



## Our Health and Safety Policy

**St Helen's Church, High Street Wheathampstead, St Albans, AL4 8AA**

**St Peter's Church, Gustard Wood, Wheathampstead, St Albans, AL4 8RU**

**Date** 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

**Review date** March 2022

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work 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

***To all employees, voluntary helpers and contractors***

*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.*

**Important Note:** Our policy is to abide by Government directives on Covid-19 restrictions and by the guidelines provided by the Church of England, our Diocese, the Royal School of Music and other relevant bodies affecting the closure, opening and use of St. Helen's Church and St. Peter's Church.

## Section A – General Statement of policy

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 is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, contractors, visitors and others who may visit the churches, churchyards and any associated buildings.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and 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 regularly 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 will be on the agenda for all meetings of the Parochial Church Council and sub-committees and employees and voluntary workers will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health and safety matters.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Banham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Richard Banham Rector

Date 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Review date March 2022

## **Section B – Organisation and responsibilities**

### **1- Responsibility of the Rector**

Overall responsibility for health and safety is that of the Rector the Revd Richard Banham who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy health and safety regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice. Specific responsibilities may be delegated to church personnel. As new projects emerge, the names of responsible persons will be notified and the list amended accordingly.

### **2- Responsibility of the Churchwardens**

Responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary is with the Churchwarden(s).

### **3- Responsibility of the Parochial Church Council**

The Parochial Church Council has general responsibility to ensure that the health and safety policy is implemented.

### **4- Responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer**

The Health and Safety Officer carries the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the arrangements outlined in this policy.

The responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer shall be to:

- a) be familiar with health and safety regulations so far as they concern church premises
- b) be familiar with the health and safety policy and arrangements and ensure they are observed
- c) ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place
- d) ensure the churches are clean and tidy
- e) ensure the churchyards are properly maintained including the safety of monuments, tombstones and trees and that grass is kept cut
- f) ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required

- g) ensure that all plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained in good condition and that all operators have received the appropriate training
- h) ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained
- i) ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained
- j) ensure that food hygiene regulations are observed

#### 5- Responsibility of employees and voluntary workers

All employees and voluntary workers have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this health and safety policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises.

Employees and voluntary workers must therefore:

- a) Comply with safety rules, operating instruction and working procedures
- b) Use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- c) Report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person
- d) Report all accidents (however minor) injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible
- e) Not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

#### 6- Responsible Persons

The following are responsible for safety in particular areas:

By activity	Name/position
Accident book/Accident reporting	Health & Safety Officer
Fire extinguishers	Health & Safety Officer
Emergency evacuation	Health & Safety Officer
Portable electrical appliances	Fabric Committee Chair
Fixed electrical system	Fabric Committee Chair
Hazardous substances	Fabric Committee Chair
Plant and machinery	Fabric Committee Chair
Condition of floors and stairs	Fabric Committee Chair
Condition of churchyard	Fabric Committee Chair
Light bulb changing	Fabric Committee Chair
Working at high levels	Fabric Committee Chair
Food preparation	Catering Team Leader
Manual handling	Fabric Committee Chair
Display Screen Equipment	Health & Safety Officer
Building defects/glazing	Fabric Committee Chair
Child protection	Safeguarding Officer

Personal safety	Health & Safety Officer
Fêtes and outings	PCC to nominate for each activity
Tower tours	Bell Captain
Bell ringing	Bell Captain
Contractors	Fabric Committee Chair
Choirs/music	Organist and Choir Leader
Health and Safety training	Health & Safety Officer
Audio/visual	A/V Team Leader
First Aid	Health & Safety officer

By Area	Name/position
Main body of the churches	Fabric Committee Chair
Chapels	Fabric Committee Chair
Clergy vestries	Fabric Committee Chair
Choir vestries	Choir Leader
Organ loft	Fabric Committee Chair
Ringling chamber	Bell Captain
Kitchens	Catering Team Leader
Churchyard	Fabric Committee Chair

## Section C – Arrangements (implementation of the policy)

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

- i. **Accidents and first aid** – First aid boxes are located in the vestries of each church.

Trained/qualified first aiders are available at some services. An up to date list will be provided for the use of those sidespersons officiating at a service.

**The accident book is located in St Helen's vestry** All accidents and incidents at either church are entered in the accident book and if necessary an Accident report form for our insurers. If the churches are let to outside organisations, they are told in writing that in the event of an accident, details must be entered in the accident book via the Health and Safety Officer. Accident books and records are regularly reviewed.

### **RIDDOR Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995**

These accidents will be reported by the Health and Safety Officer

- ii. **Fire Safety**

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In order to achieve this, we undertake the following:

- An assessment of the fire risks in the churches and associated buildings and the risks to our neighbours. This is carried out either as a specific exercise or as part of our general health and safety risk assessments
- A check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned
- A check that people who may be in the building can get out safely including, if necessary, the provision of emergency lighting and fire exit signage
- To provide reasonable fire fighting equipment
- A check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- A regular check that our fire fighting equipment is in place and is serviceable and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

**Fire extinguishers** are kept in the buildings as follows:

**St Helen's** Vestry- 1 x CO<sub>2</sub>  
Main body of church - 3 x Water

**St Peter's** Vestry – 1 x Co<sub>2</sub>  
Main body of church - 1 x Water

The extinguishers are checked each month by the responsible person to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged. The extinguishers noted above are checked annually by a competent contractor.

### **Other fire protection equipment**

**St Helen's** – 3 x fire blankets

### **Evacuation procedures**

For large services and concerts, where the congregation exceeds 100 in St Helen's or 50 in St Peter's, our procedures for stewarding/evacuation are as follows:

- 1 All designated fire doors must be unlocked before the service or event commences and be clearly marked as fire exits using the 'Running Man' symbol
- 2 A check must be made that all doors can be opened
- 3 A trained steward must be allotted to each door and have responsibility for persons in the specific part of church

### **St Helen's**

Nave – South/West/North doors

Chancel – South/West/North/Vestry doors

Vestry – Vestry/Chancel doors

### **St Peter's**

All – South/Vestry doors

- 4 Responsibility for using fire extinguishers will only be for trained persons. The emphasis is on safe evacuation leaving fire extinguishing to the professional Fire Service
- 5 If Emergency Lighting is not available torches must be available for each steward
- 6 In the event of an emergency (fire/bomb threat, etc.) an announcement will be made by a member of the Ministerial Team
- 7 Persons will assemble as follows:

**St Helen's** – The Rectory meadow

**St Peter's** – The Car Park away from the church building

- 8 The emergency services will be contacted immediately using 999 by a nominated person using a mobile telephone

### Evacuation Drills

Fire evacuation drills may be carried out from time to time. All employees and voluntary workers should ensure that they are familiar with escape routes and ensure these are kept clear and unobstructed.

#### If you discover a Fire (no matter how small)

- 1 Immediately raise the alarm
- 2 Telephone the emergency services using 999
- 3 Check the building for occupants
- 4 Attack the fire if possible using fire extinguishing appliances (but only if you have had appropriate training)
- 5 Assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. **The general rule is people before property**
- 6 Ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles

#### iii Electrical Safety

- A list of all our portable electrical appliances is maintained by the responsible person
- Every quarter, plugs, cables and sockets will be inspected by the responsible person to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed will be reported to the Fabric Committee Chair for action
- Every year our portable electrical equipment will be tested 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 correctly interpret the results. Any unsafe equipment will be safely disposed of.
- Every quarter a visual inspection will be carried out of the fixed electrical installation by the responsible person. Any defects will be reported to the Fabric Committee Chair for action
- Every five years, our fixed electrical systems will be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a 'Full Scope' member of the NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT. Any necessary remedial work will be carried out
- At intervals of not more than two and a half years our lightning conductor systems will be examined and tested by a competent specialist firm of lightning engineers
- It is our policy not to sell any second-hand electrical goods unless they have been inspected and tested by a suitably qualified person and a register of such equipment is maintained
- Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:
  - 1 visually check all electrical equipment before use
  - 2 report all faults immediately to the responsible person
  - 3 Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment

- 4 No electrical equipment is to be brought onto the premises and used until it has been tested by the approved person ( or if it is new and within the guarantee period) and entered in the electrical equipment record
- 5 Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods
- 6 Flexible cables should be positioned and protected so that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage

**iv Hazardous substances**

The responsible person will maintain a list of all hazardous substances used in the churches. Where possible, we have eliminated the use of hazardous substances, which include substances marked s 'harmful, irritant, oxidising or dangerous to the environment', data sheets or product information provided by the manufacturers are used to determine the correct method of use, protective clothing needed, method of storage and action to be taken in the event of an accident.

Do not mix chemicals. Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

**v Safety of plant and machinery**

The responsible person will maintain a list of all items of plant and machinery. The procedures for checking and rules of use are as follows:

- 1 Employees and voluntary workers must not operate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use
- 2 Employees and voluntary workers must not ride on any parts of machinery not intended for that use
- 3 Machinery must be switched off before any adjustments are made
- 4 After carrying out maintenance and adjustments, all guards must be replaced before the machinery is used
- 5 Before using any item of plant or machinery, a check must be made to ensure it is in safe working condition, correctly adjusted, and there are no loose nuts, bolts or other defects
- 6 The appropriate personal protective equipment detailed below must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery
- 7 Persons under the age of 18 may use hand tools only and are not permitted to operate any power driven item of plant or machinery
- 8 Ladders may only be used when other equipment such as tower scaffolds or mobile elevated work platforms cannot be used and for work of short duration, provided they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties
- 9 Any defect and damage found to any item of plant and machinery must be reported to the responsible person
- 10 All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained and a schedule kept of maintenance requirements
- 11 Persons must not work on their own unless they have a means of communication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on. **The use of ladders must be carried out with more than one person.**



12 The following items of plant and equipment are tested by a competent person in accordance with an inspection programme

Item	Inspection arrangements
Large Ladder	Annual visual inspection and label
Large stepladder	Annual visual inspection and label
Small stepladder	Annual visual inspection and label

**vi 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 will be made every quarter by the responsible person of

- 1 all floors and stairs in the churches and
- 2 all paths and steps in the churchyards. Particular note will be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths. Any defects will be reported to the Fabric Committee Chair who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

**vii Lighting**

In order to ensure that the churches are adequately lit, an inspection will be made every month by the responsible person to ensure that all lights in the churches and churchyards are working. Any bulbs that require replacing will be reported to the Fabric Committee Chair who will ensure that the bulbs are replaced following appropriate safety procedures.

**viii Working at high levels**

The following areas are designated as high levels – any area requiring the use of a ladder or stepladder to gain safe access. Only those persons designated by the Fabric Committee may work at high level. Unless a contractor is used, at least 2 persons must be present. Only the replacing of light bulbs or changing wall hangings is authorised without special agreement of the fabric committee Chair. The Appropriate training will be given and a system of recording will detail who is working where at any time.

**ix Preparation of food**

- 1 We ensure that we follow the appropriate regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs
- 2 We ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training
- 3 We ensure that the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored including storage at the correct temperatures
- 4 Before any preparation commences, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be washed down and disinfected
- 5 Food stuffs may only be prepared in the kitchens
- 6 Only catering team nominees who have received the appropriate training may prepare and serve foodstuffs

**x Manual handling-lifting, carrying and moving loads**

- 1 Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable

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

**xi Display Screen Equipment**

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

- Stability and legibility of screen
- Contrast and brightness of the screen
- Tilt and swivel of the screen
- Suitability of keyboards, desks and chairs
- The work station environment
- The user-friendliness of the software

Daily work routines will involve periods away from the screen. Where necessary, risk assessments will be carried out by the responsible person.

**xii Hazardous building/glazing**

- 1 Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are inspected every six months by the responsible person.
- 2 Any defects noted are immediately reported to the Fabric Committee Chair and the procedures put in hand for repairs.
- 3 Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.
- 4 A check is made of any asbestos 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 in the building is given to all contractors and anyone else who may be affected.
- 5 A check is made of all glazing in the building to ensure that any glass below waist height and in doors below shoulder height is of a safety material or is protected against breakage.

**xiii Child Protection**

A separate Safeguarding Policy is in place. A statement upholding our procedures will be made at each annual church meeting and be suitably recorded. A permanent record will be maintained of all accidents involving children.

**xiv Risk Assessments/activities**

Risk assessments will be carried out on all areas of the church premises and all activities that carry a significant risk at regular intervals by a competent person in order to meet our obligations under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

In particular, risk assessments need to be undertaken to assess the risks to persons working alone in the churches, travelling to and from church, accepting persons into their homes and handling cash and other valuables.

Procedures must be drawn up, including the appropriate control measures, and these must be followed.

**xv Contractors**

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

- 1 have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same.
- 2 Produce evidence that they have appropriate Public and Employers' Liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained.
- 3 Comply with all the requirements of this health and safety policy and co-operate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation.
- 4 Where plant and machinery is brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation.
- 5 Contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the church officials. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors.
- 6 All contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake. This 'permit to work' will also specify any safety precautions they must undertake. Particular care needs to be taken for 'hot works'.

**xvi Information and enforcement**

Environmental Health

Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3JE

Telephone: 01727 819570 email: [contactus@stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:contactus@stalbans.gov.uk)

Employment Medical Advisory Service Information

HSENI, Longbridge House, 16/24 Waring Street, Belfast, BT1 2DX

Telephone: 028 9034 7487 email: [emasmail@hseni.gov.uk](mailto:emasmail@hseni.gov.uk)

**xvii Health and Safety Law poster**

A copy of the HSE poster 'Health and Safety Law – what you should know' is displayed in the upper vestry.