

Health and Safety Policy

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Introduction

In addition to our moral and financial obligations, health and safety law requires the Parish Council, as an employer, to bear overall duty for the care of its staff, Councillors, contractors, visitors and members of the public on its premises. To comply with these obligations we have developed arrangements for health and safety management, in which all staff and members of the Parish Council have a contribution to make.

The purpose of this health and safety policy is to set out our commitment to health and safety and to define the organisational arrangements for health and safety management.

It is not sufficient merely to read this policy. Our commitment to health and safety must be translated into effective action, and it will be the responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes committee to ensure that this happens.

1 Parish Council Policy Statement

1.1 General Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer for providing a safe and healthy workplace and work environment for its employees and others (contractors, visitors, and the public) who may be affected by its work. In addition, all employees and others have the responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and others.

The Parish Council has the following specific health and safety objectives:-

(a) to comply with all statutory health and safety requirements.

(b) to adopt all other reasonably practicable means to eliminate hazards and reduce the risk of injury (to the lowest achievable level) to its employees and others and the risk of damage to property in areas for which it is responsible.

(c) to ensure that resources are made available to provide:-

- equipment and systems of work that are safe and without unacceptable risks to health;
- safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- a safe place of work with safe access to it and safe egress from it;
- a healthy working environment;
- adequate welfare facilities and arrangements; and
- sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure all employees are aware of the hazards at their workplace together with the necessary measures to be taken to protect against these hazards.

(d) To ensure that Councillors understand and accept personal responsibility for achieving these objectives. To do this we will ensure that a health and safety management system is maintained which will:-

- ensure that all members of the Parish Council understand their own personal responsibilities with regard to health and safety;
- utilise a regular monitoring, inspection and auditing procedure to ensure the effective management of health and safety throughout the Parish Council; and
- produce an annual report summarising progress in achieving the health and safety objectives and making recommendations for an annual rolling programme of improvements. These recommendations will form the basis of an annual Safety Action Plan.

1.2 Policy Statements, Risk Assessments and Guidance Notes on individual health and safety issues.

The Parish Council has prepared, or will prepare, Policy Statements, Risk Assessments and Guidance Notes on individual health and safety issues. These currently include:

- Parish Hub Fire Risk Assessment
- Testing of Portable (electrical) Appliances
- Lone working in the office

- Workstation self-assessment guidance notes
- Rights of Way work party equipment risk assessments
- Allotment Sites Risk Assessments
- A generic Risk Assessment pro-forma for all potentially hazardous activities

2 Duties under the law

2.1 Introduction

Health and safety law is a particular branch of employment law that aims to ensure that people at work are protected from hazards, which may arise from that work. Health and safety law is upheld and examined using both criminal and civil legal systems.

Modern health and safety law is largely self-regulatory, but there are statutory enforcement agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive, Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. These agencies ensure that the law is complied with and that major breaches are investigated.

2.2 Relevant statutory provisions.

A non-exhaustive list of current, relevant statutory provisions affecting the work of the Parish Council is as follows: (common abbreviations and year of enactment are shown in parentheses)

- Occupiers' Liability Act (1984)
- Factories Act (FA, 1961)
- Offices, Shops and Railways Premises Act (OSRA, 1963)
- Fire Precautions Act (FPA, 1971)
- Fire Precautions (Work Places) Regulations (1997)
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HASAWA, 1974)
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (1981)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR, 1995)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH, 1988 and 2002)
- Electricity at Work Regulations (EW, 1989)
- Noise at Work Regulations (1989)
- Environmental Protection Act (EPA, 1990)
- Food Safety Act (1990)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSW, 1992 and 1999)
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (DSE, 1992)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (MHO, 1992)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER, 1998)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER, 1998)
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (PPE, 1992)
- Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations (WHSW, 1992)

3 Health and Safety in practice

3.1 Safe systems of work

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992), the Parish Council will ensure that all work procedures, that expose the operator to a significant hazard are assessed for risk and appropriate control measures are applied.

3.2 The office environment

- **Temperature:** The Parish Council endeavours to keep all of its buildings within a comfortable temperature range, compatible with energy conservation, (18 to 20°C) and in any case above the statutory minimum of 16° C after the first hour of work (there is no statutory maximum, although the working temperature must be reasonable).
- **Humidity:** The Parish Council endeavours to keep all of its buildings at a comfortable humidity range (40 to 75%RH). Low humidity can cause irritation to the eyes and respiratory tract.
- **Lighting:** The Parish Council will install adequate lighting appropriate to the activity being carried out. The average and minimum lighting levels are given (in lux (lx)) for various activities:
 - work requiring limited perception of detail, e.g. kitchen (50lx)
 - work requiring perception of detail, e.g. offices (100lx)
- **Noise:** Noise can be a nuisance or, even worse, can cause damage to hearing. Unacceptable noise levels will be rectified.
- **Workspace:** The office should have enough free space to allow people to get to and from workstations and to move in the room with ease. The total volume of the room, when empty, divided by the number of permanent occupants should be at least 11 cubic metres per person (counting rooms >3m high as 3m).

3.3 Safe working and work places

- **Fire Safety in the office:** In compliance with fire safety legislation the Parish Council provides a range of measures to prevent the occurrence and spread of fire and a range of equipment to detect, warn of, and extinguish fires. These will be regularly tested.
- **Safety of equipment and machinery:** In compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment (PUWE) Regulations (1998) the Parish Council will provide equipment and machinery which is safe in its construction, safe to use in the place where it is to be used, and safe for the purpose for which it is to be used. All portable appliances will be tested every 24 months by a qualified electrician.

- Risk assessment: In compliance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992) the Parish Council will make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the work-related health and safety risks to which staff and members of the Parish Council (and visitors, contractors and the public) may be exposed. The Parish Council has devised a written scheme of risk assessment which will be applied, unless an assessment required by other statutes (e.g. COSHH) has already been carried out.
- First Aid: In compliance with the Health and Safety (First Aid Regulations (1981), the Parish Council encourages staff, and Councillors who may engage in hazardous activities on behalf of the Council e.g. brushcutting, to undertake first aid at work training and refresher courses as appropriate at three year intervals.
- Reporting and monitoring of accidents and 'near-misses': The Parish Council has a statutory duty (under the Notification of Accidents, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1980)) to record all accidents. Anyone who has an accident or suffers a 'near-miss' while on Council's business must ensure that they complete an entry in the Accident Book which is kept in the Council's office.
- Reporting to the HSE under RIDDOR: Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR, 1995) the Parish Council has a statutory obligation to report certain types of incidents and accidents to the HSE. The HSE may investigate any incident/accident which is reported to them. The notifiable types of incident are:
 - a fatality;
 - a specified major injury (fracture of skull, spine or pelvis; fracture or amputation of limb(s); loss of sight or penetrating injury to an eye; severe electric shock or any other injury which results in hospitalisation for more than 24 hours);
 - An injury which results in incapacity to work for more than three days;

3.4 Auditing

To comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1992) the Parish Council has an obligation to audit its health and safety management systems. This will be carried out annually by the Clerk, and a report considered under a standing agenda item at a March meeting of the Finance and General Purposes committee.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Introduction

Health and safety standards in the Parish Council will be at least as high as those required by legislation.

4.2 Policy making

Responsibility for Health and Safety matters will rest with the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Council must endorse significant actions and changes to this policy. The Council is the ultimate policy-making body.

4.3. The Clerk's responsibilities

As Health and Safety Officer, the Parish Clerk will:

- advise members of the Parish Council on all matters of health and safety;
- maintain awareness of current and impending health and safety legislation, arrange for its implementation within the Parish Council and monitor its compliance;
- draft Parish Council Safety Policies, Risk Assessments and Guidance Notes;
- provide advice, information, liaison and support for members of the Parish Council with health and safety duties and responsibilities;
- monitor the implementation of the Parish Council's health and safety policy;
- provide, or arrange for the provision of, health and safety training;
- promote positive health and safety attitudes and practice;
- monitor and audit health and safety arrangements and ensure the implementation of the Annual Safety Action Plan.
- compile and interpret incident and accident statistics;
- liaise when appropriate with the health and safety enforcing authorities (local authority, Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Environment Agency (EA) and the emergency services (fire and rescue, police and ambulance) ;
- manage the health and safety budget and provide financial statements for the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- follow a programme of continual professional development so that the standard of professional expertise is maintained;
- arrange testing of portable appliances by a qualified electrician every 24 months and keep appropriate records.
- arrange regular testing of equipment to detect, warn of, and extinguish fires, and keep appropriate records;
- carry out any other health and safety duties as may be assigned by the Parish Council.

As Fire Safety Officer, the Clerk will:

- advise members of the Parish Council on all matters of fire safety;
- prepare, organise and carry out fire safety training;
- audit fire safety provisions in Parish Council buildings and advise on any remedial action;
- investigate incidents involving fire, or defective fire-fighting equipment;
- keep aware of current fire safety legislation and follow a programme of continual professional development so that the standard of professional expertise is maintained;
- maintain fire safety records and documentation;
- liaise with the Fire and Rescue Service and the Parish Council's insurers, assisting as required;
- carry out a fire drill within the office, at least once a year;
- ensure that a notice is prominently displayed in the office specifying the assembly point in case of fire;
- carry out any other fire safety duties as may be assigned by the Parish Council.