

Parochial Church Council of St Andrew's Church, Ombersley

Health and Safety Policy

We will, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our voluntary helpers, and provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose. We will consult voluntary workers on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health and safety matters.

We expect our voluntary workers to have due regard for their own safety and this policy, and bring any deficiencies or concerns to the attention of a senior member of the Church (the Priest in Charge or a member of the Parochial Church Council).

We will also endeavour to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, contractors, visitors and others who may visit the church and churchyard.

The arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

This policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities. We will regularly review the policy and the way in which it has operated, and make any appropriate changes.

Any Health and Safety matters arising from this policy will be raised at the following meeting of the Parochial Church Council, and in any case Health and Safety will form an item on the agenda at a meeting of the Parochial Church Council at least once per year.

(Signed)

Priest in Charge

Date

Review date:

Organisation and arrangements

A. Introduction

The activities of St Andrew's Church, its buildings and their maintenance do not generally present serious safety concerns. Nevertheless, there still remains the potential for accidents. The aim of our safety policy is therefore

- to make arrangements which enable hazards in our surroundings to be identified;
- to reduce the risks presented by these hazards to tolerably low levels;
- to encourage church members, voluntary workers and users of our premises to be vigilant, taking care for their own safety and that of others.

We need to keep it simple. In our church we must make sure that our arrangements are flexible enough to deal with both routine and unexpected hazards and not administratively cumbersome or over-complex.

In this policy, the term hazard means a safety concern or a situation which could cause harm. The term risk is a combination of the severity of the hazard and the likelihood of its occurrence

B. Safety inspections

We shall ensure that our safety policy is being carried out is by having safety inspections involving a cross-section of members of our church.

A safety inspection of the church premises will be carried out every 12 months by a churchwarden accompanied by at least one other person. To assist them, a checklist is provided. The topics listed under the "Specific Concerns" below are intended to give the inspection team more detailed information on the checklist items.

A record of the inspections and their findings will be kept.

Any actions arising will be dealt with by the **Verger** or **churchwardens**, and this may include immediate rectification and / or carrying out risk assessments. The information will be brought before the PCC at its next meeting.

The check list is really only a starting point. It cannot cover every possible hazard. The inspection team - and indeed the whole church community - must be alert to new or unexpected hazards and situations.

A note on Risk Assessments is appended to this policy.

C. Specific arrangements and concerns

The following is a list of specific safety arrangements and concerns. It is a part of the Church Safety Policy, and it forms a guidance for the team carrying out safety inspections.

1. Accident book

The Church maintains an accident book (kept in the vestry). Any accidents on church premises involving personal injury, or near misses, will be investigated by the churchwardens, and the details (including dates, times, circumstances and any relevant observations or recommendations) entered in the accident book.

2. Medical emergency

- 2.1 A first aid box is located in the drawer of the table in the Narthex. The contents are checked regularly.
- 2.2 In the event of a medical emergency, if a mobile telephone is not to hand to summon help, a public call box is located opposite the churchyard gate.

3. Fire safety

- 3.1 Fire extinguishers are kept in the following locations:

- West door, near the bookshelves Pressurised water
- Kitchen Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)
- Choir vestry Pressurised water, CO₂

The extinguishers noted above are checked at every inspection to make sure they are still in place and have not been discharged

- 3.2 In the event of an emergency an announcement to leave the building will be made by the senior member of clergy or a churchwarden.

The assembly point is the grassed area of the churchyard between the church and the main road. Keep well clear of the gate and pathway, as the emergency services may need access.

The emergency services will be contacted immediately by a churchwarden, using a personal mobile phone or the public telephone adjacent to the village shops.

- 3.3 Before the start of any service, the sidespeople on duty for the day will check at least two exits from the church are open and clear of obstructions.

Two torches and spare batteries are kept in the drawer of the table in the Narthex.

Sidespeople will be briefed to be extra vigilant when candlelit services are taking place.

4. Electrical Safety

- 4.1 Every five years, our fixed electrical system will be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a member of the NICEIC, ECA or other approved body. Any necessary remedial work will be carried out.
- 4.2 Our portable electrical appliances will be examined at each routine safety inspection (with especial attention to age, general condition, damage to plugs, cables and sockets and worn flexes) and any defects reported to the verger or churchwardens for rectification.

5. Hazardous substances

- 5.1 Hazardous substances which may found in normal domestic premises (such as detergents and polishes) are stored securely in a cupboard or in elevated positions in the kitchen area.
- 5.2 Fuel oil for the boiler is stored in a standard closed tank. Drain valves are locked shut.
- 5.3 No other hazardous substances are stored on church premises.

6. Plant and machinery

Volunteers using equipment on church premises (such as mowers and strimmers and portable tools) should ensure that the equipment is properly maintained and that they know how to use it safely.

7. Slips, trips, falls and impacts

- 7.1 The routine safety inspection will include attention to the state of the floors, stairs and hand-rails in the church. The inspection team will also check that the state of paths and steps in the churchyard is satisfactory.
- 7.2 Impact from falling boxes, heavy items, masonry and churchyard memorials is of concern. Any potential problems here will be identified and addressed by the inspection teams.

8. Lighting

The routine safety inspection will include a check that all the lights in the church are working correctly.

9. Tower tours

There are a number of potential hazards within the tower of St Andrew's Church, including (but not limited to) steep and worn steps, a lack of handrails, defects in the flooring, the bell mechanisms and dust. The clock chimes are also very loud.

Consequently it is the policy of the PCC not to allow tower tours by members of the

public, or to allow unauthorised persons to enter the tower. For the purposes of this policy, persons authorised to enter the tower shall be limited to:

- The incumbent
- The Churchwardens
- The Verger
- *bona fide* members of the bell-ringing team and visiting ringers
- Contractors carrying out repairs and maintenance

or other persons authorised by any of the above and personally accompanied by them.

From time to time parties of children from the local school have climbed a part of the way up the tower (but no further than the bell chamber). Past experience suggests this may safely continue provided the accompanying teachers and staff have been informed of the hazards and have assessed the risks, the children are closely supervised at all times, and the school carries its own insurance.

10. Working at high levels

Working at high levels can be particularly hazardous, and is strongly discouraged.

Volunteers must not work or use ladders above 2m height on church premises, must work within their capabilities and that of any equipment, and must never work alone.

Access to the tower roof and the roof of the nave, working behind the parapets, is permissible from the tower, using only the installed permanent stairways and roof hatchway, and subject to the tower entry policy (section 9 above). Volunteers must not attempt access to the roofs above the north and south aisles or above the chancel.

11. Child Protection

We have a child protection policy which is monitored and administered by the **Child Protection Officer** appointed by the Parochial Church Council (currently Jenny Batelen).

12. Personal safety

Working alone in the church or churchyard is discouraged, but it is recognised that in many cases there is no practical alternative. Volunteers who are in the position of working alone must ensure that either they have ready access to a mobile telephone at all times, or arrange for some other person to check periodically on their welfare.

13. Church activities

All special church activities (fetes, outings, special events) must be subjected to a risk assessment. The organisers must take appropriate action depending on the outcome.

Appendix 1 - Risk Assessments

Carrying out a risk assessment simply means that we think about a hazard, its severity and its likelihood, and then decide what control measures, if any, we need to put into place. In most cases the course of action will be obvious.

Occasionally however it may not be this simple. Eliminating the hazard might be impracticable or very expensive. In this case a risk rating should be carried in order to determine the appropriate course of action.

Remember that a **hazard** means a safety concern or a situation which could cause harm. **Risk** is a combination of the severity of the hazard and the likelihood of its occurrence.

By grading the severity to a hazard, and then judging the likelihood of it happening, we can gauge just how high is the resulting risk. Use the diagram on the next page.

If the risk is assessed as “**low**”, no action at all may be required.

If the risk is “**medium**”, additional control measures and warnings will probably be necessary.

If the risk is “**high**” it may be necessary to stop the particular activity or restrict access to the area until action has been taken.

RISK GRADING DIAGRAM

Hazard severity

Low severity - minor cuts and bruises.

Medium severity - serious injury, or incapacitated for 3 days or more.

High severity - fatality or life-threatening injury, or many people seriously injured.

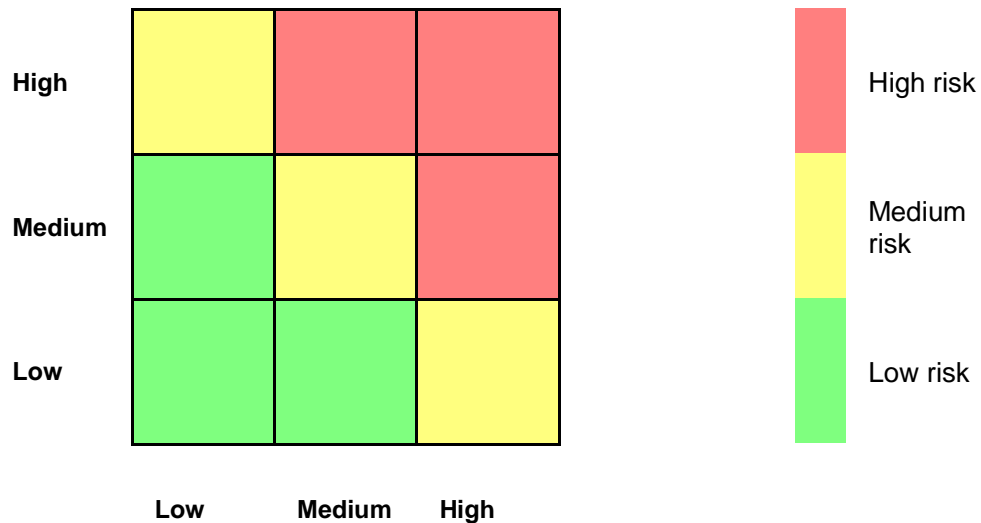
Likelihood

Low - very unlikely, and nobody can remember anything like it happening before.

Medium - quite possible, or people can remember something like it happening before.

High - quite probable, or something like it has happened several times or recently.

Hazard Severity



Likelihood