



HEALTH & SAFETY POLCY

St Thomas of Canterbury Church



Health and Safety Policy and Guidelines

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**St Thomas of Canterbury Woodford
Health and Safety Policy and Guidelines
“Keeping People Safe”**

As a community of Christians it is important for us to work together to show the care we owe to one another. Treating all with respect, care and kindness is our duty we all need to embrace and demonstrate. This document outlines our commitment to the Health Safety and Welfare of our Community.

Introduction

As a Church, we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use the Church, Becket Centre, Friary or Grounds.

We also know that where we have staff or control premises we must meet the requirements of Health and Safety Law in certain circumstances.

In particular, we know that if we have five or more members of staff we are required to have a written Health and Safety (H&S) Policy. As such we have prepared 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 reasonable and practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our staff, volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the Church, Becket Centre, Parish Office or Grounds (including Car Parks and Huts) or any other facilities for which we are responsible. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) accepts 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. The PPC will appoint a person to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

We wish to do all that is reasonable to prevent accidents and work related ill health. We will monitor all health and safety matters continuously. We will review at appropriate intervals the effectiveness of this policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each member of staff and our volunteers to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others, in order to prevent injury to themselves and others and to co-operate with us in all matters relating to health, safety and the environment. This policy will be brought to their attention.

We will endeavour to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation. To this end we will provide information, instruction and supervision for all clergy, staff and volunteers.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. This document together with all related documents will be kept in the Parish Office where it will be available on request. They will also be published on the parish website.

Signed

Office Chair of PPC

Date

Organisation and Responsibilities

1. The person appointed by the PPC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is: The Chair of the PPC

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 or where this is not possible interim steps will be taken to prevent danger.
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests.
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and if necessary reported.
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained.
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the Church grounds.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

2. The Parish Office Manager has day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy.

They will seek to ensure that:

- All staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities.
- Any complaints regarding Health and Safety are investigated and addressed as soon as possible.
- Where hazards cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger.
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy.
- Adequate information and training is provided for those identified as requiring such.
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy.
- A regular report on Health and Safety issues is prepared and submitted to the PPC.
- A personal example is set on matters of health and safety.

3. Hirers and Users of the Becket Centre

- The Becket Centre Committee will be responsible for issues regarding Health and Safety in the Becket Centre
- This includes all issues relating to the hiring and use of the rooms such as the activities permitted therein.
- They will also be responsible to the best of their ability for ensuring the safety of the kitchens and of those using them.
- Those using the centre for any purpose involving care of Children or Vulnerable persons will require to conform with Parish and Diocesan DBS regulations
- Anyone hiring church premises whether for financial consideration or not, must co-operate with the terms and conditions imposed by the Becket Centre Committee.

- Hirers must report any accident or unsafe condition of which they become aware during the course of their hire as instructed within the terms and conditions of hire
- Hirers are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with emergency procedures applicable to the premises they are hiring and have made suitable provisions to implement these.
- Hirers should also undertake their own risk assessments for general usage and fire.
- Hirers for children's groups must have their own child protection procedures and will be expected to follow them.
- In all cases the hirer must ensure their activities are in sympathy with and respectful of the teachings of the Catholic Church and will give no offence to any other parties neither will they cause disturbance to other parties.

4. Tennis Club Committee

The Tennis Committee will

- be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the tennis courts, hut and associated areas.
- provide a copy of their Health & Safety Policy statement to the PPC.
- be responsible for issues regarding Health and Safety in the Tennis Courts and linked area
- provide appropriate risk assessments on the activities to be undertaken including any private hire
- keep records of all accidents and incidents and provide an annual report to the PPC
- take steps to ensure that those using the centre for any purpose involving care of Children or Vulnerable persons will require to conform with Parish and Diocesan DBS regulations
- provide their own first aid kit and accident book
- display fire evacuation procedure notices

5. All staff 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 must ensure that they: -

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them.
- Complete their tasks 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 may be rectified.
- Warn any new staff 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 to the Parish Office any incidents, accidents or near misses.
- Do not misuse any health and safety equipment

Friars

- This Policy also applies to members of the Clergy when they are in the Church, Becket Centre or Parish Office.
- It is the duty of each to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others, in order to prevent injury to themselves and others and to co-operate with the Parish in all matters relating to health, safety and the environment.
- This policy will be brought to their attention in particular the issues regarding lone working with Parishioners or others.

Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks.

General Arrangements Competent Assistance

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations. Where an appointment is made, we will record the details here,

Our person appointed to assist us is: PiB risk management

Health & Safety Committee

The PPC is supported in reviewing the Health & Safety arrangements by a Committee comprising Bernadette Harris, the Chair of the PPC, The Parish Manager and the Parish Priest. They will meet as required and make decisions on any concerns and advise the PPC accordingly as necessary.

Risk Assessment

- We will at the earliest convenience complete risk assessments to identify what is needed to comply with health and safety law.
- We will record our findings, implementing where indicated any necessary changes.
- This will be ongoing as we will regularly review and revise these especially where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

Information and Training

- We will provide any necessary information and training for our staff 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.

Monitoring

- We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate.

- Critical and Near Miss Incidents - we will keep a record in the Parish Office of any critical or near miss incidents arising (e.g. Car Park incidents, Theft, Aggression etc.)
- Becket Centre - checks of Fire Safety, Premises Safety, Gas and Electrical Equipment testing will be recorded regularly with records being kept in the Parish Office.
- Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting Checks will be done at regular intervals and recorded with records being kept in the Parish Office.
- Accidents and First Aid - we will keep records in the Parish Office of all accidents and occasions where First Aid equipment is used.
- We will ensure that all equipment (e.g. involving, work and electrical equipment, lifting) and church utilities is inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe.

Contractors

- If we employ contractors, we will try to ensure that they have their own health & safety policy and public and Employers Liability Insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.
- We will not ask them to do work that endangers their health and will only engage contractors who to our knowledge are competent in the work they are being asked to do.
- All contractors must :-
 - a) Take reasonable care of their own safety and of others affected by their actions.
 - b) Discharge their undertakings in a safe manner within the relevant H&S laws codes and standards.
 - c) Have their own Health and Safety (H&S) Policy (where required by law) and submit copies and relevant risk assessments to the Office Manager.
 - d) Comply with and accept our H&S policy if they do not have one.
 - e) Conform to all written and verbal instructions given to them to ensure their personal safety and the safety of others.
 - f) Dress sensibly and safely for their particular working environment or occupation.
 - g) Conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the work place refraining from any behaviour (such as bad language) which causes offence, is inconsistent with health and safety or likely to cause a risk of an accident or incident.
 - h) Use all safety equipment and /or protective clothing as directed.
 - i) Avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others.
 - j) Maintain all equipment in good condition.
 - k) Report all incidents to their company supervisor or to the Office Manager for recording purposes and take any appropriate action whether injury is sustained or not.
 - l) Observe the Fire Evacuation procedure and position of all Fire Equipment and Fire Exit routes.

Record Keeping

- Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept and are available at The Parish Office.

Specific Arrangements

Major Incidents

A major incident is an event or situation with a range of serious consequences, which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency.

There are several types of major incidents:

- Natural – flood
- Hostile – terror threat
- Health related – the coronavirus pandemic
- Technological – cyber attacks

We are committed to supporting the actions needed for the good of the Friars, staff, volunteers and parishioners and society in general.

Covid

We all have a part to play in helping to keep our communities and beyond safe. We will follow the latest guidance and instructions as advised by national and local officials.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Asbestos

- The presence of asbestos containing material (ACMs) does not in itself constitute a danger being hazardous only when disturbed or damaged such as by abrasion, sawing, drilling etc.
- Where appropriate we will take steps to identify the presence of ACMs in our buildings and, if found, assess any risk from it and then implement a plan to manage that risk.
- We will provide relevant information on the presence of ACMs to any others who may require it (for example, building contractors).
- Only persons trained to identify and work with ACMs will be permitted to work in areas on our premises suspected or known to have ACMs.
- Records of the checks, assessments and plans made will be kept.
- Copies of any assessments done by Contractors will be filed with this document.

Church, Friary and Becket Centre Buildings including the Parish Office

- 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. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made.
- Glazing will also be inspected to ensure that any glass in windows or doors is safe.
- Regular inspections will also be made of the grounds (looking for trips and hazards) and this will include possible hazards caused by trees

Church grounds and Car Parks

- We will ensure that boundary walls are kept in good repair.
- Where indicated we will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe.
- These areas will be checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained and records stored in the Parish Office.
- We will report any concerns to the Parish Office.

Environment

- We will seek to ensure as far as possible that we provide a safe environment and suitable facilities for those working or using our premises, e.g. toilet and other facilities.
- We will seek to ensure where reasonably practical that for all using the premises there is :-
 - i) Appropriate heating and ventilation
 - ii) Lighting is safe and appropriate especially in high hazard areas
 - iii) Emergency lighting is available for escape routes should power fail.
- We have in existence a no smoking policy throughout our premises - signs indicating this will be displayed at the entrances in accordance with statutory requirements
- Smokers are requested to ensure disposal of their smoking material does not constitute a fire risk nor give rise to litter
- Where this might be a hazard receptacles will be provided for smoking materials

Building, Construction and Repair Work

- Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned, we will identify what is needed to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts.
- Where work is undertaken using paid or volunteer workers careful consideration of the hazards and risks will be done to ensure there is a sufficient level of competence to carry out the work safely.
- Where this is in doubt Third Party contractors must be sought.
- We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction or Conservation Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Children Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- We are committed to safeguarding children, young adults and vulnerable adults in accordance with the procedures issued by the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service and Diocesan policy and procedures.
- We have a Diocesan Safeguarding Commission and Safeguarding Officer who with the Parish Safeguarding representative manages and promotes the safeguarding of the above within the Parish.

Disabled Persons

- For the purposes of this document this refers to a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has substantial and long term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities
- We are committed to the inclusion of disabled persons and will endeavour to introduce reasonable adjustments to facilitate this where necessary.

Display Screen Equipment

- We recognise that incorrect use of this equipment may result in musculo-skeletal and other health issues.
- Where our staff 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 seek to ensure that any electrical system or fixed machine is regularly maintained so as to prevent danger.
- Portable Appliances will be maintained by regular PAT testing.
- Defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced.
- It is recognised that the above will require the co-operation and vigilance of people using such equipment to report defects and remove faulty equipment from service.
- We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

Events

- Where we intend to hold within the buildings large concerts, services or other events, the organisers will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.
- Where events are organised outside the buildings the organisers must perform a risk assessment before the event takes place and ensure they comply with all Health and Safety regulations.
- We will work with the organisers to identify any additional risks and these will be regularly reviewed where indicated. This will include sacramental programmes
- We will require drivers involved in the soup run to complete a Drivers assessment and authorisation form.

Fire

- We will seek to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In order to do this an assessment of fire risks in our premises will be regularly carried out.
It is our policy to:-
- Manage Fire hazards to avoid the risk of fires starting.
- In the event of fire ensure there is a means of detection within a reasonable time and provision for people in the building to be warned of the danger so they may evacuate safely.

- Ensure that those in the building know what to do in the event of fire.
- Ensure Fire Fighting equipment is provided, appropriate, accessible and well maintained.
- Ensure regular inspections of premises and equipment are made and any hazards addressed.
- Complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire.
- Ensure all designated Fire Exits are not obstructed and are capable of being opened immediately without the need for a key prior to services or events in the Church or Becket Centre.
- Encourage the establishment of emergency procedures for safe evacuation of all from the premises and identify persons to assist in their implementation providing sufficient information, instruction and if needed training to enable them to carry out their role effectively. This may involve practice evacuation procedures.
- Record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions.
- Review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

First Aid

- We will provide 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 rely on the good will of volunteers to provide (as appropriate) First Aid treatment at our services and other activities.
- We will also provide relevant information for staff and volunteers.
- We will review our First Aid arrangements regularly and update these where appropriate.

Our first aid box is located in the: Parish Office Corridor

Our Person in Charge of First Aid Arrangements is: - **Julia McVeigh**

Accident Reporting

- The Parish Office will keep an accident book and record all details therein.
- We will encourage the reporting and recording of all injuries and accidents however minor to the Parish Office.
- We will report (via the Diocese) to the Health and Safety Executive and keep records of certain ill health and accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- Ill health in staff volunteers or clergy believed to be related to work undertaken for the Church will be managed in a similar way to other untoward incidents with Occupational Health advice being obtained where necessary.
- All accident records and associated information will be filed confidentially and retained for at least 3 years.
- All Health and Safety queries or concerns should be addressed to the Parish Office Manager parishoffice@stthomaswoodford.org

Our Accident Book is kept by the Parish Office

New and Existing Staff

- New staff are likely to be unfamiliar with their work place and may be at increased risk.
- We will ensure new staff (paid or voluntary) are competent for the tasks in hand and where gaps exist provide additional training and or supervision.
- All staff should be provided with critical information (Safety Induction Training) on their first day at work and existing staff should have this regularly updated

Personal Safety

- By its very nature we recognise that all at St Thomas may be at risk of violence, harassment or threats from members of the public especially as those with psychological issues, addiction issues and others seeking help or refuge.
- We are aware people with such problems are frequently attracted to Churches and the like and constitute an increased risks and hazard.
- Persons are encouraged to be aware of these issues to themselves and to others.
- All persons should a) avoid unnecessary risks e.g. working in or leaving the premises alone at night b) know what to do if something goes wrong c) ensure others are aware of their whereabouts and plans.
- Should any untoward events occur we will investigate the causes and, where possible, establish procedures to avoid recurrences
- Support will be offered to anyone suffering from verbal or physical abuse and the Police will be involved in any cases of assault.
- Those who volunteer to visit the sick in their homes or Care homes will be advised about personal safety and managing their own risk.

Heating Systems

- We will ensure that the gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person.
- Any defects found will be corrected immediately.
- We will keep records of the checks made and a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate will be available. Such records will be kept in the parish office.
- We will seek to have emergency procedures in place for any issues arising (e.g. suspected gas leaks).

Hazardous Substances

- All domestic cleaning products will be safely stored and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Similarly any other hazardous or horticultural products on the site will be subject to the same precautions.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- In our environment this is likely to be mainly restricted to cleaning and maintenance tasks using simple items such as gloves, glasses, and Hi-Viz clothing
- We will encourage all those with responsibilities to be aware of activities in the premises that may require suitable PPE and provide this where indicated

Lifting Equipment and Manual Handling

- We will strive to ensure that any ladders, trolleys or other equipment used for carrying and lifting are properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.
- We will encourage people to be aware of the dangers of manual handling.
- Risk assessments must be carried out for manual handling activities.
- We will seek to avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible.
- Where this is not practical, we will seek to make use of lifting aids (such as, trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting.

Food Safety

- We seek to follow good hygiene practice governing the preparation, storage and service foodstuffs.
- We will seek to ensure all food handlers working in the Friary or Becket have access to appropriate information, instruction and where necessary supervision.
- We do not guarantee that any food provided on the premises (Friary or Becket) is suitable for people with food allergies or intolerances.
- Kitchen furniture and equipment should be fit for purpose, kept clean and well maintained.
- Persons using kitchen facilities and equipment must ensure that they are authorised to do so by a responsible person or group (e.g. Friars, Becket Centre Committee)
- We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, 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, Trips and Falls

- 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 and egress
- 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 hand rails or lighting) remain adequate.
- All should be aware of keeping walkways free from obstruction and cables
- Signs should be used to indicate hazards e.g. wet floor, or spill signs
- Lighting should be routinely checked and any faults reported
- 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.
- We will ensure adequate signs are used where there is any danger of slips or falls

Choir Loft

- A risk assessment should be done for those likely to use the stairs and choir loft.
- Any dangers identified will where possible be addressed.

Working at Height

- Where possible we will try and 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.
- We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.
- We will seek to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practical
- Contractors are responsible for their own working arrangements

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) will be regularly checked to ensure they are safe.
- We will keep records of any checks we make.

Working Alone

- We will seek to avoid the need for lone working as far as is reasonably practical
- We will identify all circumstances where staff, volunteers or contractors do work alone and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety.

Church Emergencies

- We will have a plan for emergencies arising in the Church
- We will have available evacuation procedures for the congregation in the event of any emergency
- We will update this regularly and perform regular practices

Revision

- **This document was drawn up in July 2019 and reviewed in 2022**
- **All documentation relating to it is to be kept in the Parish Office with copies on the website**
- **Overall management of the document is in the hands of the Parish Office Manager**
- **The Document is to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis**