it can be found). The Word version can be completed electronically after clicking on 'enable editing' and saved, and should then be sent as an email attachment, to richard.havelock@btinternet.com, and copied to admin@ctmparish.org.uk.

If necessary, a paper form can be obtained either by printing the PDF version from the parish website, or as one of the HSE accident forms kept in each church and at Church House (locations in table above). The completed form should then be sent to Richard Havelock via the Parish Office, Rectory, Church Road, Caversham RG4 7AD, or delivered to him directly.

Each accident, adverse incident or "near miss" will be investigated and corrective action taken, and an anonymised report made to each quarterly meeting of the Parish Church Council. When appropriate, our insurers will be advised.

Any outside organisation using parish premises must be informed in writing of this requirement.

It is important that such a report is submitted of any adverse incident with potentially harmful consequences, so that action can be taken to prevent it occurring again, perhaps with more serious consequences.

Accident, adverse incident and "near miss" records are reviewed quarterly, or more frequently if and when appropriate.

Any accident or incident within the provisions of the RIDDOR reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1995, must be reported promptly, in accordance with the statutory requirement, to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

Any 'serious incident'⁴ must be reported (as stipulated in the Parish 'Serious Incident Policy'), through a Churchwarden or other delegated person, to the PCC Standing Committee.

2. Fire safety

In order to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2005, we undertake, at **annual intervals**,

- a written assessment of the fire risks in the church and other parish buildings, and those to neighbouring premises,
- a check to ensure that
 - a fire could be detected in a reasonable time, and that people could be warned;
 - anyone in the building could be evacuated safely (if necessary with the aid of emergency lighting and marking of fire exits);
 - there is reasonable provision of fire-fighting equipment in good condition, and that it is serviced annually by a competent person;
 - those likely to be on the premises know what action to take if there is a fire.

⁴ A 'serious incident' is not defined in the policy, but examples might include significant injury such as requiring admittance to hospital, theft from or significant damage to a building, or anything threatening the charitable status of the parish.

Fire extinguishers of designated type are kept (*on fixed brackets or stands*) in the following locations:

St John's Church	Location	Type of extinguisher	Type of fire	Capacity
	S side of inside of W door	Water	General, non-electrical	
	NW corner (by electrical gear)	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	S porch, on W side of inner door	Water	General, non-electrical	
	E of organ, between organ and altar rails	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Choir vestry (upper room)	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Choir vestry (upper room)	Water	General, non-electrical	

St Peter's Church	Location	Type of extinguisher	Type of fire	Capacity
	West end of nave, to right of steps to kitchen	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Kitchen: beside door to flower room	Carbon dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Immediately to left of organ	Carbon dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	North side of Lady Chapel, to left of doorway into chancel	Water	General, non-electrical	
	South-west corner of Lady Chapel, near votive candle stand	Water	General, non-electrical	
	North wall of Vanderstegen Chapel, to right of steps into vestry	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Vestry, to left of external door	Carbon dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Vestry: near wall safe	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Tower ringing chamber	Foam	Flammable solids or liquids	
	Tower ringing chamber	Carbon dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Tower ringing chamber	Water	General, non-electrical	

St Margaret's Church	Location	Type of extinguisher	Type of fire	Capacity
	On wall in corner by main entrance door	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	On floor next to door to bell tower	Water	General, non-electrical	

Church House	Location	Type of extinguisher	Type of fire	Capacity
	Hallway – side of front door	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Hallway – side of back door	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Landing – top of stairs outside toilet	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Haslam Hall – by escape door in far left corner on entering	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Haslam Hall – on left just inside entrance door	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Parish office	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Flat	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	Haslam Hall kitchen	Powder	Flammable solids, liquids and gases, and electrical	

Parish office (Rectory annexe)	Location	Type of extinguisher	Type of fire	Capacity
	Ground floor hallway	Water	General, non-electrical	
	Ground floor hallway	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	
	1 st floor hallway	Water	General, non-electrical	
	1 st floor hallway	Water	General, non-electrical	
	1 st floor room	Carbon Dioxide	Electrical or oil	

They must not be moved from these positions.

They are serviced annually by the following competent person or organisation: Chubbs.

Other fire protection equipment:

St John's Church	Location	Type of equipment	Type of fire
	Kitchen (on wall)	Fire blanket	Cooking or clothes

St Peter's Church	Location	Type of equipment	Type of fire
	Kitchen	Fire blanket	Cooking or clothes

St Margaret's Church	Location	Type of equipment	Type of fire
	On end of bookcase for hymn books (next to water fire extinguisher at back of church by bell tower)	Fire blanket	Cooking or clothes

Church House	Location	Type of equipment	Type of fire
	Haslam Hall kitchen	Fire blanket	Cooking or clothes

All extinguishers and other pieces of equipment are checked every month by the responsible person to ensure that they are still in place, and that no extinguisher has been discharged.

Smoking is prohibited on all church and other parish premises.

Candles

Hand-held candles can pose a significant hazard, therefore:

- purpose-made candles, with slide-on card trays, should be used wherever possible;
- particular care will be taken to avoid contact with inflammable materials, such as curtains, clothing and hair;
- people (especially children) holding candles should be careful not stand too close together;
- special care will be taken over the additional risk posed by processions of people holding candles.

High risk events

For a service, such as Christingle, where the risks are particularly high, special precautions should be taken to ensure that suitable fire extinguishers are readily available (especially the water-filled type, although care must be taken not to direct them towards any electrical installation). Other useful aids can be:

- fire blanket (useful for clothes on fire)
- wet tea towel
- sand bucket.

Each sidesman/woman and any other steward officiating at such an event must understand clearly the evacuation procedure and the use of fire extinguishing measures, and his or her own role in implementing these should either be necessary.

After such an event, a careful check must be made of any nook or cranny, *especially under each pew*, in which a burning or smouldering candle might have been left⁵.

[There is further guidance about candles in Appendix 2]

Evacuation procedure

There should be a written evacuation procedure for each building, made known to all regular users, and, in the case of churches, especially to all sidesmen/women. This procedure should be reviewed annually to ensure that it is up to date.

⁵ A recent serious church fire was caused by a smouldering candle left under a pew after a service.

Churches

For main services, concerts and other events, especially where there is a particular fire risk such as when candles are held by members of the congregation, and where there are significantly more people in the church than usual, our procedures for stewarding and possible evacuation are as follows.

- All designated fire exit doors will be unlocked, and a check made that they can be opened, before the service or concert starts, and be clearly indicated as fire exits.
- A trained sidesmen/woman or steward will be allotted to each of these doors, and have responsibility for people in one of the following specified parts of the church.

St John's Church	Area of church	Exit door
	Back of nave	West door
	Front of nave and chancel	South door

St Margaret's Church	Area of church	Exit door
		Main (north) door and porch
		External vestry door

St Peter's Church	Area of church	Exit door
	Choir, Lady Chapel, front half of south side-aisle, front five rows of south side of central aisle	Door in south wall of Lady Chapel
	Organist, Vestry, Vanderstegen Chapel, front half of north side aisle, front five rows of north side of central aisle	Via vestry to door at east end of vestry
	Rear half of south side-aisle	Door at west end of south aisle leading into main porch and exit door.
	From sixth row to back of both north and south sides of central aisles	Main entrance and exit
	From sixth row to back of north side-aisle, and kitchen	Through kitchen to outside door on south side (past lavatories).

In case the lighting system fails, one or more torches should be available.

Location of torches for emergency use	
St John's	One at back of church in NW corner on window sill above meter cupboard; and another in the upper room by entrance door.
St Margaret's	At back of flower ladies' cupboard.
St Peter's	In drawer under pew at central aisle end on the north side (immediately opposite the Churchwarden's pew on the south side of the central aisle).

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, the decision to leave the building will be made, and announced, by the senior member of clergy or another appropriate person present, after consultation with others as appropriate.

Those evacuated will assemble at:

- **St John's:** on front lawn by noticeboard
- **St Margaret's:** car park
- **St Peter's:** Caversham Court (emergency vehicle access via The Warren)

The emergency services will be contacted immediately by the senior person present (or someone he or she delegates) using whichever telephone is nearest to hand.

Location of landline telephones in churches

- St Peter's: in the kitchen
- St John's: none
- St Margaret's: none

Use of portable electrical or gas heating or cooking equipment by outside bodies in church premises

Because of the hazard posed, such use is forbidden, except in exceptional circumstances where:

- it has been agreed with one of the Churchwardens for those premises,
- a risk assessment has been undertaken,
- appropriate precautions taken, and
- a signed undertaking given by an appropriate representative of the outside body that (a) he/she has read the relevant sections of the CTM Parish Health & Safety, and will ensure that their provisions are abided by, and (b) the body accepts full responsibility for the safe use of such equipment, and has made and paid for suitable insurance arrangements.

Other parish buildings

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, the decision to leave the building will be made, and announced, by the senior person present, after consultation with others as appropriate.

Those evacuated will assemble at:

- **Rectory Office:** Caversham Court
- **Church House:** car-park, behind Church House
- **25 Ilkley Road:** on pavement in front of house or nearby
- **6 Gosbrook Road:** in car park immediately to the east.

The emergency services will be contacted immediately by the senior person present (or someone he or she delegates) using whichever telephone is nearest to hand.

An automatic emergency lighting and fire door closing system, and a smoke alarm system, is installed at Church House and the Parish Office adjoining the Rectory. The smoke alarms should be tested weekly.

There is a landline telephone in the main Parish office adjoining the Rectory, and in the office at Church House.

Fire Evacuation drill for all employees and voluntary workers

will be carried out every year as part of the general annual training update for sidesmen/women. All employees and voluntary workers should ensure they are familiar with

- escape routes and ensure that they are kept clear and unobstructed, and
- the use of the different types of fire extinguisher.

If you discover a fire:

- a) Immediately raise the alarm.
- b) Telephone the emergency services (999).
- c) Check the building for occupants.
- d) Try to put out the fire if possible and within your own capability, using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk.
- e) If it is not possible to tackle the fire, or if you are not sure about which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. The key rule is *people before property*.
- f) Evacuate to the designated assembly point.
- g) Ensure that access is clear for emergency vehicles.

Responsibility for using each fire extinguisher will be allotted to an appropriate person who has received instruction in its use.

3. Electrical Safety

Responsibility for ensuring these requirements are in place is held, but may be delegated, by the Churchwardens for the churches, and the Parish Property Committee for other parish premises.

A list of all portable electrical appliances should be maintained.

Every three months plugs, cables and sockets, and any other visible parts of the fixed electrical installation, should be inspected visually by the responsible person to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes, trailing leads or any other apparent defects. Any shortcoming must be reported for action.

Every year, all portable electrical equipment should be tested⁶ by a competent person (with an appropriate level of electrical knowledge and experience, who has the correct equipment to complete the tests, knows how to use it and can correctly interpret the results)⁷. Any unsafe equipment should then be safely disposed of. However, it may be decided, after an assessment of the risk, in the light of their knowledge of the equipment concerned, to decrease the frequency of this testing to what is considered appropriate in the circumstances.

There must be a Residual Current Device (RCD) covering all the electricity circuits in each building.

Every five years, the fixed electrical system will be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a "Full Scope" member of the NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT. Any work found necessary must be carried out as soon as required.

At intervals of not more than two-and-a-half years, and after any lightning strike, the lightning conductor system will be examined and tested by a competent (specialist) firm of lightning engineers.⁸

⁶ Portable Appliance Testing ("PAT testing")

⁷ Our Ecclesiastical Insurance surveyor has suggested (25/9/14) that PAT-testing could be delegated to a volunteer who could attend suitable training, and may be able to borrow or hire the necessary equipment, perhaps from Reading Borough Council.

⁸ British Standard (BS) 6651 recommends that lightning protection systems should be inspected and tested preferably annually, although the maximum permissible interval is four years. However, it is convenient for the interval to be two-and-a-half years to fit in with the quinquennial inspection cycle, with an annual inspection by a church officer. An inspection and test is also advisable after a lightning strike since some damage may have been

The system will also be inspected annually by a church officer. A written record of every inspection and test must be kept.

It is our policy not to sell any secondhand electrical goods unless tested by a suitable qualified person and entered into a register of such equipment maintained by us.

Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury, and faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers **must**:

- visually check all electrical equipment before use;
- report any fault immediately to the responsible person (one of the churchwardens);
- not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment;
- not use any electrical equipment brought onto the premises from elsewhere until it has been tested by the approved person and entered into the electrical equipment register;
- switch off and disconnect any electrical equipment not in use for an extended period;
- position and protect flexible cables such that they are not at risk of damage, or likely to trip anyone up.

4. Hazardous substances

Responsibility for ensuring these requirements are in place is held, but may be delegated, by the Churchwardens for the churches, and the Parish Property Committee for other parish premises.

Hazardous substances are covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations, 2002, with which we are required to comply. Advice on good practice with regard to cleaning and disinfectant materials is available, as guidance document 'SR4', from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) website.

Expert advice, when necessary, can be obtained locally from an Environmental Health Officer, Reading Borough Council.

The following principles should be borne in mind and followed.

- Storage places should be secure, cool, dry and dark, and able to contain any spillage. The amount stored should be only what is likely to be needed for a reasonable time ahead.
- Always read label on container, or attached leaflet, regarding correct use and any precautions required, and ensure that they are followed.
- Dispose safely of anything which is unnecessary, unduly hazardous or out-of-date.
- Bear in mind that some chemicals can be inflammable.
- Make sure that good washing facilities are available close to hand.
- Take particular with anything containing sodium hydroxide (caustic soda) which, if splashed into an eye, can cause blindness.
- Never mix agents, such as to sodium hyperchlorite which can then release chlorine, which is a poisonous gas.
- If it is necessary to make up solutions from a concentrate, these should be for immediate use only and any residue discarded.
- Caps of containers should be put back immediately after pouring.
- The contents of all containers must be clearly marked - never decant concentrate into an unlabelled container.

incurred. A written record of every inspection and test must be kept. [*Ecclesiastical Insurance guidance on fire precautions, 2018.*]

- Never re-use a concentrate container.
- Clear up any spillage promptly.
- When cleaning, as far as possible remove any heavy deposits first before applying chemical agents.
- Avoid as far as possible chemicals coming into contact with skin, which can cause dermatitis, an allergic reaction, or other damage. Wash off any splashes immediately. Do not touch any cleaned surfaces until they have dried.
- Any vapour given off from a chemical could cause asthma.
- Use protective gloves (the single-use type is acceptable), which should be provided. Preferably these should not be latex, but if this is the only type available they should be 'low-protein' and 'powder free'. Any single-use gloves must be thrown away as soon as they are taken off.
- If there is any risk of contact with the face, use protective glasses and any other equipment necessary.
- Wash hands after using any chemical.
- If you notice any skin damage, apply or arrange for appropriate treatment, such as the application of a suitable cream.
- Wash out any equipment after use, and check it regularly for any signs of leaks, wear or damage.
- Any concern should be reported (or someone to whom they have delegated responsibility).

An up-to-date list will be maintained of all hazardous substances used on each of the parish premises.

As far as possible, we have eliminated the use of hazardous substances. The safety arrangements for those that remain are as follows.

Name of substance	Hazard level <i>(low, medium or high)</i>	Storage requirements	Protective clothing required	Action in event of an accident/spillage
Sodium Hyperchlorite (bleach)	Medium	Locked cupboard or room	Rubber gloves should be worn	Wash with copious amounts of tap water
Toilet and other cleaning and/or disinfectant agents (which may contain sodium hyperchlorite, sodium hydroxide or hydrogen peroxide or citric acid)	Medium	Locked cupboard or room	Rubber gloves should be worn	Wash with copious amounts of tap water
Disinfectant spray (which may contain ethanol, propane and/or butane)	High if near intensive heat or naked flame	Locked cupboard or room	Rubber gloves advised	Stop spraying and control any fire.

White spirit (turpentine)	High if near intensive heat or naked flame	Locked cupboard or room	Rubber gloves advised	Wipe up and wash affected area with water
Dishwasher tablets (provided enclosed in usual protective sachet)	Low	Beyond reach of small children and other vulnerable people	None	Wipe up and wash affected area with water

Asbestos

In accordance with the *Control of Asbestos Regulations, 2006*⁹, a suitable and sufficient assessment is undertaken, by a competent person¹⁰, to establish whether there is asbestos in any of the three churches or other parish premises, and if so its quantity and condition. A record is maintained of location and condition of any materials known, or presumed, to contain asbestos. A plan must then be prepared setting out in detail how the risk will be managed, including:

- monitoring the condition of any asbestos;
- ensuring it is properly maintained or, where necessary, safely removed;
- taking any action necessary;
- monitoring and reviewing the plan and action taken;
- providing information to emergency services, and also to anyone working on the site likely to encounter or disturb the asbestos.

Any survey must be undertaken by a competent person, in accordance with the HSE Guidance, "Asbestos: The Survey Guide".

5. Gas equipment

In the administration office adjoining the Rectory there is a gas boiler which is maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is registered as 'Gas Safe', and a written record kept. Any work found necessary to maintain safety is carried out immediately.

There is no other gas equipment installed in any of the three churches or other parish premises.

6. Safety of machinery

The responsible person will maintain a list of all items of all tools, plant and machinery owned by the church or parish. The procedures for checking and rules for use are listed in Appendix 3.

However, most of the work using machinery is carried out, for example within the churchyards, by either volunteers or contractors using their own tools and machinery, which the churchwardens, or anyone supervising the work on their behalf, must be satisfied are properly maintained and safe. In the case of contractors, it is also necessary to ensure that adequate indemnity cover and the other required provision is in place, as stipulated in Section 20, below.

⁹ Regulation 4 applies to all non-domestic premises including places of worship.

¹⁰ This must be in accordance with the HSE guidance "Asbestos: The Survey Guide".

In assessing the suitability of equipment owned and used by a volunteer, the general operating precautions listed in Appendix 3 should be borne in mind as far as reasonable and practicable.

7. Slips, trips and falls – condition of floors, steps and paths.

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, an inspection is made every year by the responsible person of

- a) all floors and stairs, and
- b) all exterior paths and steps. Particular note will be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths.

Any defects will be reported to the appropriate Churchwarden or member of the Parish Properties Committee, who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

St Peter's Churchyard

Risk assessments have been undertaken (in late 2014/early 2015) with regard to (a) the steep ground and gully on the north side of the church, and (b) the escarpment at the top of the churchyard alongside St Peter's Hill. They were submitted to Reading Borough Council (responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard), which gave an undertaking that further action would be considered in consultation with the parish and diocese. These should be repeated at least every five years, or if any relevant circumstances change, in collaboration with Reading Borough Council, ensuring that it takes necessary action to manage any risk identified.

*A similar assessment is required of the parapet above the retaining wall on the south side of the churchyard, and arrangements made to manage any risk identified.*¹¹

Assisting people who have difficulty in standing or walking

Care should be taken to avoid any circumstances likely to threaten the stability of anyone who has difficulty in standing or walking, and to provide guidance and support as and when appropriate. However, physical assistance should be undertaken only by those able to do it safely and confidently.

8. Lighting

In order to ensure that the church, other buildings and external premises are adequately lit, an inspection will be made every month by the responsible person to ensure that lights are working. Any bulbs that require replacing will be reported to the appropriate Churchwarden or member of the Parish Properties Committee who will ensure that the defective bulb is replaced safely.

An appropriate number of electric torches should be kept in one or more designated and appropriate places on each site, and checked regularly, in case of a power failure after dark or in the event of a fire.

Responsibility for the lighting along the path through St Peter's churchyard lies with Reading Borough Council, but any defects must be reported to an appropriate RBC officer, and record kept of this and any action taken.

¹¹ RBH has recently discussed responsibility for the churchyard, and the need for one of more related risk assessments, with Reading Borough Council's Landscape Services Manager. It was agreed that, once advice has been forthcoming from the RBC legal department, a meeting on site will be arranged with an RBC representative, the St Peter's Churchwardens and the H&S coordinator, to discuss and agree the respective roles of RBC and the parish, and any action deemed to be required.

9. Working at high level

In all three churches, the area designated as high level is above the top of the nave and chancel arcade (and below the springing of the roof structure). On the exterior of other buildings, it is above the ceiling level of the ground floor.

Only the following people may work at high level:

- approved contractors carrying out agreed work
- competent volunteers, approved by an appropriate Churchwarden or member of the Properties Committee, who have read and understood, to the satisfaction of the Parish officer responsible, the HSE guidance '*Safe use of ladders and stepladders – an employer's guide*', and Appendix 1 to this document, which must be complied with.

Only the following work is authorised without special agreement:

Work	Site	Person
Changing light bulbs	Inside church	Churchwarden, or someone authorised and supervised by him or her.
Clearing leaves and other debris from gutters	Church exterior	Churchwarden, or someone authorised and supervised by him or her.

10. The Eucharist

(a) Cleaning of the chalice and other related vessels

Still water and other fluids left in an open container can become contaminated. Therefore, **every week**:

- the chalice(s), carafe(s) and associated vessels must be thoroughly cleaned with warm or hot water, and then left to dry thoroughly before being used again;
- any unused wine left in a chalice should be discarded in an appropriate way.

A written protocol will be produced by the leading volunteer for this duty, to guide the others who undertake it.

(b) Good practice

- Unused wine that has been kept temporarily in a carafe and not poured into a chalice may be poured back into a partly-emptied bottle. Any partly-used bottle of wine should be used up before opening a fresh one.
- Water used for the Eucharist should normally be drawn from the mains supply. If it is found necessary to use bottled water, any partly-used bottle should be discarded the same day and not reused subsequently.
- Gluten-free wafers should be available, and this made known to all communicants, especially any who might have an allergy.

- Intinction should be used only when the officiating member of the clergy feels that there is a significant liturgical or pastoral reason to do so. In this event, suitable precautions should be taken to avoid any risk of cross-infection or contamination.

11. Preparation of food and drink

If food is to be sold (either directly, or indirectly as part of an event for which payment is made), publicly or privately, whether for profit or fund-raising, its preparation is governed by the *Food Hygiene Regulations, 2006*. (Only food cooked at home for private consumption is excluded.) However, it is good practice for any food supplied on church premises to be subject to monitoring and control by someone with the necessary expertise designated as having lead responsibility for catering.

We ensure that:

- the appropriate regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs are followed;
- all food handlers receive adequate supervision, and, if necessary, instruction and training;
- the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored, including maintaining the correct temperature.

Before any preparation begins, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be washed down and disinfected.

Foodstuffs may be prepared only in the following areas:

- a church or other designated kitchen on parish premises
- home kitchens of approved food providers.

Only the following people, who have received appropriate training, may prepare and serve foodstuffs:

- those authorised by the designated lead person for catering for the event concerned.

It is recommended by our insurer that at least one person, designated as having responsibility for catering arrangements, from each church at or for which food is prepared, should attend a course, such as is provided by Reading Borough Council leading to the award of a *food hygiene certificate*, with subsequent training at appropriate intervals, so that up-to-date knowledge can then be relayed to all authorised food handlers.

(See Appendix 5 for further information)

Any hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.

Jam jars for fêtes, etc.

If jam-jars are re-used for home-made preserves, the basic principles of hygiene should always be followed. They must be free of any chips and cracks to the glass, heat-sterilised before use, and have well-fitting lids.¹²

Community Café (at St John's Church)

The management and staff of the Community Café are required to maintain a proper standard of health and safety, while the Rector and churchwardens have a responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure this. If necessary, advice will be sought from a

¹² Newsletter of the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers, Vol 6, Issue 5, January 2013.

Reading Borough Council Environmental Health Officer. The *Food Hygiene Regulations, 2006*, include the requirements for catering businesses (more rigorous than those listed above), which include the need for written “food safety management procedures”.

Carrying hot water or other fluids

Carrying hot water (especially if just boiled) or any other fluids should be minimised, and when necessary carried out only by those approved by the catering supervisor of the event concerned as able to undertake this task safely.

The steps from the kitchen down to the back of the nave (where drinks are routinely served) at St Peter’s Church pose a particular hazard in this regard.

Use of hot milk

Unless served immediately, the use of heated milk should be avoided, because of the risk of infection by pathogens if left for any length of time. It should never be reheated, since doing so increases the risk even further.

12. Manual handling – lifting, carrying and moving loads.

- Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as reasonably practicable.
- Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we shall carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible.
- The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling.
- Only those people who have received the appropriate training are authorised to undertake manual handling tasks.

13. Display screen equipment

Our policy is to assess the risks of all habitual users of computer workstations, and to reduce those risks to the lowest possible level. The following factors will be considered when carrying out a risk assessment:

- stability and legibility of the screen;
- contrast and brightness of the screen;
- tilt and swivel of the screen;
- suitability of keyboards, desks and chairs;
- the work station environment;
- the ease of use of the software.

Daily work routines will involve periods away from the screen (about every two hours). When necessary, risk assessments will be carried out by the responsible person.

14. Hazardous arising from buildings, including glazing.

- Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are inspected every year by the person responsible, or by someone he or she delegates for the purpose.

- Any defect noted is immediately reported to the person responsible for the building (if he or she has not carried out the inspection), and appropriate action taken.
- Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.
- A check is made of any asbestos¹³ in the building by a competent person, noting its location, type and condition. Where necessary, asbestos will be removed by a licensed contractor. Information regarding any asbestos remaining is given to all contractors and anyone who may be affected.
- A check is made of all glazing in the buildings to ensure that any glass in windows below shoulder height is of a safety material and is protected against breakage.

15. Churchyards and other parish land: condition of trees and gravestones

Trees

The condition of all trees, within or liable to encroach on the churchyard or other parish land, should be monitored by visual checks at appropriate intervals (once every six months, and also after any bouts of turbulent weather) by a competent person (who may be a “tree officer” appointed by the PCC for the purpose), on behalf of the Churchwardens. Particular attention should be paid to any diseased or dead wood, especially in beech, ash and sycamore trees, from which it is particularly likely to fall.

Any tree over ten years old, large enough to pose possible danger in the event of collapse, for which the parish is responsible¹⁴, should be inspected by a competent person (normally a local authority tree officer, a tree consultant or a tree surgeon) every five years as part of the quinquennial inspection of the church premises, and a note of the findings attached to the main report. Any action indicated must then be taken promptly.¹⁵

Gravestones

The condition of gravestones should be checked at appropriate intervals, at least once a year, for indications of potential danger such as instability, and any necessary remedial action taken without delay.

Reporting to Reading Borough Council any defect in St Peter’s churchyard

There is “contingent liability” to report any defect discovered to an appropriate official of Reading Borough Council, which is responsible for maintaining the churchyard and for taking any remedial action necessary.

16. Safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults

We have a parish safeguarding policy, which accords with the Church of England House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy and Guidance. Supervision of its implementation is by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

¹³ Covered above in Section 4, *Hazardous Substances (COSHH)*.

¹⁴ Therefore not including St Peter’s churchyard, although the duty remains of informing Reading Borough Council of any known concern or defect.

¹⁵ See Chancellor’s Guidance to all Parochial Church Councils concerning trees in the Diocese of Oxford pursuant to Section 6(3) of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure, 1991 (Diocese of Oxford, March 2005).

A permanent record is maintained of any accident involving a child.

17. Personal safety and security

A risk assessment is undertaken with regard to any circumstances in which the safety of an employee or volunteer may be in doubt, such as:

- working alone in the church or other parish premises, and locking up, especially at night.
- accepting people, particularly strangers, into those premises or a private home
- visiting people at their homes or elsewhere
- handling cash or other valuables, routinely, but also at events such as fetes (where particular precautions should be taken, for example by limiting the accumulation of insecure takings).

If appropriate, a safe system of work or procedure is drawn up, including suitable control measures.

Our insurer recommends that anyone likely to incur risk should formulate a personal safety plan which includes an assessment of the hazards likely to be encountered, taking account of location and the activity concerned and any other relevant factors. It should outline safety actions and control measures, and be:

- clear and easy to understand;
- made known to appropriate people (such as immediate colleagues);
- reviewed regularly.

General guiding principles are:

- exercise common sense;
- if working alone in a church or office is unavoidable, be aware of the need to manage the risk;
- anyone locking up a church at night should be accompanied if possible;
- carry a mobile 'phone, which is switched on, easily accessible, can be operated readily, and is programmed with emergency contact numbers;
- tell someone else (a) whom you are visiting or where you are going, and (b) when you expect to return.

(See Appendix 6)

When a baptism or other service is taking place other than at a regular time, the member of the clergy concerned should decide whether there should be at least one sidesman/woman (or other steward) in attendance, and, if so, take appropriate action to arrange for this.

Remember¹⁶:

- It is perfectly reasonable to put the safety of yourself (and family) above the needs of others.
- You should take sensible precautions to prevent an accusation of inappropriate behaviour with a child or vulnerable adult.

18. Infection Control

Recent experience with the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for appropriate precautions in managing the risk of infection by pathogens in general. When there is such a widespread and

¹⁶ From guidance by Ecclesiastical (our insurers) on personal safety for church people.

serious threat to public health, it is crucial that a system of safe practice is developed and implemented to manage the risk, in accordance with any national and Diocesan guidance that has been issued.

It is also important to take account and manage any risk of infection arising from other aspects of parish life, including:

- the Eucharist and
- food and drink preparation.

19. Risk assessments

In order to meet our obligations under *The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999*, a risk assessment will be carried out, at regular intervals by a competent person, on any aspect of premises or activity that is deemed to carry a significant hazard.

The following are amongst those functions and activities given special consideration as to risk:

- fêtes (including the use of “bouncy castles”)
- tower tours
- change-ringing bells
- sponsored walks, visits and outings
- churchyard maintenance, including grave digging
- erection of temporary staging.

Each risk assessment should be recorded on one of the parish Risk Assessment forms which can be downloaded from parish website (scroll down to ‘Policies’) as

- either a Word version which can be completed electronically (after clicking on ‘enable editing’) and then submitted as an email attachment
- or as a PDF which can be printed and filled in manually. The completed risk assessment should then be sent:
 - *where children, young people or vulnerable adults are concerned:* to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, via the Parish Office
 - *in all other cases:* to an appropriate churchwarden.

20. Training of sidesmen/women and other appropriate volunteers

The churchwardens will arrange regular meetings of sidesmen/women and anyone else for whom such training is appropriate, which they will be encouraged to attend. These normally take place once a year, but more often if necessary, to keep them up to date with health and safety matters, including first aid, fire precautions and the evacuation procedure, and any other relevant topic such as manual handling and use of a portable ramp. If necessary, separate sessions may be arranged to cover one or more of these topics.

The Parish Properties Committee will make similar arrangements for those within its sphere of responsibility.

21. Contractors

Anyone entering church or other parish premises for the purpose of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church or parish, is regarded as a contractor. Any contractor **must:**

- have his or her own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy;
- produce evidence that he or she has appropriate **Public** and, if appropriate, **Employer's Liability** insurance in place – a record of this evidence will be kept;
- comply with all the requirements of our health and safety policy, and cooperate with church and/or parish officials in providing a safe place of work, and a safe system of operation;
- where plant and machinery is brought onto church or parish premises, show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure safe operation;
- not use a sub-contractor or person other than their own direct employee except with the express permission of an appropriate church official or body – even then, responsibility remains with the contractor.

For significant work, and on all occasions when part or all of this will not be directly supervised, any contractor will be given detailed instructions, in the form of an appropriate “permit to work”, as to the location, nature and extent of the authorised undertaking, which will specify any necessary safety precautions.

Particular care in this regard will be taken for any “hot work”¹⁷, for which a specific permit is required.

Should any construction work be undertaken, *The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations* will be followed.

22. Information and enforcement: local contact details

Environmental Health Service:

Reading Borough Council
Environmental Protection Team
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Tel: 0118 937 3787

Employment Medical Advisory Service:

c/o Health and Safety Executive regional office (East & South East)
Priestley House
Priestley Road
Basingstoke
RG24 9NW

Tel: 01256 404000

¹⁷ “Hot work” is a technical term within health and safety law.

23. Health and Safety Law poster

A copy of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) poster “Health and Safety Law – what you should know” is displayed in:

- Parish office at Rectory
- Parish office at Church House

Appendices

1. First Aid

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the arrangements for administering First Aid, and the location of any First Aid kits.

First Aid kits

These should be identified by a white cross on a green background. They should contain sufficient quantities of the required materials, and be replenished as soon as possible after use. The items should include only those which the nominated First Aider(s) have been trained to use, and must be appropriate for the circumstances. The HSE recommends¹⁸ as a minimum First Aid kit stock:

- a leaflet or poster giving general advice on First Aid
- individually-wrapped, sterile dressings (assorted sizes), appropriate to the nature of the work being undertaken (e.g. a detectable type of dressing for food handlers) x 20
- sterile eye pads x 2
- safety pins x 6
- sterile, individually-wrapped, unmedicated wound dressings:
 - medium sized, approx. 12cm x 12cm x 6
 - large, approx. 18cm x 18cm x 2
- pair of disposable gloves x 1.

Tablets or medications should not be kept.

First aid kits should be stored in an area, the location of which is generally known, where deterioration will be minimal. The contents should be checked every three months, and after any use, by someone holding a current *first aid certificate*, and any shortcomings or losses made good. A continuing record should be kept of these checks and of any action taken.

Providers of First Aid

Anyone formally recognised as a First Aider should be trained, and hold a current *certificate of competence*.

¹⁸ HSE Approved Code of Practice in *The Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981*

Where a First Aider is not available, one or more person may be appointed to take charge of coordination in an emergency. Appointed persons are responsible only for summoning trained personnel or professional assistance, and should not administer First Aid except such as is required by the emergency, and then only as far as his or her expertise and knowledge allows.

As far as possible, there should be a trained First Aider, holding a current certificate, present at all main church services and other significant events.

Records

A note of any First Aid treatment should be made on the Accident Form describing the injury, and then sent to the parish office at 20 Church Road, Caversham, RG4 7AD at the Rectory (as described above).

Further advice

Here is a link to simple NHS information about a range of medical emergencies and what can and should be done straightaway until professional help arrives.

- [First aid - NHS](#)

All staff and volunteers are strongly advised to read and become familiar with this important information.

2. Candles

The use of candles in church is a very important part of worship. However, it is important to remember that, if not used correctly they can be the cause of major fires and serious injuries. Simple precautions should mean that candles can be used safely.

Choice of candle

Good-quality, slow burning ones are best.

Hand-held candles

Great care needs to be taken where people, especially in large numbers, are given candles to hold. Apart from the risk of igniting flammable materials, molten wax can cause damage to clothing, and skin burns, since is very hot. Purpose-made candles are available, and should be used with proper slide-on card drip trays.

Children, for whom even greater care is necessary, should be properly supervised, and care taken to ensure they do not stand too close together and, in particular, are not too close behind one another, to avoid the risk of either clothing or hair being set alight. Processions of children holding candles are probably best avoided.

Placing of candles

Candles must be kept clear of all combustible materials including flammable decorations, foliage and electrical equipment. It is best for them to be placed in metal holders on non-combustible surfaces such as stone or brick.

Fire extinguishers

These must always be readily available where candles are being used. Water extinguishers are the most suitable for dealing with burning foliage, paper and wood. Staff (employed or volunteer) must know where the extinguishers are, and how to use them. Training is usually available from either the extinguisher supplier or the local Fire and Rescue Service. Water must not be used on electrical equipment.

Fire blanket

Fire blankets are particularly suitable for dealing with burning clothing, and at least one should be available on each of the parish premises.

Lighting

Stewards and those working in other parish buildings should have access to torches so that any minor problems can be managed without turning on the main lights. In the event of a fire or other serious emergency, the main lights must be turned on immediately.

Procedure

For main church services, each member of the team of sidesmen/women, and any other stewards, on duty should be assigned specific duties. Each emergency exit door should be unlocked before the service starts, and checked to ensure it will open quickly and easily if necessary. Each of the exits, and each fire extinguisher, should be allocated to a specific steward.

As far as practicable, similar arrangements should be made for other parish premises when occupied.

Safe use of votive candles

A stand should be used (the pricket type is recommended), with candles that can be fixed securely on it (and not the "tea-light" or "night-light" type). The order of lighting candles should be from the back

forwards. There should always be someone supervising. A church should not be left unattended with candles still burning, and when it is locked up at night they should all be extinguished.¹⁹

Other parish buildings

Candles should not be used in any other parish buildings.

3. Machinery

The procedures for checking, and rules for use of, equipment owned by one of the churches or the parish, are as follows:

- a) Employees and voluntary workers must not use tools or operate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use.
- b) Employees and voluntary workers must not ride on any parts of machinery not intended for that use.
- c) Machinery must be switched off before any adjustment is made.
- d) After carrying out maintenance and adjustments, all guards must be replaced before machinery is used.
- e) Before using any item of plant or machinery, a check must be made to ensure that it is in a safe working condition, correctly adjusted, and that there are no loose nuts, bolts or other defects.
- f) The appropriate personal protective equipment detailed below must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery.
- g) Persons under the age of 18 years may use hand tools only, and are not permitted to operate any power-driven item of plant or machinery.
- h) Any defect and damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported promptly to the responsible person.
- i) All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained and a schedule kept of maintenance requirements.
- j) Persons should not work on their own unless they have a means of communication, have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken, and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on.
- k) The following items of plant and equipment are tested by a competent person in accordance with an inspection programme (examples only).

Examples of “safe systems of work” for two typical types of gardening equipment

Item	Maintenance required, by whom, and frequency.	Special precautions Needed	Personal protective equipment needed	Notes
<i>Petrol powered rotary mower</i>	<i>Servicing every year.</i>	<i>Keep all body parts well clear of any moving parts of machinery. Beware of risk of escaping from</i>	<i>Stout shoes or boots</i>	

¹⁹ Agreed by the PCC on 24/3/2021.

		<i>grasp when on sloping ground.</i>		
<i>Electric hedge-trimmer</i>	<i>Servicing every year.</i>	<i>Residual Current Device (formerly Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker).</i>	<i>Sturdy shoes. Protective gloves Protective jacket</i>	

4. Use of ladders

On average, falls from ladders and stepladders account for 14 deaths and 1,200 major injuries per year.²⁰ A fall from as little as two metres can be fatal. The Health and Safety Executive believes that misuse of ladders can be partly explained by the way they are used in the home. More than half the accidents occur because ladders are not securely placed or fixed.²¹

The Health & Safety Coordinator has distributed current HSE guidance²² to churchwardens, and posters highlighting the hazards have been distributed for display in each of the three churches.

New Work at Height Regulations came into force in 2005 which stipulate that an employer must ensure that a ladder is not used at a place of work unless a risk assessment indicates that the use of more suitable equipment is not justified. This could be on the basis of the short duration of use, features of the site which cannot be altered, and that sufficient hand holds and support are already provided.

The “hierarchy of controls” is:

- first to avoid work at height where possible,
- then to prevent falls from height, and failing that,
- to reduce the consequences of a fall.

Where work at height is necessary, there is a need to justify whether a ladder or stepladder is the most suitable access equipment, compared to other access options. Appropriate training for anyone involved is crucial.

A ladder is a means of access, not a safe working platform. Ladders should be used only for minor jobs of short duration which require the use of only one hand, so that the other can be used to hold on to the ladder.

Alternative means of access

Consider the possibility of using alternative equipment, such as a mobile scaffold tower or a mobile elevated work platform (“cherry picker”). A ladder should be used only for work of short duration, and when it can be safely secured, using ladder-ties if necessary. It may be better to use a contractor who has the proper equipment rather than trying to do the work yourself.

²⁰ *The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) – a brief guide*. Leaflet INDG 40 (rev 1) HSE Books 2007

²¹ *Guidance notes on church health and safety – version 2 – Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc, 2010*

²² *Safe use of ladders and stepladders – an employer’s guide* (Sept 2011) HSE code INDG 402, ref 09/11.

Ladder standards

Only ladders which meet the appropriate British or European standards should be used. BS 1129:1990 applies to wooden ladders, BS 2037:1994 to metal ones. Under the British Standards, the maximum static load for an industrial ladder is 175kg, and for a domestic one 125kg.

Choice of ladder

Ensure the ladder is suitable for the job, is of the correct material and appropriate length. Ladders should not be painted which can hide defects. For electrical work, only use ladders of a non-conductive material. Allow one metre of ladder length above the highest rung used. Never stand on the top three rungs. Ladders should not be used for work more than five metres from the base.

Stepladders

These are suitable for small jobs of short duration where it is not possible to rest a ladder against a wall or other support. They should be used only for minor maintenance at a height not exceeding two metres. The stepladder should have a "A" frame with a small working platform at the top which can be used to hold tools and materials. The platform should never be used to stand on. There must be some mechanism to prevent the legs from spreading out, and a safety catch to prevent the joint opening. They must be placed on firm, level ground. The height of the steps should not exceed three times the width of the base.

Routine checks

Before use, the ladder should be checked to ensure the general condition is sound, and that it is clean and dry, free from wet paint, oil, mud or other slippery substances. In addition, checks should be made to ensure that there are:

- no cracks
- no rungs missing, bent or loose
- no stiles (outside uprights) damaged or bent
- no warping or splitting of a wooden ladder
- no corrosion of a metal ladder
- no sharp edges (metal) or splinters (wood)
- foot pads, caps and other rubber fittings are in place and sound.

Safe positioning

The ladder should be placed on a firm, level, dry surface. Where this is not possible, for example working on grass, the feet should be tied to stakes in the ground to stop slipping, and a large, flat board placed underneath the feet to prevent them sinking into the ground.

The ladder should only be set against a structure capable of supporting the load that will be imposed upon it.

Ensure the ladder cannot be knocked over by passing traffic. An exclusion zone may be necessary to ensure that no one unauthorized can pass underneath the ladder.

The ladder should be set at an angle of 75°, that is one unit of measure out from the wall/support for every four units up.

Securing the ladder

Both the bottom and the upper part of the ladder should be secured by tying of the stiles to fixed objects. If ladders are frequently required to be used in the same position, permanent ladder ties should be located into any suitable nearby masonry or brickwork.

Extension ladders should have an overlap of at least three rungs.

Safe use

When using a ladder, the following should be considered.

- Keep your body facing the ladder at all times, centred between the stiles.
- Don't reach too far outwards or sideways, or stand with one foot on the ladder and one on something else.
- Do not over-stretch. Climb down the ladder and move it, however time-consuming this might be.
- Keep both hands free as much as possible to hold the ladder. If you need to carry tools, use a shoulder-bag, belt-holster or belt-hooks. Use a rung-hook for hanging a paint pot.
- Hold on to the ladder with at least one hand when working.
- Wear strong flat shoes or boots, with dry soles and a good grip. Do not wear sandals, slip-ons or have bare feet.
- Do not use a ladder in strong winds or if it is raining.
- Only use a ladder if you feel completely confident.
- Don't use a ladder near overhead power lines.

Routine maintenance

Ladders should carry an identification number and a written maintenance log should be kept.

As well as an inspection every time prior to use, there should be a schedule of regular inspection and maintenance, the frequency depending on where it is used and stored, and how often it is used. If any defects are found, the ladder should be withdrawn from use, suitably labelled, and segregated for repair or safe disposal.

Cords, chains and ropes should be checked and replaced if defective, and pulleys should be lubricated regularly. Missing or defective pads or sleeves should be replaced.

All ladders should be cleaned regularly before being stored. Climbing or gripping surfaces should be free of oil, grease, mud or anything slippery.

Timber ladders may be coated with a transparent non-conductive finish such as varnish, shellac or a clear preservative, but not any opaque covering such as paint. Aluminium equipment should be given an adequate protective coating when it is subject to acids, alkalis or other corrosive substances.

Storage

Storage areas should be easily accessible. Ladders should be stored in conditions similar to those in which they will be used, protected from direct exposure to the elements and well ventilated. Storage racks should give protection against damage, with sufficient support to prevent excessive sagging. When not in use, ladders should be locked either in a store room or to a fixed strongpoint to prevent unauthorised access.

Materials should not be stored on top of ladders.

5. Preparation of Food

The general stipulations of the Food Standards Agency for premises, used only occasionally for food preparation, include the following.

- Premises must be kept clean and maintained in good repair and condition to avoid risk of contamination, particularly from animals and pests.
- Appropriate facilities must be provided to maintain personal hygiene, including hand-washing, lavatory and, where necessary, changing facilities.
- Food preparation surfaces must be well maintained, and easy to clean and disinfect.
- Adequate facilities must be provided for cleaning and disinfection of work utensils and equipment.
- There must be an adequate supply of hot and/or cold water including drinking water.
- There must be adequate arrangements for (a) the storage and disposal of waste, and (b) storage of food at suitable temperatures, and the monitoring of those temperatures.
- Food must be placed in such a way that avoids decontamination as far as practicable.
- If food is washed or cleaned, there must be adequate facilities to do this hygienically.

Special care must be taken to ensure that hands are always washed after handling money before handling any food.

Personal hygiene

Every person working in a food handling area must maintain a high level of personal cleanliness. Suitable clothing should be worn, and any hand and finger jewellery, except for a wedding ring, should be removed. Anyone suffering from a skin infection, sores or diarrhoea, with an open wound, or who is suspected of carrying a disease transmissible by food, must not handle food or enter a food-handling area.

Food hygiene training

People who handle food must either have received training in the principles of food hygiene to an appropriate level for the catering operation concerned, or be under direct supervision by someone with this expertise.

Food allergy

Measures should be taken to minimise the risk of anyone coming into contact with food likely to cause an allergic reaction.

- When food is dispensed, a sign should be displayed warning that some food may contain allergens, and to ask anyone known to have an allergy to declare this.

Here are links to further guidance from:

The *Foods Standards Agency*:

- [Providing food at community and charity events | Food Standards Agency](#)

and our insurers, *Ecclesiastical*:

- [Food Safety | Risk Management Guidance | Ecclesiastical](#)

6. Personal safety ²³

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy and church workers. It is often for the purpose of “pastoral encounters”, which are at the heart of much of the church’s ministry.

However, changes in society have highlighted the importance of protecting personal safety. The recent report of the Chichester commission has identified the need to ensure that:

- safeguarding issues raised during pastoral encounters are dealt with properly; and
- adequate records of pastoral encounters are kept and retained.

The commission found that much unnecessary concern could have been avoided if better records had been kept. These should be made in a paper or electronic diary, made available to other appropriate people, kept with other parish records, and include details of the person seen, the date of the encounter, and a brief note of the reason for it. Any safeguarding issues arising must be raised with the Parish Safeguarding Officer (and may have to be reported to a statutory authority).

The initial risk assessment should include the following questions:

- Is there a risk of violence? (i.e. any behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful physical or mental effects on someone.)
- Are there particular risks?
- Are there any known medical or other factors which could make either party more vulnerable (e.g. mood swings or a disorder of normal behavioural inhibition)
- Is lone working really necessary, or could the encounter instead be in a public location, rather than a secluded one with which you may not be familiar?

Any proposed lone working should, as far as possible, be planned in advance, taking account of who else should be told about it or be involved.

The following practical suggestions are made for precautions that might be useful, firstly for any situation, and then for each of the three particular settings mentioned.

General precautions for any situation

- Have a mobile ‘phone, in good order and accessible, programmed with emergency contact numbers, if possible with “speed dial” shortcuts.
- Arrange with someone suitable, such as a family member, an innocuous-sounding emergency code or phrase (such as “I’m expecting a call from John Smith – could you let me know when he calls?”), which will indicate that you need help without alerting the person you are with (whom you believe to be a potential threat) and so perhaps worsening your predicament.
- Consider having a personal attack alarm.
- If you are alone with someone potentially threatening, “read” the situation for ominous signs, and have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting if necessary, such as “I have another appointment now – could we re-schedule this one?”
- If you are worried, escape as quickly as possible to a place of safety.

At home or in an office

²³ Based on (a) *Personal Safety Plan for Church People*, guidance produced by Ecclesiastical Insurance (03/2014), and (b) advice leaflets from Diocese of Oxford on *Lone Working* and *Recording Pastoral Encounters*, both published in June 2014.

- It may be useful to arrange for a security assessment of the premises, with regard, for example, to the possible benefits of security lighting or an intruder alarm. (Financial support may be available from the diocese.)
- Consider installing a spy-hole or security chain in the front door to check on callers before opening it.
- Ensure that keys are not visible or easily accessible from an outside door or a window.
- Consider whether you need to let uninvited callers, especially if not known to you, come inside.
- Plan in advance how to respond to requests for food or money from unexpected visitors. One method might be to have ready a bag in which you have placed what you would normally give. This could be held in one hand, leaving the other free to close the door quickly if necessary, meanwhile keeping one of your feet on a doorstep planted firmly behind the open door to prevent it being forced open.
- Be wary of leaving strangers alone inside the premises.
- Try to plan one-to-one meetings (especially with someone you don't know) when there will be someone else at home or in your office.

At a church, or in a churchyard.

- Try to avoid being alone in a church if possible, especially after dark.
- Ensure that someone reliable knows when to expect you to be back at home.
- Plan an escape route from the building in case you need it.
- If you have come by car, keep the keys to hand, and park so that you can get away easily if necessary.

When visiting others at home or elsewhere

- Ensure that someone reliable knows where you are going, and when you are expected to return to your home or base.
- Try, whenever practicable, to arrange for any one-to-one meeting with someone you don't know to be in a public location rather than an unfamiliar place.
- Consider whether it is safe to accept food or drink from a person not well known to you.
- Arrange for someone to call you at regular intervals to check that all is well. Coded phrases should be agreed beforehand to avoid alerting, and perhaps provoking, the person you are with and concerned about.
- If meeting at someone's house,
 - make a mental note of the layout, how the front door lock works, and the route by which you could escape quickly if necessary;
 - allow the host to lead the way, so that doors cannot be locked behind you;
 - sit as close to the door as possible.

7. Bells

There are *eight bells in the tower of St Peter's*, ranging in weight from 4 to 8 cwt (200-400 kg).

There are *six bells in the tower of St Margaret's*, ranging in weight from approximately 3 to 7 cwt (150-350 kg). Since the ringing-chamber is the base of the tower at the back of the church, it is particularly important that care is taken that ringers have a clear and sufficient area in which to operate without interference.

At both churches, the bells are hung in the traditional English way for change-ringing and, as such, can present dangers if misused.

As a matter of course, all those ringing should ensure that the following standard precautions are observed:

- keep feet on the floor if sitting near a bell being rung,
- do not allow ropes to trail on the floor if the bells are up,
- do not moving around the belfry if the bells are being rung, and
- check that a bell is down before attempting to ring it up.

As a general rule, bells should always be left in the “down” position other than for ringing. It is extremely hazardous for bells to be left “up”, particularly if fire-fighters or others need to enter the tower or if anyone unauthorised is able to do so. However, they can be left “up” during the period (usually no more than five days) immediately before a wedding, or other celebratory service or event at which they will be rung in this way, provided that (as is normal practice in this event):

- **at St Peter’s Church**, two warning signs are placed in the ringing room (one of which deliberately obstructs access to the entrance door to the bell chamber), which indicate “Danger – bells are up”;
- **at St Margaret’s Church**, the trap-door into the bell chamber is locked, and a warning sign is attached to it.

Other routine precautions

The access door to the tower and ringing-room, and the separate trap-door from the ringing-room to the bell-chamber, are kept locked, all keys being within the control of the Tower Captain or a nominated and approved deputy, and the Churchwardens.

The Tower Captain is responsible also for ensuring the following.

- All adult (aged sixteen years or over) ringers, including those visiting, are competent for their role, in good health, and of suitable height and build. If in training, there should be appropriate supervision.
- Visiting ringers are warned of the particular circumstances of the tower and bells concerned by means of a list of safety precautions displayed on the wall of the ringing chamber, to which their attention must be drawn.
- Junior ringers must be at least eight years old, and have written consent from a parent or guardian before ringing or being taught to ring. They must be in good health, of suitable height, build and temperament. They must be suitably experienced already, or be in the process of being taught to ring. It is within the discretion of the Tower Captain whether a particular child is suitable. At least one responsible and named adult (such as a parent of one of the children present, or an experienced adult ringer), other than the Tower Captain, must be present when any child, young person or vulnerable adult is in the bell tower. A record should be maintained of each junior ringer’s instruction and training, and level of competence. Safeguarding responsibility should be vested in one or more suitable named people, in consultation with the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

[There are “special conditions concerning heavy bells”²⁴, but these do not apply at either St Peter’s or St Margaret’s where the heaviest bell at both is under half the qualifying weight. Also not applicable at either church are the special provisions for “turning the clappers of bells up ‘wrong’”.]

²⁴ Ecclesiastical H&S Guidance Notes 2007 - ibid

Accident reporting and first aid for ringers

These should be in accordance with Section C1 above on “Accidents and First Aid”, and any report made using the designated Accident Book of the church concerned.

Bell maintenance

Unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary, all maintenance should normally be undertaken wherever possible with the bells “down”, either by, or under the direction of, the Tower Captain or the Steeple Keeper²⁵. A second person should be present during maintenance operations to assist, and take action in the event of an emergency. However, where this is not possible, the Tower Captain, or approved deputy, working alone amongst the bells must advise another responsible person of their proposed activity and how long it is expected to take, and contact him or her at the predicted time to inform of progress, and, if the task is not yet completed, again when it has been. If this other person does not hear when expected, he or she must immediately ascertain that the lone worker is safe.

Maintenance with bells up

Where it is essential that maintenance work is carried out while the bells are up, there must be a second responsible person present. Before any work begins, the two people present must carefully assess any risk and how it will be managed, in the light of the benefit to be gained. This need not be written, but must take account of all known circumstances, and, as the work progresses, be reviewed as and when necessary, and modified as appropriate.

8. Disabled and vulnerable people

The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, imposes a duty on service providers to make *reasonable* adjustments in the way that services are provided so that disabled people can benefit in the same way as the able-bodied. This includes not just access, but also the ability to participate and understand what is going on. The definition of disability is any physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Impairments may be related to:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical coordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand, or
- perception of risk of physical danger.

Consideration should be given to implications and risks for:

- wheelchair users
- visually impaired
- those with hearing difficulty
- elderly in general
- “persons of excessively large or small stature”
- pregnant women
- parents and others in charge of small children, especially those with pushchairs

²⁵ The Tower Captain leads the ringers, while the Steeple Keeper is responsible for the bells and their machinery.

- those who are
 - temporarily injured,
 - sick and ill, or
 - emotionally distressed or unstable.

Provision of auxiliary aids

Reasonable provision might include:

- large print hymn and service books
- signs in Braille for the visually impaired
- an induction loop system for people with hearing difficulty

Where an induction loop system has been installed, it should be tested at annually, or when it is suspected that there is any defect, by someone relying on and using a personal hearing aid.

Health & Safety

Safety requirements must not be used as an excuse for failing to make provision for people with a disability.

Special provision must be made to ensure that anyone with a disability can be safely evacuated in the event of a fire or other emergency. The requirements of wheelchair users, as well as those with a hearing and sight impairment, or any other disability, must be taken into account when carrying out a fire risk assessment, and drawing up an evacuation procedure.

9. Specimen risk assessments and controls (giving “safe systems of working”)

Hazards/risks/people affected	Existing controls	Likelihood (L)	Severity (S)	Risk rating (LxS)	Possible additional controls
Risk of fire from hand-held candles, especially by children such as at Christingle services.	Supervision by accompanying adults, and by stewards, supported by ready means of putting out any fire, including wet tea towels, water extinguishers and a fire blanket.	1	3	3	(a) Other than at Christingle services, if possible use candles with attached cardboard trays. (b) Have sand bucket available. (c) Ensure no ignited (including smouldering) candle is left under a pew after service.
Risk of ladder left upright against wall	Ladder placed when not in	2	3	6	Ladders brought onto

toppling over if inadvertently pushed, especially if placed on uneven part of floor or ground.	use in position of repose, locked in storage cupboard or to strongpoint.				premises only during use.
Risk from someone unable to walk being lifted in a wheelchair from St Peter's nave up stairs through kitchen to lavatory.	Could be taken in wheelchair up ramp through south doors, and in at side entrance to kitchen under tower, but access narrow and awkward.	1	1	1	Ideally, proper disabled lavatory should be provided, with step-free access, but may well not be practicable given the environmental constraints of St Peter's.

10. Health & safety check-list for the Parish Church Council (PCC), Churchwardens and the Parish Properties Committee

PCC

(Holds overall responsibility for health & safety)

At each meeting

- Report any reason to suppose that the policy is not being followed.
- Check that the minutes of every meeting of each Church Leadership Team includes a health & safety section, and that any matter of concern has been reported to the Health & Safety Co-ordinator, and acted upon as appropriate.
- Confirm that any potential or actual adverse incident has been reported and analysed, and any necessary corrective action formulated and taken.
- Report any departure from the parish policy, and that it has been approved by the PCC, and recorded.

Churchwardens

(Hold responsibility for health & safety within their churches and other parish buildings²⁶, though they may delegate particular aspects to other named people, such as members of the relevant Church Leadership Team and the Parish Properties Committee. The following areas of activity are already delegated as follows:

- *bell-ringing and tower management*
- *cleaning of chalice and other Eucharist vessels*
- *catering.]*

²⁶ See footnote 3 on page 2.

Monthly

- Check that all lighting is working satisfactorily.
- Check that all fire extinguishers and other protective equipment are in place and working order.
- Check that any untoward incident has been reported using the prescribed procedure.
- Check that votive candles are correctly placed on stand.
- Check that (a) all hazardous substances are stored securely, (b) all unnecessary or out-of-date ones have been disposed of, and (c) appropriate personal protective equipment (usually just rubber gloves) is available.

Every three months

- Check that the emergency First Aid kit is complete and its contents in date been, and has been replenished if and as necessary.
- Check that torches are in place and working.
- Visually check all electrical cables.
- Check that the list of hazardous substances is up to date.
- Check any machinery is in good order.
- Check for any slip or trip hazard, and that any appropriate precautions have been taken.
- Check that all ladders are in good repair, and ensure that they are used only by those deemed suitable to use them.
- Ensure that the prescribed infection control measures are being followed.
- Check that there is adequate provision for disabled and otherwise vulnerable people.
- Check that any defect, or other cause for concern, in a churchyard or church grounds have come to light. In the case of St Peter's, ensure that it has been reported to the Landscape Services Manager of Reading Borough Council.

Every year

- Carry out a fire risk assessment.
- Check that the fire protection equipment (such as extinguishers and fire blanket) are in place, and in good condition and working order.
- Carry out a general risk assessment.
- Check that the annual training (including first aid, fire precautions, evacuation, manual handling (and the use of any ramp available) for the sidesmen/women has taken place.
- Check that evacuation procedure is up to date, and known to all sidesmen/women.
- Check visually the lightning conductor system.

Every two and a half years

- Arrange for the lightning conductor to be tested by a suitably qualified electrical engineer.

Every five years

- Arrange for the fixed electrical system to be inspected and tested by a suitably qualified electrician.

Parish Property Committee

[Holds responsibility delegated from churchwardens²⁷ for all parish properties other than churches]

²⁷ See footnote 3 on page 2.

(A) For each site used and managed directly by the parish:

- ***parish administration office attached to the Rectory***
- ***Church House: parish office***
- ***Church House: Haslam Hall & kitchen***
- ***Church House: communal areas not individually leased.***

Monthly

- Check that all lighting is working satisfactorily.
- Check that all fire extinguishers and other protective equipment are in place and working order.
- Check that any untoward incident has been reported using the prescribed procedure.
- Check that (a) all hazardous substances are stored securely, (b) all unnecessary or out-of-date ones have been disposed of, and (c) appropriate personal protective equipment (usually just rubber gloves) is available.

Every three months

- Check that the emergency First Aid kit been checked, and replenished as necessary.
- Check visually all electrical cables.
- Check that any hazardous substances are stored and used safely.
- Check any machinery is in good order.
- Check for any slip or trip hazard, and if so that appropriate precautions have been taken.
- Ensure that prescribed infection control measures are being followed.
- Check that there is appropriate provision for disabled and otherwise vulnerable people.

Every year

- Carry out a fire risk assessment.
- Check that any fire protection equipment (such as extinguishers and fire blanket) is in place, and in good condition and working order.
- Carry out a general risk assessment been undertaken.
- Check that evacuation procedure is up to date, and known to all regular users of the premises.

Every five years

- Arrange for the fixed electrical system to be inspected and tested by a suitably qualified electrician.

(B) For properties rented or leased unfurnished to third parties:

- **25 Ilkley Road**
- **6 Gosbrook Road,**
- **Church House: Kent Rooms**
- **Church House: Bennett Room**
- **Church House: Vincent Room**
- **Church House: 'Caversham Good Neighbours' office**
- **Church House: Commercial Room (currently occupied by hairdresser).**

The tenant is responsible for routine health & safety compliance, which should be included in any tenancy agreement.

The PCC (as landlord), or someone or an external management agent authorised to act on its behalf, is responsible for the following:

- providing, as and when required, documentary evidence that the following (and anything else legally required) are currently valid:
 - Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
 - Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR)
 - Gas Safety Certificate
 - buildings insurance.

- ensuring that **every six months, when a potential problem arises, and at the start and finish of lease, a general inspection of the property is made, to include checking that:**
 - the overall condition of the premises is satisfactory
 - the tenant is complying with the terms of the lease
 - any maintenance needs are identified and acted upon
 - any threats to health and safety are identified and acted upon
 - fire protection and safety equipment is satisfactory
 - there is a valid electrical safety certificate.

If this is delegated to an external management agent, he or she *must report the findings, and any relevant defects or deficiencies, in writing or an email, to a designated member of the Parish Property Committee who can ensure that any necessary action can be taken.*

Approved and adopted by PCC
November 2024

Date reviewed	Jan 2018
Date reviewed	24 March 2021
<i>Reviewed schedule changed to annually</i>	
Date reviewed	16 November 2022
Date reviewed	15 November 2023
Date reviewed	13 November 2024
Date reviewed	14 January 2025
Next review date	2026