



# **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

**Adopted August 2022**

**Reviewed and adopted December 2023**

## POLICY STATEMENT:

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Odiham Parish Council:

Odiham Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its members; staff; volunteers; visitors; and for anyone affected by its activities. For the purpose of this Policy, Councillors are defined as volunteers unless otherwise stated.

The Council maintains this policy for the management of health and safety as its top priority and will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure effective organisation and planning are established and maintained. The Council will also ensure that appropriate and effective audit and review mechanisms are used to inform the work of the Council, which undertakes to commit appropriate resources to manage health and safety.

Our statement of general policy, below, is based upon that required by virtue of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The principles of the Act and its underpinning Regulations as later published are taken by the Council as a minimum requirement for the safe and effective management of the Council and its activities.

Our statement of general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities;
- To consult with our staff on matters affecting their health and safety;
- To provide and maintain safe equipment;
- To provide sufficient information, instruction, and supervision of staff, volunteers and visitors as far as is reasonably practical;
- To ensure all staff and volunteers are competent in their Council-related activities, and to provide adequate training as far as is reasonably practical;
- To prevent accidents and activity-related ill health as far as is reasonably practical;
- To maintain safe and healthy conditions for conducting the Council's business and the public facilities it provides; and
- To review and revise this Policy as necessary at regular intervals, but at least annually.

Approved by the Council on:

Signed: *Ellie A McFarlane* Chair

*Andrea Mann*

Responsible Officer

## **1. Responsibilities**

1.1 The full Council has overall responsibility for Health and Safety. The Council:

- Provides a lead in developing a positive health & safety culture through its decisions, policies and individual behaviour.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to implement adequate health & safety systems.

1.2 The Parish Clerk will fulfil the role of 'Competent Person' responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Parish Clerk shall:

- Keep informed of relevant Health and Safety policy legislation and inform the Council accordingly.
- Advise the Council on the resources and arrangements necessary to fulfil the Council's responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work legislation.
- Make effective arrangements to implement this Policy.
- Ensure that matters of Health and Safety are regularly discussed at OPC meetings.
- Ensure that regular risk assessments are carried out of working practices, with subsequent consideration and review of any necessary corrective/protective measures.
- For major works, request method statements from contractors prior to the works starting and retain these in a file.
- Maintain a file of risk assessments for all staff and voluntary activities.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are given access to this policy before starting any task or activity or as soon as practical upon joining the Council.
- Ensure that work activities by the Council do not unreasonably jeopardise the health and safety of members of the public.
- Maintain a central record of notified accidents.
- When an accident or hazardous incident occurs, take immediate action to prevent a recurrence or further accident and to complete the necessary accident reporting procedure.
- Act as the contact and liaison point for the Health and Safety Inspectorate.

1.3 All employees and voluntary helpers will:

- Co-operate fully with this Policy.
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety, to use appropriate personal protective clothing and, where appropriate, ensure that appropriate first aid materials are available.
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by their activities.
- Not operate any item or equipment or machinery unless they have been trained or authorised to do so.
- Not misuse any plant, equipment tools or materials so as to cause risks to health and safety or carry out any repairs.
- Not undertake any unauthorised activity or task without prior consent and training.
- Wear appropriate PPE which has been provided to them.
- Report any accidents or hazardous incidents to the Parish Clerk.

- Report to management any medical condition or medication which could affect the safety of themselves or others.
- Co-operate with the management on the implementation of the medical or occupational health providers (employees only).

1.4 When it is necessary to employ, engage or facilitate outside contractors, the Contractor shall:

- Provide a method statement, risk assessments and evidence of Public Liability Insurance not less than £10M.
- Consider all potential hazards imposed upon OPC employees, volunteers or members of the public.
- Ensure all control methods are in place to minimise all risks to OPC employees, volunteers, members of the public and their own staff.
- Ensure their own staff are trained and competent in undertaking the work they have been instructed to carry out.
- Manage the provision of PPE for their workers.
- If necessary, agree to arrange for a building or facility to be closed throughout the works or schedule their works at a time when less footfall is expected.

## **2. Arrangements**

### **2.1 Risk assessments**

- The Parish Clerk will complete a risk assessment for every building, facility and equipment owned by OPC.
- The Parish Clerk will complete risk assessments for all employee activities. In some instances a verbal discussion and agreement on the potential risks and control methods will suffice.
- Risk assessments will be completed for all events and activities by the lead organiser who will act as the H&S Responsible Person at the event.
- Every member of staff and volunteer has a duty to risk assess their own actions before undertaking a new or different task.
- Risk assessments shall be reviewed regularly or following a significant change in circumstances or legislation.

### **2.2 First aid kit**

- A First Aid kit is located in the Parish Office.
- Use of an item from any first aid kit must be notified to the Parish Clerk who will then arrange suitable replenishment.
- It is the duty of the Parish Clerk to ensure that the contents of the office first aid kit is always at least at the prescribed stock level and in date.

### **2.3 Fire safety**

- Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms are sited at the specified locations in the Bridewell and are maintained by KBO Fire & Security Ltd.
- Fire extinguishers in the parish room and south chapel are maintained and serviced annually by KBO Fire & Security Ltd.

### **2.4 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- PPE will be provided to all employees and volunteers who are involved in activities where there is a potential risk of injury or exposure to the elements.
- A high viz jacket must be worn for all activities working on, adjacent to or near the highway.

### **3. Accident and injury at work procedures**

- 3.1 Although every effort will be made to ensure a safe environment, it is accepted that accidents can occur. Accidents and incidents occurring in the OPC offices and/or OPC premises shall be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk or senior employee on duty at the time of the accident.
- 3.2 If any of the following occur they must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) procedures (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>):
- Fatal accidents.
  - A specified injury to an employee as detailed in regulation 4.
  - An injury to a non-employee where that person is taken to hospital immediately following the injury.
  - Any employee diagnosed as suffering from a disease specified in the Regulations.
  - Any employee diagnosed with a cancer caused by work related exposure to a known carcinogen or mutagen.
  - Accidents resulting in a period of absence of more than 7 days.
  - Injuries to the public where they have to be taken to hospital.
  - Some dangerous occurrences.
- 3.3 All accidents resulting in injury and near misses will be investigated to identify any unsafe acts, equipment or working practices to determine whether changes need to be made to equipment, training or systems of work to reduce, as far as possible, the likelihood of the same occurring in the future.
- 3.4 All accidents resulting in injury and near misses will be reported to the Council in accordance with OPC's Data Protection Policy.

### **4. Communication to employees and volunteers:**

- The H&S Policy Statement will be published on OPC's website.
- The H&S Law Poster will be displayed on internal noticeboards at The Bridewell.
- A copy of this Policy will be provided to all staff and volunteers carrying out a task or function on behalf of the Council.
- New employees and volunteers will be required to sign to confirm they have read this Policy.
- H&S will be a regular item for discussion in Staff Meetings and meetings of the Staffing Committee.
- Formal H&S training will be offered to staff where this is considered appropriate.
- Any new activity or project involving volunteers will involve a dedicated H&S briefing or training session.

- Any employee seen breaching or showing disregard to this Policy will be spoken to by the Parish Clerk or the Staffing Committee and serious actions may lead to disciplinary action.
- Any volunteer or organisation using the Council's amenities seen breaching or showing disregard to this Policy will be spoken to by a representative of OPC and serious actions may lead to the volunteer or organisation being refused use of OPC's amenities.

## **5. Hazards and risks**

### **5.1 Fire**

Evacuation procedures in the event of outbreak of smoke and/or fire:

- Visitors and other persons in the building should immediately proceed and assemble in an orderly manner to the Mayhill Junior School playground, which is the fire assembly point.
- The Parish Clerk or senior employee should arrange for a register to be called.
- The Parish Clerk or senior employee should ensure the emergency services are summoned.
- Employees and visitors shall not remove a fire appliance from its designated place unless it is to be used in an attempt to extinguish a fire.
- Any use of a fire extinguisher should be reported to the Parish Clerk.

### **5.2 Display Screen Equipment**

OPC complies with the H&S (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 by:

Staff:

- All staff who regularly use DSE as part of their work must complete a DSE risk assessment for their work station to assess and reduce risks of ill health. This should be completed as soon as possible after starting work or following a change in equipment. This should be a home work station where a member of staff has been sanctioned to work from home.
- The risk assessment(s) will be discussed with the Parish Clerk to agree and implement control methods which will minimise risk.
- OPC will offer free eye tests to employees, in accordance with the Regulations, for employees who spend a significant amount of their working day using a display screen.

Volunteers:

- All volunteers who regularly use DSE as part of their work or voluntary activities on Council owned or managed premises must complete a DSE risk assessment for their work station to assess and reduce risks of ill health. This should be completed as soon as possible after starting the voluntary activity or following a change in equipment.
- The risk assessment(s) will be discussed with the person in charge of the voluntary activity to agree and implement control methods which will minimise risk.

- All volunteers who regularly use DSE at home as part of their voluntary activity are encouraged to complete a risk assessment for their home work station. Volunteers should discuss concerns with the person in charge of the voluntary activity for advice on how control methods may help to minimise risk.
- All risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and following any change in circumstances.
- Employees and volunteers should read further details on the DSE Regulations at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm>

### 5.3 Manual Handling

The incorrect handling of loads causes high numbers of injuries each year and can result in pain, time off work and sometimes permanent disability.

- All employees and regular volunteers will be required to undertake manual handling training.
- Manual handling should be avoided wherever possible but, where operations cannot be avoided, these general principles should be followed:
  - o Assess the load and the task
  - o Plan the route
  - o Position feet
  - o Get a good grip
  - o Keep the load close to the body
  - o Maintain good posture throughout the procedure
  - o Use the leg muscles
  - o Use body momentum
- Where it is possible to move a load without lifting the load should be pushed and not pulled.

### 5.4 Driving for Work

- All employees required to drive as part of their working day, either as part of their normal duties or when driving to and from a meeting or training event etc shall provide a copy of their driving licence to the Parish Clerk.
- No member of staff or volunteer disqualified from driving will be permitted to drive for work related activities whatsoever or permitted to drive any Council owned vehicle.
- Employees and volunteers driving their own vehicles for work related activities should ensure they hold the relevant insurance cover and provide a copy to the Council.
- Employees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring their own vehicles are road worthy with a valid MOT certificate where required and should not volunteer to drive for work related activities if they are aware of any issues.
- Employees and volunteers should not drive for work related activities if they are tired, feeling unwell or under the influence of drugs, alcohol or prescribed medication which affects their ability to drive.
- Any employee or volunteer driving to work related appointments should prioritise safety over time and never rush to make an appointment on time.

## 5.5 Working at Height

Falls from height are one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries. Common causes are falls from ladders and through fragile roofs. Generally, Council employees and volunteers have limited need to work from heights themselves and as such should avoid working at height where it is reasonably practical to do so.

OPC acknowledges the following tasks require staff or volunteers to work from height:

- Displaying flags on the High Street.
- Arranging books.
- Setting up/clearing away from events.
- Managing the Speed Indicator Device (SID).

Where work at height cannot be avoided:

- Use the correct equipment – for use in The Bridewell a kick step should be sufficient.
- Ensure the equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job.
- Don't overload or overreach.
- Take precautions when working near fragile surfaces.
- Provide protection from falling objects.
- Consider space to fall should by clearing space around the ladder or kick step.
- When a ladder is required, always ensure a second person is present to hold the ladder stable.

## 5.6 Lone Working

There are frequent occasions when employees are lone working, either in the parish office or on site. In this situation to ensure employees are as safe as possible all members of staff must ensure they:

- Have access to a working phone; for off-site workers this shall be a mobile phone.
- Outside of the public opening hours for the office, ensure that the Bridewell door is locked.
- The front and rear parish office doors should remain locked at all times.
- Inform a second person where they are working and how long they expect to be lone working.
- When working in The Bridewell, always ensure the sign at the front door indicates when someone is in the building.

## 5.7 Smoking

- OPC complies with the legislation that became law in July 2007 therefore smoking is not permitted in any part of OPC owned or managed buildings.

## 5.8 Drugs and Alcohol



- No non-prescription drugs are permitted in any Council owned or managed buildings at any time.
- No alcohol should be consumed on the premises unless by prior agreement for pre-arranged functions or events.
- Anyone found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol may be subject to gross misconduct charges or asked to step down from voluntary activities.

## 5.9 Premises

- The office should be kept clean and tidy.
- The office temperature should be at least 16C in accordance with HSE guidance. There is no H&S guidance on the maximum temperature but staff and volunteers should raise any concerns with line management.
- Office windows should have blinds or other shading systems in good working order.
- Outside access to the building must be safe and properly maintained.
- Stairs and corridors must be unobstructed.
- All cables, leads and wires should be properly secured so that they do not constitute a trip hazard.
- All filing cabinets, shelves and cupboards should be stable and secure and kept closed when not in use.
- Any spillage must be mopped up and the floor dried.

## 5.10 Dangerous substances

- Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended), OPC must conduct a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health from exposure to any hazardous substance.
- COSHH sheets will be sourced wherever possible and used to assess potential harm and substances will only be used where necessary.
- This list is not exhaustive, but substances used by OPC may include: Tippex, photocopier toner, weed killer, paint, WD4O, de-icer, glass cleaning fluids and cleaning solvent.
- All lids/tops must be properly secured after a substance has been used and should be stored safely and clearly labelled in a secure place.
- Photocopier toner can cause eye and skin irritation. The photocopier toner cartridge should be changed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions; in addition, vinyl or rubber gloves should be worn during this operation.

## 5.11 Electrical Equipment

- No employee or volunteer should use any electrical appliance which they have not been authorised to use.
- No employee or volunteer should carry out any repair to any electrical appliance on Council owned property.
- Lighting sockets must not be left empty: a suitable bulb or fluorescent tube must be in place.
- Any faulty equipment, wiring, plugs or bulbs must be reported to the Parish Clerk.
- All electrical equipment will be PAT tested annually.

## 5.12 New and expectant mothers

- Expectant mothers should make their employer aware they are pregnant as soon as practical in order for any required adjustments to be made.
- Each workstation will be assessed and OPC will strive to make all reasonable adjustments to work stations or working practices which may cause harm to them or their unborn child.
- A new or expectant mother should not lift heavy loads, stand for long periods of time or do anything they consider will be a risk to them or their unborn child.
- OPC will consider temporarily adjusting working conditions or offer suitable alternative work if this is deemed necessary.

### 5.13 Disabilities

- OPC will make all reasonable adjustments for disabled workers and volunteers.
- Employees and volunteers must make OPC aware they have a disability in order for OPC to make these adjustments and may call on third party professional advice if required.

### 5.14 Working Time Regulations

All employees and volunteers will adhere to the Working Time Regulations which limits the working time to less than 48 hours per week, requires set rest hours, holiday entitlement, rest periods, 11 hours between shifts in any 24 hour periods and rest break if working over 6 hours.

The full legislation can be viewed at  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1998/1833/contents/made>

### 5.15 Home Working

This policy applies to employees who are equipped and authorised to work from home. Anyone requiring advice or support to help meet best H&S standards at home should speak to the Parish Clerk or their appointed Councillor support or committee.

### 5.16 Stress

OPC acknowledges its legal duty to protect employees from stress at work. The HSE defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”.

There are six main areas of work design which effect stress levels:

- Demands
- Control
- Support
- Relationships
- Role
- Change

Stress affects people differently and signs of stress will display differently in different people, a person suffering with stress may not even be aware themselves.

Any employee suffering from stress should speak to the Parish Clerk to discuss what reasonable control methods can be put in place.

Failure to resolve stress in the workplace through reasonable control methods may be referred to the Staffing Committee in confidence.

Further detail is available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/what-to-do.htm>

## 5.17 Infectious Diseases/Illness

Staff and volunteers must not knowingly come to work or join a voluntary activity whilst infected with a contagious disease or illness.

### Covid-19

Although HSE will no longer expect COVID-19 control measures, employers must continue to consult workers and their representatives on any changes they make that might affect health and safety

Any member of staff or Councillor testing positive with Covid should not attend the office or any OPC meeting. Staff and Councillors should only return to the office or attend meetings once they have a negative test (PCR or LFT).

## 6 Contractors

Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 section 3 OPC recognises its responsibility for the health and safety of contractors and anyone else that could be affected by their activities. However, this does not absolve contractors from the legal responsibilities for health and safety.

Before awarding a contract, OPC will:

- i Identify the level and scope of works and create a detailed job description including health & safety implications.
- ii Review the contractor's schedule of works prior to starting works. Ideally OPC will see a method statement.
- lii Checks will be undertaken to ensure and verify the contractor's competency to carry out the specified works. This may include seeking references.
- lv For larger projects or major works, the contractor should provide a risk assessment and health & safety policy prior to starting work.
- V Check proof of adequate insurance before work begins. This should include public liability and, if necessary, professional indemnity insurance.

At the start of the works, OPC will

- vi Carry out an induction of the site.
- vii Carry out an inspection to ensure safe working methods ie use of PPE and barriers to keep members of the public safe.
- viii Ensure OPC staff, councillors and contractors' own staff are clear about who is supervising the works.

## **7 Monitoring and evaluation**

- 6.1 It will be necessary for OPC to determine, from time to time, whether or not health and safety responsibilities are being discharged properly. Monitoring may take place through a number of mechanisms, including spot checks on employee behaviour, a full safety inspection and reports to the full Council by the Parish Clerk.
- 6.2 Reports of all accidents, near-misses and sickness linked to work shall be monitored on a regular basis. Recommendations may follow on the need for greater safeguards, more training or the need to change an employee's work practices.
- 6.3 Employees shall be consulted on any proposed changes to this policy.

## **7 Review**

The full Council shall review this policy at least once every three years from the date of adoption or following a change in legislation or circumstances.