

# **St Mary the Virgin Church, Bampton, Oxfordshire**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following policy was agreed by the St Mary the Virgin, Bampton, Community Church Council (BCCC) on 31 March 2025.

The overall accountability of the Bampton with Clanfield Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the maintenance of health and safety (H&S) within the parish is delegated to the BCCC in the case of St Mary the Virgin Church, Bampton (SMB). Responsibility for ensuring SMB has an effective H&S policy is delegated to the churchwarden.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that activities undertaken in SMB are safe and do not pose a risk to the health of our volunteers, congregation, visitors, and others who may use the church or churchyard. This will be in accordance with good practice and any statutory provisions where they apply. We will endeavour to make available adequate resources to achieve these objectives.

It is the duty of each person using the church to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. We will try to bring this policy to the attention of all users, and that everyone involved within the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months, or sooner should amendment be needed in response to an event, or change in church activity. Changes will be approved by the BCCC and notified to the PCC.

A copy of the policy will be kept in the church and made available to others on request.

Signed on behalf of BCCC.



D M Jacobs  
Churchwarden

31 Mar 25

# Health & Safety Policy

## RESPONSIBILITY

The **Churchwarden (CW)** has responsibility for implementing this policy in conjunction with the Health & Safety Coordinator (HSC) if appointed.

He will make best efforts to ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained.
- Only competent persons will carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests.
- Accidents, hazards and H&S related complaints are investigated, recorded, and dealt with as soon as possible.
- The church is kept up to date on H&S matters.
- He sets a personal example on H&S matters.
- Those involved with the church are aware of their H&S responsibilities.
- Precautions are taken as set out in this policy and in related risk assessments.
- Information and training are provided for those that need it.
- Periodic inspections of floors, walkways and access routes are undertaken. A record of the inspection, and any issues identified, are to be made in the Church H&S Log Book stored in the vestry.
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to mitigate risk.
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy.

**All those involved with the church** 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 will make best efforts to ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them.
- Take necessary precautions to protect themselves and others when undertaking their work.
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions, and other working procedures.
- Report any hazard, defect, or damage.
- Warn new employees 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 any accident.
- Do not misuse equipment or items provided in the interests of H&S.

## H&S ARRANGEMENTS

### Risk Assessments

A risk assessment will be completed for the use of the church generally and for any unusual activity that takes place within it or the churchyard. These assessments will identify the H&S measures that need to be taken. The risk assessments will be retained in a H&S Log Book maintained by the CW. It is located in the vestry.

### Accident Book

A book will be maintained in which accidents that occur within the church or the churchyard will be recorded. The book will be kept adjacent to the hymn books adjacent to south porch door (main entrance). The accident book will be reviewed regularly by the CW to identify new risks or hazards that need to be reflected in our Risk Assessment and H&S Policy.

### **First Aid**

A first aid kit will be kept in the kitchenette. Whenever it is used the CW will be informed so that:

- The accident book can be updated.
- The first aid kit can be restocked.

### **Fire Safety**

SMB will comply with fire prevention regulations. Fire Risk Assessments will be updated and annual reviews will be conducted to determine whether additional fire safety measures should be taken. SMB will maintain the correct number of fire extinguishers in the church in compliance with its fire risk assessment. They will be checked in accordance with their maintenance schedule. When candles are lit, they will be monitored to ensure that they are not becoming dangerous. All candles will be extinguished before the building is vacated. Responsibilities of church officers, in the event of a fire, will be briefed and discussed every 6 months.

### **Fire Extinguishers**

SMB will position:

One 13A (water or foam based) portable fire extinguisher at the:

- South porch door.
- West door.
- Lady Chapel door.
- Vestry exit.

One 2 kg CO<sub>2</sub> portable extinguisher near to the:

- Church organ.

If the large door near to the church toilet is recommissioned and used as an exit for evacuation purposes, a 13A portable extinguisher would need to be located there, too.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

Whenever people gather in SMB, exits should be made available in accordance with following guidance:

- Up to 60 attendees - the south porch door (the usual church entrance).
- Up to 150 attendees - the south porch door and west door.
- Over 150 - the west door, south porch door and Lady Chapel door.<sup>1</sup>

At least one steward (a church officer or competent volunteer from the congregation) should be ready and positioned to marshal people through each exit. They should direct those exiting SMB to an assembly point north of the building at Church Close.

### **Electrical Safety**

A check of the church's electrical installation shall take place every five years, and an up-to-date certificate will be kept in the church log. The Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment (ITEE) (previously termed 'PAT' testing) will be undertaken in accordance with regulation as specified by the Health and Safety Executive. Electrical devices that are subject to, but have not been tested in accordance with ITEE, will not be used. A list of tested equipment will be maintained in the Church Log.

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<sup>1</sup> Fire Risk Assessment, FRA2124212, conducted on 14 Jan 25, indicated that if SMB had in excess of 150 attendees, then a fourth exit should be made available. A fourth door is not currently usable. Further investigations will be undertaken.

**Contractors**

Contractors working on our behalf or within the church and churchyard will be required to carry out a risk assessment of their work. They will demonstrate that they are competent for the task and that they comply with current regulation. A copy of the risk assessment shall be given to the CW or the agent appointed as the church's representative prior to the commencement of the work. Contractors involved in hot works are to comply with the policy included as an annex to this policy statement.

**Church Building**

The fabric of the church will be inspected in accordance with the Quinquennial requirements set by the Diocese. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable. If H&S risks are identified, mitigation measures will be implemented.

**Hazardous materials**

Hazardous materials, such as cleaning products, are to be kept securely when not in use within the locked kitchenette.

**Food Safety**

Anyone engaged in the preparation and serving of food in the church shall adhere to relevant food safety and hygiene regulations and guidance. Any food served in the church will be stored in, and served from, food standard containers; only in-date food will be served.

**Bell Ringers**

The Tower Captain will advise the CW on the measures in place to assure BCCC that bell ringers and others who may enter the ringing chamber and tower comply with this H&S policy and other applicable regulations. Such measures will include, but are not limited to:

- Evacuation procedures.
- A safe means of heating.
- Provision of fire extinguishers and emergency lighting.
- Notification of safety procedures to visiting bell ringers.

**Child and Vulnerable People Safety**

Safeguarding and the care of vulnerable people will be in accordance with the BCCC's published policy.

**Churchyard**

The churchyard will be rendered a safe place to visit or to tend to graves through:

- Maintaining the grass around the graves and the churchyard as a whole.
- Inspecting the gravestones to determine that none are liable to topple. Where gravestones are found to be loose, action will be taken to secure them or signpost them as hazardous.
- Maintaining the path in a safe condition, without trip hazards.
- Inspecting trees to determine if any present a hazard. Where a risk is identified, action will be taken to render it safe or signpost the hazard.

**Events**

When concerts, services, and fundraising events are scheduled, additional precautions that are necessary shall be identified and implemented.

**Working at Height**

Working at height will be avoided. If this is not practicable, work will be planned to identify and implement precautions, including the provision of training and checks for the safety of any equipment used.

**Lone Working**

Where possible, anyone working within the building will be accompanied by at least one other person.

Where it is not feasible to have another person present, anyone planning to work alone shall inform another person at the start and end of their work. If the work involves accessing the tower, or working above floor level, at least one other person will be present.

**Hot Works**

Any hot works undertaken in, or on, SMB, must be done in accordance with the constraints of the Ecclesiastical<sup>2</sup> Hot Works Permit. An example of this permit is attached, below.

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<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastical is the insurer of SMB

# Hot Work Permit

Issuing organisation

Permit no.

## A. Proposal

To be completed by the person responsible for carrying out the work.

Building

Exact location of proposed work

Nature of hot work to be undertaken

The above location has been examined and the precautions listed on the reverse side of this form have been complied with as indicated.

Signed

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date

Position

Contractor (where applicable)

## B. Agreement

To be completed by the fire officer or other nominated person.

This Hot work permit is issued subject to the following conditions:

Time of issue permit

Time of expiry of permit\*

A final fire check of the work area shall be periodically undertaken for one hour immediately after the hot works have been completed and before the permit is signed off.

Additional conditions required.

Signed

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date

Position

## C. Fire watch

To be completed by a member of staff or contractor responsible for the work before returning this permit to the issuer.

The work area and all adjacent areas to which sparks and heat might have spread (such as floors below and above, and areas on other sides of walls) have been inspected and found to be free of fire following completion of the work.

Time inspection completed

This must be filled in one hour after hot works have been completed.

Signed

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date

Position

Contractor (where applicable)

\* It is not desirable to issue permits for protracted periods. Fresh permits should be issued, for example, where work extends from morning to afternoon. Note: where work is being carried out by a contractor, the issuer of the permit should ensure that the contractor has complied with the requirements prior to work being carried out, and should be satisfied that the area is free of fire when work is completed.

## Risk details

- 1 The person nominated to authorise hot work, normally the fire or safety officer, must have experience or training in the problems associated with hot work and be of suitable status to ensure compliance with the procedures.
- 2 Prior to the commencement of work, a Hot work permit should be obtained from the authorised person. This should be done on every occasion that hot work of any type is undertaken within or upon the fabric of established buildings or any structures or plant in the open. This procedure should also apply to construction sites once fitting out has commenced, and to all buildings which are being refurbished.
- 3 A Hot work permit should not be issued without considering the significance of any other permits to work in the vicinity, or adjacent manufacturing processes which may involve the use of flammable liquids or gases.
- 4 A Hot work permit should also be issued for a specific task that is undertaken in a clearly identified area. Hot work permits should not be issued for protracted periods. Separate Hot work permits should be issued for work which extends from morning to afternoon periods.
- 5 Before completing the first part of the Hot work permit, the person responsible for carrying out the work should complete the checklist shown below to indicate that fire protection measures are adequate, suitable precautions have been taken and the equipment to be used is safe.
- 6 If the person authorised to issue the Hot work permit is not satisfied with the arrangements, further measures may be requested, and any additional conditions should be entered in the space provided in section B. The time within which a final fire check should be made is also specified in section B. This will normally be an hour after the time of expiry of the Hot work permit, when work must be complete. If trained personnel will not be available to make this check (for example in the case of a permit issued late in the day) work must not be commenced.
- 7 The Hot work permit should be completed in duplicate, with the top copy being handed to the person responsible for carrying out the work. The second copy should be retained by the issuer who may wish to inspect the site of the work or instigate spot checks to ensure that conditions have been met and that work is complete before the Hot work permit expires.
- 8 The completed form should be returned to the issuer and retained for future reference.

## Hot work permit checklist

### Can this job be avoided? Is there a safer way?

(The person carrying out the check should tick the appropriate boxes.)

#### Fire protection

- 1 Where sprinklers are installed they are operative. ☐
- 2 A trained person not directly involved with the work will provide a continuous fire watch during the period of hot work and for at least one hour after it ceases, in the work area and those adjoining areas to which sparks and heat may spread. ☐
- 3 At least two suitable extinguishers or a hose reel are immediately available. Both the personnel undertaking the work and providing the fire watch are trained in their use. ☐
- 4 Personnel involved with the work and providing the fire watch are familiar with the means of escape and method of raising the alarm/calling the Fire Brigade. ☐

#### Precautions within 10 metres (minimum) of the work

- 5 Combustible materials have been cleared from the area. Where materials cannot be removed, protection has been provided by non-combustible or purpose-made blankets, drapes or screens. ☐
- 6 Flammable liquids have been removed from the area. ☐
- 7 Floors have been swept clean. ☐
- 8 Combustible floors have been covered with overlapping sheets of non-combustible material or wetted and liberally

covered with sand. All openings and gaps (combustible floors or otherwise) are adequately covered.

- 9 Protection (non-combustible or purpose-made blankets, drapes or screens) has been provided for: ☐
  - Walls, partitions and ceilings of combustible construction or surface finish
  - All holes and other openings in walls, partitions and ceilings through which sparks could pass.
- 10 Combustible materials have been moved away from the far side of walls or partitions where heat could be conducted, especially where these incorporate metal. ☐
- 11 Enclosed equipment (tanks, containers, dust collectors etc.) has been emptied and tested, or is known to be free of flammable concentrations of vapour or dust. ☐

#### Equipment

- 12 Equipment for hot work has been checked and found to be in good repair. ☐
- 13 Gas cylinders are sited at least 3 metres from the burner and have been properly secured in a vertical position and fitted with a regulator and flashback arrestor. ☐
- 14 Hazardous materials will be removed from the hot works location as soon as work is completed. ☐
- 15 Any lit tar boilers will not be left unattended. ☐



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