



Longburrow Hall, Park Lane
Stokenchurch, High Wycombe
Bucks HP14 3TQ

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. General Policy Statement

Stokenchurch Parish council (hereinafter referred to as the “**Parish Council**”) acknowledges and accepts its duties and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other relevant health and safety legislation. This policy has been developed with reference to guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and reflects recognised best practice for local councils.

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public who may be affected by its activities.

In particular, the Parish Council will:

- Establish, implement and maintain safe systems of work (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, s2);
- Maintain safe premises, plant and equipment (Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992);
- Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments and implement appropriate control measures (Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999);
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure health and safety (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974);
- Review health and safety arrangements regularly and following significant change or incident, in line with NALC guidance.

This policy is supported by documented procedures and risk assessments and will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislative or operational changes require.

2. Organisation

2.1 The Parish Council

The Parish Council has overall responsibility for health and safety and will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and maintained;
- Allocate sufficient resources to meet health and safety requirements;
- Appoint a Health and Safety Manager;
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken and reviewed;
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance, including NALC guidance.

2.2 Health and Safety Manager

The Chairman of the Parish Council acts as the Health and Safety Manager and is responsible for:

- Day-to-day oversight of health and safety matters;
Ensuring accidents are recorded and investigated where appropriate;
- Acting as the point of contact for health and safety concerns;
- Liaising with enforcing authorities if required.

2.3 Parish Clerk

The Parish Clerk is responsible for:

- Maintaining health and safety records, including the Accident Book;
- Ensuring risk assessments and inspections are carried out;
- Ensuring staff receive relevant information and training;
- Reporting significant health and safety issues to the Parish Council.

2.4 Employees

All employees have a statutory duty to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others;
- Comply with this policy and safe working practices;
- Use equipment correctly and in accordance with training;
- Report hazards, defects, accidents, or near misses promptly;
- Co-operate with the Parish Council to enable statutory duties to be met.

3. Arrangements for Health and Safety

The arrangements set out below describe how the Parish Council will meet its statutory duties and implement the General Policy Statement, in accordance with NALC guidance.

3.1 Security of the Office

Valuables

Employees are advised not to leave personal items of value or money unattended. The Parish Council cannot accept responsibility for personal losses.

Office Security

During periods of absence and at the end of the working day, the office must be securely locked. The person responsible for locking up must routinely check that:

- All office equipment is switched off;
- All windows are closed and securely locked;
- Filing and archive areas are locked and secure;

- All lights are turned off;
- All entrances and exits are firmly shut and securely locked.

Any unusual circumstances relating to persons or property must be reported immediately to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

3.2 Accidents and First Aid

All accidents, incidents, or injuries at work, however minor, must be reported to the Health and Safety Manager and recorded in the Accident Book held at the office.

Where first aid treatment is required, assistance should be sought from an appointed First Aider (where applicable). In the event of a serious incident:

- Dial 999 for emergency services;
- Do not move an injured person unless it is essential for safety reasons.

The Parish Council will comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) where applicable.

3.3 Fire Safety

All employees must familiarise themselves with:

- Fire evacuation procedures;
- The location of fire alarms and fire extinguishers;
- Emergency exits and assembly points.

Fire doors must be kept closed and corridors and fire exits kept free from obstruction at all times, particularly when using public buildings.

Fire risk assessments will be carried out and reviewed regularly.

3.4 Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The Parish Council will comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations. All hazardous substances used in the workplace will be assessed to identify risks to health.

In an office environment these may include:

- Photocopier toner;
- Correction fluids;
- Cleaning materials.

Such substances must be stored safely and used in accordance with manufacturer instructions. Safety data sheets will be made available where appropriate. Any concerns should be raised with the Health and Safety Manager.

3.5 Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are a major cause of workplace injury. Employees must:

- Remain vigilant and report hazards promptly;
- Wear suitable footwear, avoiding high heels or slippery soles;
- Use handrails on stairs;

- Avoid carrying loads that obstruct vision.

Spillages must be cleaned up immediately and obstructions removed. Only suitable step stools or ladders may be used to reach high items.

3.6 Manual Handling (Lifting, Carrying and Handling)

The Parish Council will take steps to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling. Employees will be provided with information on safe lifting techniques.

Employees must:

- Assess the load before lifting;
 - Seek assistance if an item is too heavy or awkward;
 - Avoid twisting or overreaching;
 - Use mechanical aids where available.
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3.7 Electrical Safety

All electrical systems and equipment will be maintained to prevent danger. Electrical inspections and testing will be carried out in accordance with NICEIC standards.

Employees must:

- Visually check equipment before use;
 - Not use damaged or defective equipment;
 - Report faults immediately;
 - Not attempt repairs unless authorised and competent.
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3.8 Lone Working

Where lone working cannot be avoided, the Parish Council will take reasonable steps to reduce risks.

Employees working alone must:

- Avoid meeting unknown contacts in private places;
 - Inform another person of their location, purpose of visit and expected return time;
 - Notify the contact person of any unexpected changes.
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3.9 Aggressive or Violent Situations

The Parish Council recognises that some roles may involve exposure to aggressive behaviour.

Any incidents involving:

- Verbal abuse;
- Threatening behaviour;
- Anti-social behaviour;
- Physical assault

must be reported as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken to reduce future risk.

3.10 Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

The Parish Council will comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.

All DSE users will be provided with guidance, including the Health and Safety Executive publication *Working with VDUs* (revised 2003). Workstations will be assessed and adjusted where necessary.

Employees experiencing discomfort or difficulties with their workstation or working environment must report this to their manager or the Health and Safety Co-ordinator so that the issue can be addressed.

4. Monitoring, Review and Audit

The Parish Council will ensure that compliance with this policy is monitored through:

- Periodic workplace inspections;
- Review of accident, incident and near-miss records;
- Review of risk assessments and control measures;
- Consideration of health and safety as a standing agenda item where appropriate.

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Parish Council and formally recorded in the Council's minutes. Revisions will be made as necessary to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation, recognised guidance (including NALC guidance), and best practice.

5. Related Documents and Legislative Framework

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents, which support its implementation and demonstrate compliance with statutory duties and NALC guidance:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents, which support its implementation:

- Risk Assessments (general and activity-specific)
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments
- Accident Book and RIDDOR reports (where applicable)
- Lone Working Procedures
- Manual Handling Guidance
- Electrical Safety Inspection and Testing Records
- COSHH Assessments and Safety Data Sheets
- Training Records

These documents are held by the Parish Clerk and are available for inspection by councillors, employees, auditors, and enforcing authorities.

The principal legislation and guidance applicable to this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
 - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
 - Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations
 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
 - Electricity at Work Regulations
 - National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Health and Safety Guidance
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