



## 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 15 May 2023**

**Review Date May 2024**

As a church, we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our churches or churchyards.

We also know that, where we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

We have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

### General Statement of policy

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the churches, churchyards or any other building that we are responsible for. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) accepts its overall responsibility for this. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will appoint a member of the PCC to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation. We will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept each church and made available to others on request.

Signed:

**Richard Banham (Rector & PCC Chairman)**

on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as agreed at a meeting on

**Date 15 May 2023**

## **Organisation and responsibilities**

### **1 The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is:**

**David Hartley**

They will ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained.
- Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained.
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately.
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests.
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary.
- Relevant health and safety documents are retained.
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

### **2. The churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy. They are:**

**Helen Caldwell**

They will ensure that:

- All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities.
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments.
- Adequate information and training are provided for those who need it.
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible.
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger.
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy.
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

**3. All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.**

They will ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them.
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others.
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures.
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with.
- Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards.
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely.
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so.
- Report any accident or 'near miss'.
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

## **Arrangements**

### **Competent assistance**

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations.

Our person appointed to assist us is:

**Michael Hollick A.C.I.I. Nebosh Dip 1.**

### **Risk Assessment**

We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect they are no longer valid.

### **Information and Training**

We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

## **First Aid**

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for employees and volunteers.

In St Helen's our First Aid box is located in the vestry

In St Peter's our First Aid box is located in the vestry

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is:

**Jenny Golesworthy**

## **Accident Reporting**

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

Our accident book is kept in St Helen's vestry.

## **Monitoring**

We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make.

## **Contractors**

If we employ contractors we make sure that they have their own health and safety policy and Public and adequate Employers Liability insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.

## **Record Keeping**

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in the vestry at St Helen's.

## **Specific Arrangements**

### **Asbestos**

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will implement any plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (for example, building contractors). We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans we have made.

### **Bell Ringing**

We will ensure that adequate precautions are in place to protect bellringers and others who may enter the ringing area and bell chamber. This will include any emergency evacuation procedure, the provision of fire

extinguishers, the provision of emergency lighting and the notification of safety procedures to visiting bellringers.

### **Church Buildings**

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable bearing in mind that a faculty may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing. All such matters are dealt with by our dedicated Fabric Committee.

### **Churchyard**

We will ensure that the boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair We will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe. Headstones, tombs and monuments will be checked regularly to ensure that they are properly maintained. All such matters are dealt with by our dedicated Fabric Committee.

### **Construction Work**

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) and comply with these if necessary.

### **Display Screen Equipment**

Where our employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed.

### **Electricity**

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliance is maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

### **Events**

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

### **Fire**

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect they are no longer valid.

## **Hazardous Substances**

We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions, taking any necessary precautions that are specified.

## **Heating System**

We will ensure that our gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made. A Carbon Monoxide alarm will be maintained in the upper vestry where the gas boiler is situated.

## **Manual Handling**

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as trolleys) or any other precautions, including team lifting.

## **Preparation of Food and Drink**

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food or drinks, we use a clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste.

## **Slips and Trips**

We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as handrails or lighting) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather. All such matters are dealt with by our dedicated Fabric Committee.

## **Tower Tours**

Where we plan to run tower tours these will only be at the discretion of the Bell Captain and appropriate precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of all visitors particularly safe evacuation in an emergency.

## **Work Equipment**

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as ladders and step-ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure that they are safe. We will keep records of any checks we make.

## **Working Alone**

We will identify circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety.

## **Working at Height**

Where possible, we will try to avoid the need for work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. A protocol for working at height has been developed and this should be followed at all times. We will make sure that the protocol is followed and provide any appropriate training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

## **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.