

Parish of Marcham with Garford PCC

Health and Safety Policy

We are committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all people who use or work in our churches and recognise that an effective health and safety policy is an integral part of managing our church activities. We also fully accept our responsibility for other persons such as contractors and visitors who may be part of our activities from time to time.

The following documents can be found in this policy:

A - CAPACITY INFORMATION AND POLICY FOR ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, MARCHAM

B - PCC POLICY ON BEES IN THE CHURCH ROOF

C – LONE WORKING GUIDELINES

The objectives of the Policy are to ensure that we provide facilities that are safe to operate in. and that, as a minimum, our statutory obligations are met. We will continually strive to improve our management of risks.

The PCC will:

- Ensure there is adequate identification and mitigation of the health and safety risks arising from church activities by completing risk assessments for all activities and ensuring that these are kept updated.
- Implement safe practices and procedures in connection with the handling and use of hazardous substances such as cleaning products.
- Ensure that
 - all employees are competent to carry out their duties.
 - provide employees and volunteers with appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision so they can cope with the particular health and safety aspects and/or responsibilities associated with their job and place of work.
- Provide and maintain adequate opportunities for all employees and volunteers to raise issues of health and safety by providing an accident book but also regular staff meetings where issues can be raised.
- Consult our employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety.
- Provide adequate facilities and arrangements for employees' welfare at work.
- Make regular safety inspections, set safety standards, and carry out risk assessments as required.

We will ensure that adequate time and finances are committed in pursuance of these aims and provide Competent Persons including the use of experts as necessary.

Whilst the overview of Health and Safety Policy will be the responsibility of the PCC, all employees and volunteers have legal obligations to take all reasonable care to protect themselves and anyone else affected by their acts or omissions.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The total responsibility for health and safety lies with Marcham with Garford PCC. However, the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the churchwardens (Neil Rowe and Chrystal Poon).

To ensure health and safety standards are maintained and improved, the following people have responsibilities in specific areas:

Church buildings: Doug Simmons and James Crafer (Clerk of Works team)

Youth Work: Rob Finch

Families & Children Work: Jill Rowe

EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS MUST CO-OPERATE BY:

- Ensuring that they have completed and/ or read any risk assessments for any activities they undertake.
- Working safely and efficiently to approved methods as identified by specific risk assessments, particularly when working with hazardous substances, flammable substances, or working at height.
- Working with regard to the safety of themselves and others.
- Reporting all accidents in the proper way using the accident book that is kept in the vestry and co-operating in the investigation of accidents and measures taken to prevent recurrence.
- Reporting possible hazards, defects, or dangers directly to the churchwardens as soon as they become aware of them.

The successful implementation of this policy requires total commitment of the PCC, employees and volunteers at all levels. A comprehensive risk assessment for the building is available in the church office. We also ask that all those in charge of church activities complete a risk assessment that is reviewed at appropriate intervals (at least annually by the person in charge of the activity and checked by a churchwarden).

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in the light of improved best practice or legislative changes.

Signed: Rev. Nick Weldon. **PCC Chair**

Date: 25th May 2022

A - CAPACITY INFORMATION AND POLICY FOR ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, MARCHAM

We welcome everyone to join in our worship and participate in events that are organised in the church building. However, the number of people that do attend such events is limited by the size and structure of the church building as it is also important people are able to exit the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency.

Level of risk

The level of risk in the church can be regarded as low in most situations (there is very little chance of fire, few if any highly combustible or flammable materials, fire would not spread quickly and would be quickly detected so that people could make their escape). However, for the purposes of assessing the capacity of the building, estimates have been based on a 'normal' level of risk as this would be a situation where the occupancy level is high and some occupants may require assistance to escape.

Exit route

Exit is through the double doors in the south wall. There is an additional possible escape through the single door by the prayer chapel, but this was not included in the estimation as to get there requires a longer travel time. In the main body of the church (nave and foyer), the narrowest part of the route is the double doors. This opening is 1200 mm wide, which can accommodate up to 230 people. ***The maximum capacity of the church is therefore 230 people.***

Capacity of different parts of the building

Nave

There are 14 pews, which can each seat up to eight people (112 people). The width of the aisle (1.20 m) is sufficient to allow people to exit from the pews. Most pews have adequate space between them (>305 mm). [The second pew on the north side does not have sufficient space, and the front pew should be moved forward to accommodate this]. *The aisles should be kept clear during services and events.*

Foyer

The foyer has a clear floor area of 39.7 m² (allowing a gangway of 750 mm). When seated (0.5 m² per person, ensuring 305 mm between rows), this could accommodate a further 79 people. If standing (0.3 m² per person), the capacity would be 132. If the pews were full, this would exceed the capacity of the exit route. *The maximum standing capacity of the foyer is therefore 118 people.* [The additional potential seating area to the west of the door has not yet been measured].

Gallery

The seating in the gallery can accommodate 28 people. However, the stairway is narrow (770 mm, when a minimum width of 1050 mm is recommended) and the distance, even from the gallery's door to the exit, is long (approximately 20 m when a maximum distance of 15 m is recommended). *In situations where the flow of people is restricted (eg because the main body of the church is full, and close to the exit route's capacity of 230 people), the gallery should not be used for additional seating.*

Tower room

The clear floor area of the tower room is 12 m². This can accommodate 19 people when seated (allowing a gangway), but for children's work (recommended space allowance 1.5 m² per person), only six people could be accommodated.

Upper room

The clear floor area is 7.5 m², with a capacity of five for children's work.

Prayer room

The clear floor area is 8.7 m², with a capacity of five for children's work.

Vestry

The clear floor area is 6.0 m², with a capacity of four for children's work.

In situations where the church is near capacity, it is recommended that children's activities are not held in any of the separate rooms (tower room, upper room, prayer room or vestry) unless parents accompany children. This is because, in the event of an emergency evacuation, parents tend to block the flow of people out of the building by going to fetch their children.

Capacity Policy

On an average Sunday the church is usually not full to capacity but the PCC have agreed that for the services where it is the following would apply:

Seating for 230 people would be provided in the main body of the church.

When the seats have been filled, people will be allowed to stand but only in safe areas, ensuring exit routes are kept clear.

The gallery would be out of bounds for these services to anyone other than the organist and audio-visual team.

Buggies and pushchairs need to be kept in the area under the gallery, out of the aisles. They should not be stored in the porch.

The main wooden doors of the church need to be kept fully open for the duration of the service.

B - PCC POLICY ON BEES IN THE CHURCH ROOF

The Problem:

Over many years a colony of bees has made its home in the roof of All Saints' Church. In the past an attempt was made to clear the colony, and remove all the accumulated hive and honey. This was only partially successful, and now in the subsequent years, the bees have returned. This presents a real health hazard to those using the church building during the swarming season (end of May to the early part of July – depending on the weather). Dead and dying bees accumulate within the church on the floor during this period, as they cannot escape through the windows.

Because bees are now a protected species in the UK, eradication is no longer an option, hence this policy as to what we, as a church community, do to live with the problem.

Procedure

- a. During the swarming season we will monitor the situation on a daily basis, sweeping up dead bees, keeping the electric blinds on the south windows down, to lower light levels and keep temperatures within the building to lower levels. If necessary, we move events and services to an alternative location (such as the Marcham Centre or St Luke's) as occasion requires. This can demand a lot of last minute rearranging, and requires good communications as to what is happening on a daily basis.
- b. We will avoid the use of the church building for any major events during the swarming season.
- c. **Weddings:** we avoid booking any weddings in All Saints' during the likely swarming season.
- d. We will not at the current time, go to the considerable expense (likely to be around £15 - 16K) of removing the sections of the church roof, removing the bees / hive / honey physically, treating the roof timbers with substances that bees dislike (e.g. creosote), re-sealing the roof with new lead flashing, and reconstructing the roof sections since there can be no guarantees that the bees will not return in due time. However, we will keep monitoring the situation to ensure that bees are not causing serious damage to the roof structure.

N.B. Any work considered above will require a Faculty from the Diocese, and thus cannot be a quick-decision option. If we decided on this route it would need to be during the winter months in order to allow the necessary time for the legal Faculty to be in place well before the next likely swarming season.

C – LONE WORKING GUIDELINES

Introduction

As an organisation, we have a duty of care to those who work for us, whether paid or volunteers. Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, for example:

- Pastoral care volunteers
- Parish Administrator
- Youth and children's workers
- Church cleaners
- Flower arrangers
- Maintenance team
- Clergy

There will always be greater risks for those working alone without direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. There are a number of particular risks that they can face within our church context:

- Injury from an accident in the church buildings whilst alone
- Injury or threatening behaviour from a member of the public
- Injury or threatening behaviour from someone they are visiting

In order to minimise the risks to our employees and volunteers we have created the following guidelines which is designed to help us consider the risks and work out how to make lone working as safe as possible.

Try to avoid the need to work alone – where possible we encourage people to avoid lone working; flower arrangers, cleaners can work in pairs; those doing maintenance can ask someone else to be present in church whilst working; pastoral visits can be done by more than one person – this may be particularly advisable when visiting a new person. Some pastoral visiting can be done in a public setting rather than a private home.

We acknowledge that there are many times however, where it is impossible, impractical or inappropriate to have someone else around, in which case the following measures should be put in place

We encourage our pastoral care volunteers and clergy who are making a pastoral visit to a person's home to do the following (a 'visit' is going into someone's home, allowing them into yours or an arranged meeting at a separate location)

Where possible, they should inform someone else (spouse, family member, trusted friend) where they are going, and when they expect to be back. If visiting someone new to the church or a member of the community who does not usually attend church the volunteer should let the pastoral care co-ordinator or Vicar know.

Clergy and other staff members visiting people in relation to funerals or baptisms should report the visit to the staff meeting.

Make sure they have a working mobile phone with them, that it is charged, on and they know how to use it.

Assess the risk as they enter someone's home – if they are unsure for any reason, they should not enter the person's home but politely leave. If they feel that the person they are visiting may be in immediate danger they should call the police.

Once they have entered they should encourage the person they are visiting to enter the room first and seat themselves close to the door remaining mindful of their exit route.

If they feel at all unsafe, they should make their excuses and leave immediately.

They should inform the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator or churchwardens immediately if there were any issues. It is good practice to record the time, dates and details of any issues that arise in a book that is kept in a secure location. We do not anticipate that this would be relevant for most pastoral care visits.

We acknowledge that pastoral care visiting covers a wide range of interactions from popping in to see a friend from church or a member of a home group to visiting a newly bereaved person from the village who has never been to church, and that these different situations carry different levels of risk. We encourage those representing church to always be mindful of potential situations that may arise. Even visiting someone you see regularly can carry a level of risk.

For working alone in the church

The parish administrator, clergy, youth and children's workers and maintenance team may all find themselves needing to work alone in the church. There are a number of risks involved in this that can be reduced with some simple measures.

Those working in the church alone should let someone else know they are going to be there.

They should carry a mobile phone that is charged and switched on.

No activities involving ladders or working from height should be done when alone. Work on the bells should not be done alone.

Since we have a church that is open to the public during daylight hours, anyone working in the church alone should remain alert. If someone enters that makes them uncomfortable they should leave the building. If they are working early in the morning or later in the evening it may be wise to shut the doors so no-one can enter unless they have a key.

When the Parish administrator is working from the office, they should ensure that the CCTV system is working and the screen in the office is on so they can see if someone enters the church. If they are concerned for their safety they should ensure the door of the office is shut and call for help.