

Health & Safety Policy for St James's Church, South Wraxall

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the PCC at its meeting on 13th May 2021

It has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the regulations made under it.

The Policy comprises the following three sections and four enclosures:

Section A – General Statement of Policy

Section B – Organisation and Responsibilities

Section C – Arrangements for Implementation

Enclosure 1 - Asbestos Management Plan

Enclosure 2 - Safe Working at Height Policy

Enclosure 3 - Nominal List of people with Health & Safety Responsibilities

Enclosure 4 - Fire Risk Assessment

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 church, churchyard and any associated buildings.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

As the church employs fewer than five people, there is no legal requirement to have a written health and safety risk assessment. However, the PCC has decided that there are sound legal and business reasons for having an asbestos

management plan, safe working at heights policy and written fire risk assessment, and these are included as enclosures to this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and formally adopted by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) at their first meeting of the calendar year. In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review, "Health & Safety" will be a standing agenda item for all meetings of the PCC.

Section B. Organisation and Responsibilities

Rector.

The Rector has overall responsibility for health and safety.

Specific responsibilities may be delegated to Church members as required. The names of all Church members with delegated Health & Safety responsible persons will be added to Enclosure 3.

Churchwardens.

The Churchwardens, in conjunction with the Health and Safety Officer, are responsible for ensuring that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary

Parochial Church Council

The PCC is responsible for ensuring that the health and safety policy is implemented.

Health and Safety Officer

The Health and Safety Officer is to:

be familiar with Health & Safety regulations as far as they concern church premises;

be familiar with the Health & Safety policy and ensure it is observed;

ensure that the requirements of RIDDOR 2013 are implemented;

ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that safe systems of work are in place;

ensure that the church is clean and tidy;

ensure that the churchyard is properly maintained including the safety of monuments, tombstones and trees, and that the grass is kept cut;

ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required;

ensure that all plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained and in good condition and that all operators have received the appropriate training;

ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained;

ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained;
ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed.

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 are to:

comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures;
use protective clothing and equipment when it is required;
report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person;
report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards to the Health & Safety Officer as soon as possible;
not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Section C. Arrangements for Implementation

Accidents and First Aid

A First Aid box is located at the back of the church.

An Accident Book is to be kept in the Vestry.

All accidents and incidents are to be entered in the Accident Book and insurers advised.

The Accident Book is to be reviewed regularly.

RIDDOR 2013

From 1st October 2013, the revised Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR 2013) came into force.

RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people in charge of work premises, to report and keep records of:

work-related accidents which cause deaths

work-related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (reportable injuries)

diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and

certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm)

If an accident occurs on Church property, the Health & Safety Officer is to be informed as soon as possible.

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 church 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 firefighting equipment

A check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire

A regular check that our firefighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

Fire Extinguishers

A CO₂ and Foam fire extinguisher is to be kept in the Tower, and a Foam fire extinguisher is to be kept in the Longs Chapel.

All fire extinguishers are to be serviced annually by Abbey Fire Protection.

Lone Working

Risk assessments are undertaken to assess the risks to persons working alone in the Church and those handling cash and other valuables.

Risk assessments are undertaken to assess the risks to persons working at heights within the Church.

Enclosure 1. Asbestos Management Plan

This Plan was adopted by the PCC on 18th March 2016.

The plan should be read in conjunction with the Shield Environmental Services Ltd Management Asbestos Survey Report, reference 80440/TP/1213, dated 19th

December 2013 (MASR). Note should be taken of the findings of the Report and of the exclusions contained in it.

These areas, which are identified in the Site Plan that forms part of the MASR, contain or may contain asbestos.

Area 1: the void below the grill in the floor at the east end of the north aisle

Area 3: boiler room: rope gasket

Area 4: boiler room: the boiler

Other: the nave - lagging of the central heating pipe that runs diagonally below the floor from the grill (see Area 1)

The risk from Asbestos will be managed by taking the following actions:

Asbestos warning stickers on or near all identified asbestos and on the boiler.

Maintenance must be carried out by qualified contractors only.

Heating engineers and general building contractors will be warned of the presence of asbestos in Areas 1 and 3, and of the assumption that asbestos may be present in the boiler room and around buried piping under the nave.

Church volunteers will be warned as appropriate of the presence of asbestos in Areas 1 and 3, and of the assumption that asbestos may be present in the boiler room and around buried piping under the nave.

Church volunteers will be expressly forbidden from interfering with the labelled asbestos in Areas 1 and 3. Volunteers are to note that maintenance and other works to the boiler and associated piping must be done by qualified contractors only.

Copies of this Asbestos Management Plan and the MASR are to be kept in the vestry.

Enclosure 2. Safe Working at Height Policy

Introduction

The PCC is aware that a large number of accidents causing injury to volunteers and employees occur when working at height from ladders.

Although ladders and step-ladders have always been used responsibly in St James's Church, the PCC has determined that working at height inside and outside the Church should be regulated by a clear set of rules to reduce the likelihood of accident and injury. Fortunately St James's Church is a relatively simple building consisting of nave, north aisle, chancel, a single vestry and the Longs' Chapel to the south of the nave; there is no second storey, no gallery and no organ loft. The church bells are not in use (except for a single clapper that

rings one bell), the bells have been made safe and the access to the tower is kept locked.

Working at Height in St James's Church

Regular instances of working at height by volunteers in St James's (normally accessed by ladders) are:

Internally:

changing light bulbs in the high-level spotlights in the nave, north aisle and chancel and the suspended light in the vestry;
attaching flags and other decorations on top of the wrought iron rood screen;
occasional access to or near to the top of the walls for comparable purposes.

Externally

periodic inspection and clearance of the gutters, hoppers and down-pipes on all elevations;

periodic inspection and clearance of the north and south roof valleys;
occasional access for placing anti-theft marking on roofing materials, inspecting the condition of windows and stonework and other comparable purposes.

Alternative means of access have been considered:

scaffold: this would be disproportionately expensive, time-consuming and disruptive for minor jobs such as those described above although its use would be considered for jobs that require access for working at height for more than 30 minutes (the limit suggested by the HSE for working from ladders);

moveable tower scaffolds: internally their use is precluded by the fixed pews and choir stalls and by the chancel and sanctuary steps. Externally the unevenness of the ground surrounding the church and the presence of memorials make the use of a tower scaffold impractical in most places.

Conclusion

The PCC has therefore determined that, if the rules and guidelines set out below are observed at all times, all parts of the Church, internally and externally, can safely be accessed by ladder for minor jobs such as those outlined above, provided that two people are present and the work at height can be done within the recommended period of 30 minutes. If the work cannot be done within the

scope of these rules, alternative methods of access would have to be devised, probably involving the use of contractors.

Rules for the use of ladders and step-ladders

These rules are to be observed by volunteers and employees of the PCC and by contractors insofar as they are appropriate to the method of working in use at the time.

a copy of this Policy is to be kept in the Vestry of St James's Church. A copy of the Health and Safety Executive's leaflet INDG402 ('Safe Use of Ladders and Step-ladders – an employer's guide', which can also be seen and downloaded from the HSE website) shall also be kept with it so that it may be read in conjunction with the Policy. INDG402 should be referred to if in doubt about the suitability of work at height from a ladder or step-ladder. A specific risk assessment may be necessary;

ladders and stepladders in use at St James's Church must comply with British Standard EN 131;

Whenever a ladder or stepladder is in use a second person must be in attendance to ensure that other people are kept clear of the foot of the ladder and do not walk under it while work is being done from it. This person must be available to 'foot' the ladder as necessary (see below);

ladders and stepladders should be given a visual check before use. Are all the rungs present and in sound condition? Are the stiles undamaged?

some form of restraint to keep the ladder in place is essential. a) tie the top of the ladder securely using two ties, one to each stile. b) Use some form of solid restraint to stop the bottom slipping. If a) and b) are not possible, the ladder must be 'footed' by a person. This entails placing one foot on the lowest rung and holding both stiles firmly to prevent the foot of the ladder from slipping the whole time that someone is working above;

a ladder should be erected at an angle of 75 degrees to the floor using the 1 in 4 rule (one unit out for every 4 units up) (Figures from INDG 402);

the locking device on an opening step-ladder must be securely fixed before mounting;

a ladder or stepladder used outside the Church may have to stand on uneven or soft ground. Chocks must be used as necessary to ensure a level base. On soft ground a board must be placed under the foot of the ladder to spread the load. A sideways slope may not exceed 16 degrees; the ladder will have to be chocked

to ensure that the rungs are level. A backwards slope may not exceed 6 degrees (see INDG402 paragraph 10 and illustrations);

a ladder should be long enough for the work to be reached conveniently by a person standing on the 4th rung from the top. The top three rungs should not be used for standing on;

a ladder or stepladder must be placed near enough to the job so that the person working from it can maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times while working. The operative must be careful not to reach out to the side so far that three contacts cannot be maintained;

heavy weights must not be carried up a ladder or step-ladder. The maximum load that should be carried is 10 kg. If a heavier load is to be carried it must be justified by a detailed handling assessment (see INDG402 paragraph 7) When an object must be carried on a ladder or stepladder one hand must be free to grip the ladder;

a person working on a ladder or stepladder must not exert side loading (eg drilling into a wall at 90 degrees to the wall on which the ladder is resting). In this case a stepladder can be restrained by the second person holding it firmly against the load;

work to the exterior of the Church must be postponed when weather conditions endanger health and safety;

all that is reasonably practical must be done to prevent anything falling while work is being carried out at height. If it is not reasonably practical to prevent falling objects, the danger area beneath the work must be kept clear so no-one

is injured. When clearing gutters, hoppers and roofs you must ensure that nothing is thrown or tipped from height if it is likely to injure anyone.

The PCC shall appoint a Health & Safety Officer who shall be responsible to the PCC for the application of these rules to all work at height in and around St James's Church.

The Health & Safety Officer shall be satisfied that anyone working at height is familiar with these rules and competent to work within the limits described in paragraph 1 of this Policy.

All contractors working at St James's Church must have an approved policy for working at height and must also comply, where appropriate, with the rules set out in this Policy for working at height in an around St James's Church.

Enclosure 3. Nominal List of people with Health & Safety Responsibilities

Rector: Reverend Ann Keating

Churchwardens: David Wyper & Valentine Thornhill

Health & Safety Officer: Philip Knowling