

Health and Safety Policy Document

Shepton Mallet Parish Church & Peter Street Rooms

Please ensure you have read and understood the contents of this booklet.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspects of Health & Safety at Saint Peter and Paul's Parish Church, or the Parish Rooms, please contact one of the persons named in this booklet

Revised November 2025 v5.1 - reviewed and approved by PCC on 10/11/25

(Next review due November 2026)

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Health and Safety Policy

**St Peter and St Paul's Parish Church, Shepton Mallet BA4 5BW
and Peter Street Rooms BA4 5BL**

(Revised and updated November 2025 v5.1)

As a church we understand that we have a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church, parish rooms or churchyard.

We also know that, as an employer and controller of premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of Health and Safety law.

General statement of policy

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the church, churchyard or any other building we are responsible for. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) accepts its overall responsibility for implementing this policy. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will keep health and safety matters under regular review with a standing item on the PCC agenda. This policy and arrangements document will be reviewed and revised as required at least every 2 years.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept in the church and made available to others on request, and published on our website.

Signed on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as agreed at a meeting on 12th January 2026

Jonathan Hunter Dunn

Organisation and Responsibilities

1. The members of the PCC with overall and joint responsibility for implementing our policy are:

**Revd Jonathan Hunter Dunn
The Churchwardens at the time being**

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 in a timely manner
Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests
Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary
Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained
They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church
They set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

2. The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy.

They are currently:

**Nicholas Bennett
Vaughan Ives**

They will ensure that:

All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities
Risk assessments are carried out and that the precautions identified in these are adequate and are implemented
Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments
Adequate information and training is provided for those that need it
Any hazards or complaints relating to health and safety are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible
Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger
All accidents are reported and recorded in-line with the requirements of this policy

Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy

3. Other members of the PCC will ensure that:

The churchwardens are fully supported in their health and safety responsibilities

Health and safety matters are fully considered at their meetings

They set a personal example in all matters of health and safety

4. All employees 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 will ensure that they:

Read this policy and understand what is required of them

Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others

Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions, risk assessments and other working procedures

Report any hazard, defect or damage to a churchwarden, so that this might be dealt with

Warn any 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, incident, or near-miss to a churchwarden

Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

5. Competent Assistance

We have appointed someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations.

The person appointed to assist us is: **Mr Steve Bruce-Jones**

Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks. We have removed any points that do not apply to our activities.

General Arrangements

Risk Assessment

We will complete risk assessments for all potentially hazardous activities to identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all users and visitors and to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, keep a register of review dates, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these on a regular basis.

Information and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of who has been trained and when the training needs to be renewed or updated. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid kit(s) and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for employees and volunteers. We will undertake regular first-aid training and refresher and training

We will appoint a number of trained first-aiders to provide adequate cover for our activities. Training and refresher courses will be made available as and when required. The names of current first-aiders will be displayed in church and in Peter Street Rooms.

Our first aid boxes are located in the church vestry, tower ringing chamber, and in the Peter Street Rooms' kitchen.

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is: **Mrs Sue Crisfield**

Accident Reporting

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees,

volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Our Accident Books are kept in the church vestry and in the Peter Street Rooms' kitchen

Monitoring

We will make quarterly checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make. We will make every effort to ensure that unimpeded emergency-vehicle access is maintained during church services and other major church gatherings.

Contractors (see also Construction Work - below)

If we employ contractors for major construction, maintenance or repair projects, we will discuss with them all aspects of health and safety in conjunction with their own Health and Safety policy and Public and Employers' Liability Insurance documents, ensuring they are appropriate and adequately cover the work to be undertaken.

Record Keeping

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, other records (including DSE assets, boiler system certificates, electrical certificates, training records, PAT records, accident / near miss records, asbestos monitoring (see below) and other documents required under this policy are kept in the parish office filing cabinet.

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos (and suspected hazardous materials)

We have taken steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, twice yearly assess any risk from it. We have implemented a plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (for example, building contractors). We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans we have made. We will stop work immediately in areas where any unidentified and possibly hazardous materials become exposed.

Bell Ringing

We will ensure that adequate precautions are in place to protect bellringers and others who may enter the ringing room and bell chamber. This will include any emergency evacuation procedure, a safe means of heating, the provision of fire extinguishers, first-aid kit, the provision of emergency lighting, and the notification of safety procedures to visiting bellringers. In addition we have a policy that bells are always left in the 'lowered' position when the tower is unattended. If the bells are required to be left raised for logistical reasons, then this is only by express permission of the churchwardens - and in all cases, for the minimum amount of time possible.

Church Buildings

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to ensure it is safe. In any case, we are required to undertake a Quinquennial Inspection carried out by our church architect and to review all repairs and renovations as outlined in the report. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable bearing in mind that a faculty may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

Churchyard

We will ensure that boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair. We will have any rotting or damaged trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe. As our churchyard is formally 'closed' (ie not open for new burials), we will report any serious concerns to Somerset Council (formerly Mendip District Council) which has responsibility for the churchyard including regular grass and hedge cutting and boundary maintenance. Headstones, tombs and monuments will be checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained - this entails a six-monthly 'topple test' where pressure is safely applied to headstones to check for crumbling and stability. Checking of headstones and overhanging branches will specifically be checked prior to major public events held in and around the churchyard such as summer fetes.

Construction Work

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. Contractors will be expected to provide their own risk assessments. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees 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. Records will be kept of any action needed and taken.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliances are maintained so as to prevent danger. Regular PAT testing will be undertaken of all church and Peter Street Rooms portable appliances. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made.

The church and Peter Street Rooms require an EICR certificate to ensure all electrical circuits and switchgear conform to current regulations. The church has a regular contractor which undertakes this work every five years. Electrical circuits will be immediately isolated if found to be defective in any way.

Events

Where we intend to hold large concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify and implement any additional precautions that are necessary through carrying out a specific risk assessment.

Fire

We have completed and updated a specific risk assessment and policy document to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. The PCC will review this on a biennial basis and make updates and revisions as necessary.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that any oil or gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person(s). Any defects found will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made.

Hazardous Substances

We only use domestic cleaning products. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking any necessary precautions that are specified. In the rare cases of using materials that come within COSHH regulations, we will undertake specific risk assessments to identify hazards, and take appropriate action.

Lifting Equipment

We do not use heavy lifting equipment.

Manual Handling

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will carry out a suitable risk assessment and make use of lifting aids or take other precautions including team lifting where necessary.

Preparation of Food

Food preparation on church or church rooms premises is undertaken very rarely. However, if this is undertaken, we will use clean and disinfected work surfaces, 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. If there is any doubt, we will consult with a trained food-hygiene specialist.

Slips and Trips

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. 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. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways and cobbled areas at all times.

Tower Tours

Where we plan to run tower tours, we will carry out specific risk assessments to identify any specific precautions that are necessary. This will take account of the number of participants, the control of movement within the tower, the number of stewards available, and the ease with which persons can safely evacuate the tower in case of emergency. We will then implement these.

Working at Height

Where possible we will try and avoid the need for working at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions with risk assessments. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training, and checks to ensure the safe operation of any equipment used.

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. It is not envisaged that we will use any power equipment that requires the training and testing of competency of users. Where necessary, equipment - such as ladders - will be checked prior to use to ensure they are in good order. We will keep records of any checks we make. Where the users' own tools are used, we would ensure that these are adequate and suitable for the task in hand. Our PAT testing equipment is available for use as an additional check of electrical safety.

Working Alone

We have identified circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone, and have implemented suitable precautions to ensure their safety. We will ensure contractors working alone in the tower, for example, will always carry a mobile phone and a responsible church member or churchwarden will check in with them on a regular basis.

Access to Tower, Roofs etc

Access to the church tower is restricted to churchwardens and authorised bell ringers. There are two chubb-type locks at the base of the tower and combination padlocks on the ringing chamber, clock room and bell chamber doors. No contractors are admitted to the tower without prior authority from the churchwardens.

Access to all the church roofs is via a secure hatch in the north porch ceiling. There are large signs warning that no attempt to access the roofs should be made without the churchwardens' authority. There is a sturdy steel grille which is locked with two padlocks preventing casual access. Key holders are the churchwardens. The roofs are alarmed by PIR sensors. These will instantly detect human activity. Consequently they should be de-activated prior to any authorised roof access.

We will check that contractors' Public Liability Insurance (PLI) is in force, along with any Professional Indemnity (PI) cover that is required is valid for the work being

undertaken. We will ensure that contractors' own risk assessments are appropriate and adequately cover the work that will be undertaken.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a medical emergency during a church event or public service the duty welcomers will likely be the first to assess the severity of the situation and will call the appropriate emergency service(s) as required. The churchwardens (if on site), or any senior member of the church, or staff member, will ensure that appropriate steps are taken to minimise further danger to members of the congregation and public, and will remain on site until the incident is considered over.

If evacuation of the church building is deemed necessary, the assembly point will be in the churchyard car-parking area. If an assembly point further away is deemed necessary, then the area next to The Shambles in Market Cross will be used.

Evacuation of Peter Street Rooms will be in Peter Street itself, or if access to the road is restricted, the churchyard will be used.

Record Keeping

Records to be kept:

Accident / near-miss records and investigations

Risk Assessment register and assessments

Approved Contractor details (ChurchSuite)

DSE assessments

Diocesan Quinquennial Inspection for church

Fire Risk Assessments for Church and Peter Street Rooms (PSR)

Safety Audits

Training Records

Asbestos Register

Equipment Inspections:

- Fire appliances for church and PSR

- Boilers / heating for church and PSR

- EICR Certificates for church and PSR

- PAT records for both sites

- Personal attack alarm, CCTV cameras at PSR

- Vestry and church roof alarms

- First-aid kits at both sites and church tower

COSHH records

Safe Working Procedures (lone working)

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