

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH

TOPSHAM

HEALTH AND SAFETY

POLICY & PRACTICES

MARCH 2012

INTRODUCTION

It is very important that St Margaret's Church demonstrates a strong commitment to the health, safety & welfare of everyone who comes to church or visits the church premises. Not only is it part of the PCC's legal responsibility to ensure a safe environment for the congregation and visitors, it is also a practical working out of the love and concern that Jesus showed for the welfare of everyone he encountered.

"Health & Safety" has acquired a very negative reputation as being chiefly concerned with petty rules, a long list of prohibitions and an impossible number of forms, assessments and training issues. It is often portrayed as an absence of common sense, the nanny state at its worst and a senseless abandonment of many cherished traditions and fun.

The aim of this document is to try to cut through these negative aspects of Health & Safety and show that St Margaret's Church can have a simple, workable **Health & Safety Policy**, a clear **Action Plan** to take the policy forward in practical terms, an up to date and comprehensive set of **Risk Assessments**, and some simple **Procedures** for dealing with the issues and situations most likely to arise. Most importantly, that all this can be done without getting in the way of the work of the church, or spoiling the enjoyment of the congregation and visitors.

There was an extremely thorough investigation into Health & Safety matters drawn up for the PCC in 2003. This policy is not in any way intended to supplant or supersede that excellent study. Instead, it is hoped that a fresh focus will ensure that the care and concern shown in 2003 can be built upon and continued.

This report has been drawn up using guidelines prepared by our insurers, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. These guidelines include a model policy statement together with supporting documents to assist in identifying risk and to review our practices and procedures. We commend it to the PCC.

Elizabeth Peskett
Churchwarden

Christopher Walledge
Churchwarden

Health & Safety Policy Statement

We will endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, visitors, contractors and others who may visit the church, churchyard and church rooms

We will also provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work, so far as is reasonably practicable, for our employees, casual workers and voluntary helpers, and provide the information, training and supervision that they need for this purpose.

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

This policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed regularly and the appropriate changes made to keep it up to date in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities.

Health & Safety Action Plan

1. "Health & Safety" will be a standing agenda item for every PCC meeting and every meeting of the Property Committee
2. The Property Committee will undertake an annual review of risk assessments during the period September – November each year
3. The Churchwardens and/or the Chairman of the Property Committee will ensure that a proper written risk assessment is carried out before any significant project, event, building or repair works, significant addition to terrier & inventory, or change in procedures
4. The Churchwardens will review the accident books at least twice a year
5. Alterations or improvements identified by the PCC as essential for reasons of Health & Safety will be given high priority when considering budgets and expenditure plans

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out for the activities and risks set out below. The Property Committee will undertake an annual review of these risk assessments during the period September – November each year and the Churchwardens and/or the Chairman of the Property Committee will ensure that a proper written risk assessment is carried out before any significant project, event, building or repair works, significant addition to terrier & inventory, or change in procedures.

Alphabetical List of Detailed Risk Assessments

After dark
Bodily fluids, sharps & other hazardous waste
Car parking (*church yard*)
Childrens church & Seekers group
Child Protection (*Safeguarding*)
Choir practice
Electric shock
Falling masonry
Fire (arson & accidental)
Hazardous substances
Lone working
Manual handling
Moveable Staging
Slips / Falls
Social events
Sports & games
Swinging doors
Tower & Ringing
Working at height
Working parties

PROCEDURES

1. Accidents and First Aid

First Aid boxes are located in the kitchen areas of the church and the church rooms. The accident books are located with the first aid boxes.

All accidents and incidents must be entered in the accident book or on an accident report form

If the church or church hall is let to outside organisations, they will be informed in writing that in the event of an accident, details must be entered in the accident book.

Accident books and accident records will be regularly reviewed by the Churchwardens

2. Fire safety

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

- An assessment of the fire risks in the church and church rooms and the risks to our neighbours. This will be carried out as part of our general Health & 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
- Display information in a prominent position so 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

3. Electrical safety

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

Every three years, all our portable electrical equipment will be tested by a competent contractor (who is a member of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting), ECA (Electrical Contractors Association) or other approved body) to ensure that all appliances are safe. Any unsafe equipment will be safely disposed of

Every year a visual inspection will be carried out of the fixed electrical system, plugs, cables and sockets by the Property Committee to ensure that there are no loose

connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed will be reported to the Churchwardens for action

Every five years our lightning conductor system will be examined and tested by a competent specialist firm of lightning engineers

4. Gas equipment safety

Our gas boilers and any other gas equipment will be maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is a CORGI registered gas installer.

Any necessary work required for safety will be implemented immediately

5. Hazardous substances

Where possible, we have eliminated the use of hazardous substances in the church and church rooms. Where this is not possible all hazardous substances (which include substances marked as 'harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, very toxic, flammable, highly flammable, extremely flammable, explosive oxidising or dangerous for the environment') will be kept in a locked cupboard or container and appropriate personal protective equipment will be used at all times

6. Evacuation procedure

For large services and concerts, where the congregation/audience exceeds 300 our procedures for stewarding/evacuation are as follows:

- All designated fire exit routes will be unlocked and checked before the service/event commences and be clearly marked as fire exits using the 'Running Man' symbol
- A trained steward will be allotted to each door and have responsibility for persons in a specific part of the church
- As emergency lighting is not available, torches will be available for each steward
- In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, an announcement to leave the building will be made
- The assembly point will be the south churchyard, well away from the church OR in the road outside Segal's bookshop depending on the nature, size and location of the risk.

NB. the front gates & road outside must be kept clear for the emergency services.

6. Manual handling – lifting, carrying and moving loads

We aim to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable.

Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, such as trolleys, as far as possible
Instruction and training will be given to all those persons who undertake manual handling

7. Risk assessments/activities

Written risk assessments will be prepared 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 & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

8. Slips, trips and falls

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, an inspection will be made on a regular basis by the Churchwardens and Chairman of Property Committee of all floors and stairs in the church and church rooms and all paths and steps in the churchyard.

Any defects will be reported to the Property Committee who will arrange for appropriate repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

9. Working at Height

No person (including contractors) shall be permitted to work on a stepladder or ladder or scaffolding when alone in the building

No-one shall climb the large aluminium stepladder or any ladder unless a second person is holding the base of the steps.

For the tower and/or roof we will employ outside contractors at all times for their specialist skills and knowledge.

10. 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:

- (a)** Have their own Health & Safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same
- (b)** Produce evidence (on request) that they have appropriate public and employers' liability insurance in place.
- (c)** Comply with all the requirements of this Health & Safety policy and co-operate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation
- (d)** 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

(e) 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

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.

11. Personal safety – Lone Working

Persons must not work on their own in church, the church rooms or churchyard unless they have a means of communication (e.g. mobile phone) and have notified someone of the details of their visit to church and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on if they fail to return / phone at the agreed time.

12. Food Hygiene

No uncooked food may be prepared and cooked in the church or the church rooms

No raw meat may be cooked on or brought onto the premises

The cooker & microwave may only be used to warm or reheat food prepared off-site.