St Mary's Church Bitton

HEALTH, SAFETY & FIRE POLICY & GUIDANCE

St Mary's Church Bitton

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Our Health, Safety and Fire Policy

St Mary's Church
Church Road
Bitton
South Gloucestershire
BS30 6LJ

POLICY REVIEWED: October 2024
NEXT REVIEW DATE: October 2027

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the regulations made under it.

The policy is in three sections:

Section A – General statement of policy

Section B – Organisation and responsibilities

Section C – Arrangements

To all employees, workers, voluntary helpers, and contractors:

The success of this policy will depend on your co-operation. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for health and safety.

Note: Instructions and guidance are in Blue Type

St Mary's Church Bitton

A. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment, and systems of work for all our employees, casual labour, and voluntary helpers, and to provide such information, training, and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We will also endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all members of the congregation, contractors, visitors and Others who may visit the church, churchyard, and any associated buildings.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities. To ensure this, the policy, and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed regularly and the appropriate changes made. The policy will be reviewed in its entirety every three years.

In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review, an item on health and safety will be on the agenda for all meetings of the Parochial Church Council, and sub-committees (where they exist) and employees and voluntary workers will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health and safety matters.

Signed

Vicar/ Curate in Charge

Date

Review date

October 2027

B RESPONSIBILITIES & ORGANISATION

1. Responsibility of the Vicar

Overall responsibility for health and safety is that of the Vicar, or in his or her absence the Vice Chairman of the PCC

Revd Ness Brunner-Ellis

who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy health and safety regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice. Specific responsibilities may be delegated to church personnel as listed below. As new projects emerge, the names of responsible persons will be notified, and the list amended accordingly.

2. Responsibility of the Churchwardens

Responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary is with the Churchwardens, as noted below:

Vacancy

Simon Harris

3. Responsibility of the Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council has general responsibility to ensure that the health and safety policy is implemented.

4. Responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer

The following person carries the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the arrangements outlined in this policy:

Jim Heavens

The responsibility of the health and safety officer shall be to:

1. be familiar with health and safety regulations as far as they concern church premises;
2. be familiar with the health and safety policy and arrangements and ensure they are observed;
3. ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place;
4. ensure the church and hall are clean and tidy;
5. ensure the churchyard is properly maintained including the safety of monuments, tombstones and trees, and that grass is kept cut (excepting any area of deliberate wilding;)
6. ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required;
7. ensure that all plant, equipment, and tools are properly maintained and in good condition and that all operators have received the appropriate training;
8. ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained;
9. ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained;
10. ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed.

5. Responsibility of employees and voluntary workers

All employees and voluntary workers have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this health and safety policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises.

Employees and voluntary workers must therefore:

1. comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures;
2. use protective clothing and equipment when it is required;
3. report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person;
4. report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible;
5. not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

6. Responsible Persons

The following are responsible for safety in particular areas. (These lists are not exhaustive):

1. By activity	Name/position
Accident book/Accident reporting (1)	Churchwardens
Fire extinguishers (2.1)	Phil Vowles
Emergency evacuation (2.4)	Churchwardens and Sidesmen
Portable electrical appliances (3.1)	Phil Vowles
Fixed electrical system (3.4)	Phil Vowles
Gas equipment (4)	Phil Vowles
Hazardous substances (5)	Jim Heavens
Plant and machinery (6)	Not applicable
Condition of floors and stairs (7.1)	Churchwardens
Condition of churchyard (7.2)	Barbara Merritt & Jacqui Harris
Light bulb changing (8)	Phil Vowles
Working at high levels (9)	Jim Heavens
Food preparation and handling (10)	Jacqui Harris and Jim Heavens
Manual handling (11)	Jim Heavens
Display screen equipment (12)	Peter Midgely
Building defects/glazing (13)	Phil Vowles
Personal safety (15)	Jim Heavens
Fêtes and outings (16.1)	Jim Heavens
Tower tours (16.2)	Not applicable
Bell ringing (16.3)	Sue Elliott, Tower Captain
Contractors (17)	As required
Choirs/music	Jane Lings
Health and safety training	Jim Heavens

2. By area

Main body of church	Churchwardens
St Catherine chapel	Churchwardens
Vestries	Churchwardens
Organ loft	Churchwardens
Ringing and bell chamber	Tower Captain
Boiler house	Phil Vowles
Lavatory	Churchwardens
Church kitchen/servery)	Jacqui Harris and Jim Heavens
Churchyard	Barbara Merritt & Jacqui Harris
Table tombs	Ann Willis
Church hall	Jill Gibson

C. ARRANGEMENTS (implementation of the policy)

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, visitors, and contractors.

1. Accidents and first aid

First aid boxes are located as follows:

Front desk

Choir vestry

Bell Chamber

Church Hall Foyer

Trained/qualified first aiders are:

The accident book(s) is/are located in:

Front Desk and Ringing Chamber

Church Hall Foyer

All accidents and incidents must be entered in the accident book and our insurers advised.

When the church or church hall is let to outside organisations, they are told in writing that in the event of an accident, details must be entered in the accident book. A separate book is kept for this purpose \ and is available in the kitchen of the Church Hall.

Accident books and accident records are reviewed twice yearly at PCC meetings.

RIDDOR Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

These accidents will be reported by the responsible person.

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) there is a statutory requirement to report certain types of accident and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authorities.

How to report an RIDDOR qualifying accident

The responsible person or deputy should go to www.hse.gov.uk/riddor and complete the appropriate online report form. The form will then be submitted directly to the RIDDOR database. You will receive a copy for your records.

All incidents can be reported online but a telephone service remains for reporting fatal and major injuries only. Call the Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5 p m).

Recording

Full details of all accidents, disease and dangerous occurrences must be recorded using the Accident Books provided.

2. Fire safety

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Fire Safety Guidelines 2023. In order to achieve this, we undertake the following:

- an assessment of the fire risks in the church and associated buildings and the risks to our neighbours;
- a check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned;
- a check that people who may be in the buildings can get out safely, including, if necessary, the provision of emergency lighting and fire exit signage;
- to provide reasonable firefighting equipment;
- a check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire;
- a regular check that our firefighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

2.1 Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are kept in the following locations:

Location	Type of extinguisher and capacity
Pulpit	Foam 3 litres
Nave (next to choir vestry door)	Foam 3 litres
Organ Loft	CO2 – 3kg
Choir Vestry	CO2 – 3kg
	All extinguishers supplied by Abbey Fire protection
	Maintained by Frys

Fire Risk Assessment is available as Annex 1

The extinguishers noted are checked every

quarter, visually, and professionally as required by regulations.

by the responsible person to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged.

The extinguishers noted above are checked annually by

Fry of Warmley

2.2 Fire alarm system

No fire alarm system is installed in the church or the church hall.

2.3 Other fire protection equipment

There is no other fire protection equipment.

2.4 Evacuation procedure

a. The church

A safety notice should be provided to each pew setting out the evacuation route and the address of the church should there be a need to call emergency services. This information should be printed on any service sheet, particularly for larger events.

For large services, concerts, or other events where the congregation or audience is anticipated to exceed

100

our procedures for stewarding/evacuation are as follows:

1. All designated fire doors must be unlocked before the service/event commences and the congregation or attendees informed before the event or service proceeds as top the fire exits.
2. A check must be made that all doors can be opened and the external door to the chancel unlocked.
3. A trained steward must be allotted to each door and have responsibility for persons in a specific part of the church:

Area of church	Exit door
Main entrance & porch	West Door
Choir vestry and tower	Vestry Door
Chancel	East door

4. Responsibility for using each fire extinguisher will be allotted to named and trained stewards.
5. Each steward will have a torch.
6. In the event of an emergency (fire/bomb threat etc.) an announcement to leave the building will be made by:

   The presiding member of the clergy, a churchwarden or the person supervising the event.

7. The assembly point for those leaving the church will be:

   The Churchyard by the Lych Gate

8. The emergency services will be contacted immediately by telephone dialling 999 and giving the following information:

1. The nature of the incident (fire, accident etc.);
2. The address of the Church:
   St Mary's Church
   Church Road
   Bitton
   BS30 6LJ
3. The nature of any injuries or health problems
4. Your name and a contact number (i.e. the telephone you are using)

b. The church Hall

For events where the number attending exceeds

70

our procedures for stewarding/evacuation are as follows:

1. All designated fire doors must be unlocked before the service/event commences and be clearly marked as fire exits using the 'Running Man' symbol.
2. A check must be made that all doors can be opened
3. A trained steward must be allotted to each door and have responsibility for persons in a specific part of the church:

Area of church hall	Exit door
Entrance hallway	Main door
Rear of hall / toilets	Rear door (fitted with crash bar)

4. Responsibility for using each fire extinguisher will be allotted to named and trained stewards.
5. Each steward will have a torch.
6. In the event of an emergency (fire/bomb threat etc.) an announcement to leave the building will be made by:

The event organiser

7. The assembly point for those leaving the church hall will be:

The churchyard by the Lych Gate

8. The emergency services will be contacted immediately by telephone dialling 999 and giving the following information:

1. The nature of the incident (fire, accident etc.);
2. The address of the Church:
   St Mary's Church Hall
   Church Lane
   Bitton
   BS30 6LH
3. The nature of any injuries or health problems
4. Your name and a contact number (i.e. the telephone you are using)

2.5 Evacuation drills

Fire evacuation drills for both the church and church hall will be carried out

Annually, during the month of July

All members of the PCC, employees andvoluntary workers should ensure they are familiar with escape routes and ensure these are kept clear and unobstructed.

2.6 If you discover a fire (however small)

1. Immediately raise the alarm and notify any person present.
2. Telephone the emergency services giving the following information:
   1. Request **FIRE**;
   2. The address of the Church:
      St Mary's Church
      Church Road
      Bitton
      BS30 6LJ
   3. The nature of any injuries or health problems
   4. Your name and a contact number (i.e. the telephone you are using)
3. Check the building for occupants and arrange for the evacuation of any persons who can leave of their own accord or safely be moved.
4. Attack the fire if possible and within your capability, using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk
5. If not possible to attack the fire or if you are unsure which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. **The rule is people before property**
6. Evacuate to the designated assembly point
7. Ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles

3. Electrical Safety

3.1 Portable Electrical Equipment

A list of all our portable electrical appliances is maintained by the responsible person.

The list of appliances is provided as Annex 2 and updated as new equipment is obtained or removed.

3.2 Schedule or inspection and repair

1 Every

quarter

plugs, cables, and sockets will be inspected by the responsible person to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn f l e x e s or trailing leads. Any repairs needed will be reported for action to

Phil Vowles

2 Every

Three Years

all our portable electrical equipment will be tested by a competent person with an appropriate level of electrical knowledge and experience who has the correct equipment to complete the tests, knows how to use it and cancorrectly interpret the results. Any unsafe equipment will be safely disposed of.

3 Every

Year

a visual inspection will be carried out of the fixed electrical installation by the responsible person. Any defects will be reported to

Phil Vowles

for action.

4 Every

Three years

our fixed electrical systemwill be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a 'Full Scope'member of the NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT. Anynecessary remedial work will be carried out.

5 At intervals of not more than

30 months

our lightning conductor system will beexamined and tested by a competentspecialist firm of lightning engineers.

6 It is our policy not to sell any second-hand electrical goods.

7 Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

(i) Visually check all electrical equipment before use
(ii) Report all faults immediately to the responsible person
(iii) Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment
(iv) No electrical equipment is to be brought onto the premises and used until it has been tested by the approved person and entered in the electrical equipment record
(v) Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods
(vi) Flexible cables should be positioned and protected so that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage

4. Gas Equipment Safety

Our gas boiler and other gas equipment is maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is registered with the Gas Safe Register.

Name and address of contractor

Any necessary work required for safety is implemented immediately.

6 Hazardous substances

The responsible person will maintain a list of all hazardous substances used in the church, churchyard and church hall and the procedures to be followed for their storage, use and action if an accident occurs:

List is attached as **ANNEX 3**

Where possible, we have eliminated the use of hazardous substances. Where this is not possible, our safety arrangements areas follows:

For all hazardous substances, which include substances marked as 'harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, very toxic, flammable, highly flammable, extremely flammable, explosive, oxidising or dangerous for the environment', data sheets or product information provided by the manufacturers are used to determine the correct method of use, protective clothing needed, method of storage, and action to take in the event of an accident.

Do not mix chemicals.

Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

7 Safety of plant and machinery

The responsible person will maintain a list of all items of plant and machinery and the rules and procedures for their use, including the appropriate personal protective equipment needed.

List is attached as **ANNEX 4**

The proceduresfor checking and rules for use are as follows:

1 Employees and voluntary workers must notoperate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use;

2 Employees and voluntary workers must not ride on any parts of machinery not intended for that use. Machinery must be switched off before any adjustments are made;

3 After carrying out maintenance andadjustments, all guards must be replaced before the machinery is used;.

4 Before using any item of plant ormachinery, a check must be made toensure it is in a safe working condition, correctly adjusted, and there are no loose nuts, bolts, or other defects;

5 The appropriate personal protective equipment detailed below must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery;

6 Persons under the age of 18 may use hand tools only and are not permitted to operate any power driven item of plant or machinery;

7 Ladders may only be used when other equipment such as tower scaffolds or mobile elevated work platforms cannot be used and for work of short duration provided they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties;

8 Any defect and damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported to the responsible person;

9 All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained, and a schedule kept ofmaintenance requirements, for example, our oil fired boiler is checked andmaintained annually by an OFTEC registered engineer;

10 Persons must not work on their own unless they have a means ofcommunication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on;

11 The following items of plant and equipment are tested by a competent person inaccordance with an inspection programme:

Item	Inspection arrangements
Boiler House and equipment	Annual Service

8. Slips, Trips and Falls: condition of floors, steps, and paths

In order to reduce as far as is reasonablypracticable the risk of slips, trips and falls, an inspection will be made every

Year

By the responsible person of

1 all floors and stairs in the church and hall, and

2 all paths and steps in the churchyard.Particular note will be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths. Any defectswill be reported to

Phil Vowles, Sextons

who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

9. Lighting

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, an inspection will be made every

Year

by the responsible person to ensure that all lights in the church, hall and churchyard are working. Any bulbsthat require replacing will be reported to

Phil Vowles

who will ensure that the bulbs are replaced following appropriate safety procedures.

10.Working at high levels

The following areas are designated as high levels:

Any place in excess of 5m high

Only the following persons may work at high level

Professional or trained persons only

The following procedures must be followed:

A safe system of work is attached as **ANNEX 5**

The appropriate training will be given, and a system of recording will detail who is working where at any time.

Only the following work is authorised without special agreement:

NO authorisation

11. Preparation & Serving of Food

1. We ensure that we follow the appropriate regulations governing the preparation, storage and serving of foodstuffs
2. We ensure that all food handlers havereceived adequate supervision, instruction, and (if required) training.
3. We ensure that the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for thefoods to be prepared stored and presented, including storage at the correct temperatures.

A safe system and guidance is attached as **ANNEX 6**

4 Before any preparation commences, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be washed down and disinfected.

5 Food stuffs may only be fully prepared in the following areas:

Church Hall kitchen

6 We ensure that all hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.

12. Manual handling - lifting, carrying, and moving loads

1 Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practical. There are no routine requirements to lift, carry or move heavy loads.

2 Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts, and hoists as far as possible.

3 The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling.

4 Only those persons who have received the appropriate training are authorised to undertake manual handling tasks.

5 Where no training is given and load are to be carried close to the body, the recommended lifting weight for men should not exceed 25kg or for women 16kg.

13. Display screen equipment

Our policy is to assess the risks to all habitualusers of computer workstations on the behalf of the church and to reduce those risks to the lowest level possible.

The following factors will be considered when carrying out risk assessments:

- stability and legibility of the screen
- contrast and brightness of the screen
- tilt and swivel of the screen
- suitability of keyboards, desks, and chairs
- the work station environment
- the user-friendliness of the software.

Daily work routines will involve periods away from the screen. Where necessary, riskassessments will be carried out by the responsible person.

The church does not currently have any workstations on its premises.

14. Hazardous buildings/glazing

1 Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to the health, safety, and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are inspected every

Year

by the responsible person.

2 Any defects noted are immediately reported to

The Churchwardens

and the procedures put in hand for repairs.

3 Where necessary, temporary measuresare taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out

4 A check is made of any asbestos in the building by a competent person, noting its location, type and condition. Where necessary, asbestos will be removed by alicensed contractor. Information regarding any asbestos remaining in the building isgiven to all contractors and anyone elsewho may be affected

5 A check is made of all glazing in the buildings to ensure that any glass in windows below waist height and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height is of a safety material or isprotected against breakage

A Faculty application may be necessary. Archdeacons may sanction temporary repairs pending permanent arrangements being approved.

15. Personal safety

Our policy is to recognise and minimise the risk to personal safety of any person undertaking business on behalf of the church. The following risk assessments have been provided for this purpose:

Persons working alone in the church (Annex 7)

Travelling to and from church on church business (Annex 8)

Handling and portage of cash and valuables (Annex 9)

Accepting persons into homes (Annex 10)

16. Risk assessments for activities

Risk assessments will be carried out on all areas of the church premises and all activities that carry a significant risk at regular intervals by a competent person in order to meet our obligations under The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The following risk assessments have been carried out to cover the main activity areas but should be reassessed prior to each activity to ensure that any additional feature has been considered:

The annual church fête (Annex 11)
Tours of the church tower and roof (Annex 12)
Change ringing bells (Annex 13)
Sponsored walks visits and outings (Annex 14)
Churchyard maintenance, including grave digging (Annex 15)
The use and erection of temporary staging (Annex 16)

16. Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

1. have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same;
2. produce evidence that they have appropriate Public and Employers' Liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained;
3. comply with all the requirements of this health and safety policy and co-operate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation;
4. where plant and machinery are brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation;
5. contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the church officials. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors;
6. all contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake. This 'permit to work' will also specify any safety precautions they must undertake.

It is our policy to manage and abide by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and place such arrangements in place to ensure that this takes place.

CDM Regulations

The Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015 apply to all construction work in Great Britain that imposes responsibilities and duties on the church as the 'client' – an individual or organisation for whom construction work is being carried out. A competent person may be appointed to assist in the discharge of these duties.The Approved Code of Practice to the CDM Regulations summarises the duties of a client as follows:

- check the competence and resource of all appointees;
- ensure there are suitable management arrangements for the project including welfare facilities;
- allow sufficient time and resources for all stages;
- provide pre-construction information to designers and contractors.

A project is notifiable to the HSE if the construction phase will be longer than 30 days or 500 person days of construction work, andfor such projects, the client must:

- appoint a CDM co-ordinator;
- appoint a Principal contractor;
- make sure construction work does notstart unless there are suitable welfare facilities, and a construction phase plan is in place;
- provide information relating to the health and safety file to the CDM co-ordinator;
- retain and provide access to the health and safety file.

17. Information and enforcement

Environmental Health Service Information

South Gloucestershire Department for
Environment & Community Services
PO Box 1954
BS37 0DD

Employment Medical Advisory Service Information:

HSE (S West & Wales)
Government Buildings,
Ty Glas,
Llanishen,
Cardiff
CF14 5SH
Fax: 029 2026 3120

(The Medical Advisory Service is a part of the Health and Safety Executive and is able to provide guidance on health matters.).

Health and Safety Executive

Health and Safety Executive
Information Line: 0845 345 0055
HSE Books: 01787 881165

18. Health and Safety Law poster

A copy of the HSE poster 'Health and Safety Law – what you should know' shall be displayed in the following locations:

Choir Vestry

ANNEXES

1. Fire Risk Assessment
2. List of portable electrical equipment
3. List of hazardous substances
4. Hazardous plant and machinery (list and use)
5. Safe system of work for working at height
6. Food preparation and service
   6.1 Food & Drink Service Guide
   6.2 Allergens
7. Persons working alone in the church – policy and advice.
8. Travelling to and from the church on church business – policy.
9. Handling & portage of cash and valuables – policy.
10. Accepting persons into homes.
11. The annual church fête.
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16. The use and erection of temporary staging.

ANNEX 1: Fire Risk Assessment

	Identified hazard	Control Measures	Periodic action requirement
1. Sources of Fuel (Combustible Materials)	Books and paper	Retained in bookshelves	
	Textiles (altar hangings)	Nil	
	Wood in pews etc.	Nil	
	Cleaning materials	To be held in locked cupboard	
2. Sources of ignition (Machinery, equipment etc.)	Candles	To be fully extinguished after use	
	Electric blowers		Annual cleaning
	Sound equipment	To be switched off at socket after use	Annual check
3. People at Risk	Congregation /persons visiting or using the church; particularly persons with limited mobility.	Advice given when congregation is over 100 persons	Cards in pews Advice on exit arrangements to be read out at the beginning of service and events where over 100 people are present
4. Means of Escape	Main west door, chancel door, door in vicar's vestry Tower door.	Not all doors are indicated	Cards in pews Advice on exit arrangements to be read out at the beginning of service and events where over 100 people are present
5. Firefighting & detection	Four fire extinguishers. No detection system.	Record to be kept by PCC Secretary	
6. Procedures & training	Annual Fire Test	Record to be kept by PCC Secretary	
7. Maintenance & testing	In line with statutory requirements	Record to be kept by PCC Secretary	
8. Fire Safety Records	Retained in the vicar's vestry safe	Record to be kept by PCC Secretary	

St Mary's Church Bitton

ANNEX 2: List of portable electrical equipment

Item	Where held	Management & maintenance
Sound equipment	Sound cupboard in rear pew	Routine checks by qualified electrician
Hostess Trolley	St Catherine Chapel	Only to be switched on under supervision
Projector	Former Muniment room	Maintained by P Midgley
Kettles	Kitchenette	Routine checks by qualified electrician
Oil filled radiators	Choir vestry and Lady Chapel	Routine checks by qualified electrician
Electric organ	Nave	Routine checks by qualified electrician
Vacuum cleaner – church cleaners	Choir Vestry	Routine checks by qualified electrician
Vacuum cleaner (Electrolux)	Bell Chamber	Routine checks by qualified electrician
Toaster	Muniment Room	Routine checks by qualified electrician Only to be used under supervision and disconnected after use.
Electric grill	Muniment Room	Routine checks by qualified electrician Only to be used under supervision and disconnected after use.
Printer	Muniment room	Routine checks by qualified electrician Only to be used under supervision and disconnected after use.
Payaz Card Reader Self-service donation point for gifts to the Development Project – tablet and card reader	Nave	Always on. Routine checks by qualified electrician
Collectin – Donation point	Nave	Always on. Routine checks by qualified electrician
Antenna, router and mesh Wi-Fi	Router in organ loft, antenna on roof and mesh Wi-Fi boosters at points throughout church	Always on. Routine checks only required.

ANNEX 3: List of hazardous substances

Item	Where held	Management & maintenance
Lighter fuel	Vicar's vestry	Domestic canister held in chest of drawers. No obvious risk
Candle oil – in storage.	Vicar's vestry	Held in glass bottle in cupboard. Manged by verger. Candles filled in vestry. Any spillages must be cleaned, and any papers or rags used in the process disposed of immediately in refuse outside the church.
Oil in candles	On altar or vicar's vestry.	1. Displayed on altar and lit during services. 2. When church is open and unmanned must be locked in vicar's vestry.

St Mary's Church Bitton

ANNEX 4: Hazardous plant and machinery (list and use)

Boiler House.
A safe procedure is in place for obtaining access to the boiler. The boiler should only be attended by a qualified or trained person.

Lid to font
The lid of the font is not particularly heavy, but awkward and should be lifted only by two persons.

ANNEX 5: Safe system of work for working at height

Any height that cannot be reached by the use of a domestic ladder, up to 5 metres in length should not be undertaken other than by trained persons or those contracted by the PCC.

Use of step ladders
Step ladders may be used for reaching low level heights such as candelabra or shelving. Ladders should only be used when there are two or more persons present, and one person should steady and assist the other in using the ladder while remaining on the ground. Step ladders must only be used on even ground and be fully extended before use.

Pews
The seats of the pews may be used to reach high shelving such as windows. When climbing on pews they should be moved to a position where required using the retractable wheels and the wheel retracted before use.

Other access
Other access arrangements must be subject to a risk assessment beforehand.

St Mary's Church Bitton

ANNEX 6: Food preparation and service

The Church

There is currently no safe food preparation area in the church. Food may be brought into the church that has previously been prepared elsewhere. There are no facilities to heat food in the church other than (1) a hostess trolley which is regularly tested and may warm food such as mince pies (2) a small toaster grill, which is regularly tested.

Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the kitchenette.

For special events where food is served on behalf of the church, a separate risk assessment and management process must be devised to ensure food safety.

The Church Hall

The church hall kitchen, while reasonably equipped is not suitable for food preparation.
Hall hirers may serve food at their own risk.

For special events where food is served on behalf of the church, a separate risk assessment and management process must be devised to ensure food safety. A food handling poster should be displayed in the kitchen area.

Cleaning of plates, cutlery, and other utensils.

If washed by hand the temperature of water should be above 55˚C. Otherwise, they may be taken out of the church for washing in a domestic dishwasher that reaches the same temperature.

ANNEX 6.1

FOOD & DRINK SERVICE GUIDE

St Mary's Church, Bitton, takes its responsibilities seriously in respect of the supply and sale of food and drinks within the church or at other events held outside such as the annual church fête. This relates particularly to the maintenance of good hygiene standards, and the quality and nature of drinks and foodstuffs provided. We are particularly alert to the need to protect those who may experience an allergic reaction to foodstuffs.

The following is provided as a guide taking account of existing legislation and the conditions under which events and services take place.

GENERAL HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS

Before serving food or drinks, surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned using a sanitiser. A clean damp cloth may be used to wipe the service, but it should be further wiped dry with a disposable towel.

Where non disposable items are to be used for service, a check should be made beforehand to ensure that they are clean before use. Following use, they should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand in water above 45̊ centigrade. If a cloth towel is to be used for drying dishes and cutlery, it should be clean and freshly laundered, otherwise disposable towel should be used.
It is advised that those involved in the handling of food should wear disposable polythene or nitrile gloves.

No one should serve food or beverages if they have had a gastric or similar illness within the preceding 48 hours. Any cuts or grazes to the hand should be covered with a blue bandage.

SERVING OF PRE-PREPARED FOOD AND DRINKS IN THE CHURCH

Food should not usually be prepared in the church although it is acceptable to heat up food made elsewhere for serving or assemble food cooked elsewhere. Hot or cold drinks may be served.
Only electrical items may be used for the heating of food or beverages within the church. All electrical items must be less than 5 years old, or PAT tested. They must be sited safely in a way that would prevent them from easily tipping over and causing injury. All items must be used following the manufacturer's instructions.

THE SERVING OR SELLING OF PREPARED FOOD AT EVENTS

Where food is prepared in advance, for example cakes, jams etc. for immediate or later consumption it is advised that those selling the items should be aware of the ingredients. Where possible, the ingredients of any foodstuff provided should be listed by the donor and provided on a small card placed next to the item that is being served or sold. A supply of such cards will be kept in the kitchenette at the rear of the nave.

It is recognised that donations of cakes, are often made anonymously by leaving the on a stand etc, but it is good practice for those making such items to provide a list of the ingredients particularly any containing one of the 14 major allergens.

Most foodstuffs prepared for serving in church or at outside events will have been made in a domestic kitchen and are not required to identify the ingredients or allergens it contains. When cakes, sandwiches light salad lunches etc are served in church or events having been prepared elsewhere, a notice should be displayed to indicate that the contents of items may be unknown

and that it is impossible to ensure that cross contamination with allergens in other foodstuffs. (see annex)
Those serving food should be aware of the 14 key allergens that are required to be identified in drinks and foodstuffs so that they may advise consumers appropriately**.**

COOKING AND SERVING FOOD AT THE CHURCH FÊTE OR OTHER EVENTS OUTDOORS
Where food is prepared and cooked further care is required in relation to food supply, storage treatment and cooking.

Supply: All foodstuffs should be sourced from a trusted supplier to ensure the quality of the items purchased.
Storage: Foodstuffs should be stored in accordance with any instructions provided. Care must be taken not to cross contaminate food, for instance by placing cooked and uncooked items in the same refrigerator. Food must be stored at the recommended temperature until used.
Food handling: It is recommended that those involved in the handling of uncooked food should wear disposable gloves. It is recognised that there will be circumstances where this is impractical. Care should be taken to avoid cross contamination between uncooked and cooked items particularly meat.
Cooking: Extra care should be taken to ensure that items are properly cooked prior to service. This is particularly the case with meats. Wherever possible separate cooking facilities should be provided for food containing meat.

Siting and use of equipment
Care should be taken with the siting of all equipment following the manufacturer's instructions. Heavy items or those that become hot must be sited on a robust and firm surface. A fire extinguisher suitable for the circumstances and fire blanket should be provided. Electrical services, if provided, should be kept dry and a circuit breaker should be used.

Gas bottles must be sited away from any open flame and seals checked before operation.
Where open fires such as barbeques or hog roasting are used, these should be sited to avoid smoke inhalation and outside of any tented area.

Ingredients and Allergens
All items to be sold should be checked to see if they contain any of the 14 allergens listed by the Food Standards Agency.(see Annex 6.2) A checklist is provided for this (see annex) and should be completed prior to the serving of food and retained on any service area for consultation. This checklist may also be used to identify which foods are suitable for vegetarian or vegan consumers.

A notice must be displayed requesting consumers with an allergy to request further information from the volunteer(s) operating the stall or service point. (see checklists and notices)

Annex 6.2
Allergens

ANNEX 7: Persons working alone in the church – policy and advice.

Persons working in the church alone, undertaking duties such as cleaning, using the printer or for any other purpose are advised of the following:

1. This is an ancient building with old and sometimes hazardous aspects. Its doors and locks may be prone to occasional failure and there are parts of the building that were not designed with modern safety standards in mind. While efforts are made to minimize certain hazards such as uneven floors and winding staircases, care should be taken to avoid slips, trips, and falls. You should:
    a. Make sure you have adequate lighting for the task by switching on lights for the area of the church you are using.
    b. Not use ladders or step ladders.
    c. If possible, take a mobile phone and keep it with you, so that you can call if you need help. Tell someone that you are going to the church and when to expect you back.

2. The church is now open daily from Easter to Michaelmas during daylight hours. The purpose of this is to enable members of the community to have access to the church and to welcome visitors. However, on occasions people visiting the church have other intentions with a view to theft or damage or (as has been experienced previously) to use the church and its facilities as a temporary home. If you are concerned about the activities of someone visiting the church while you are working there you should avoid confrontation and leave the church, informing one of the churchwardens or clergy as soon as possible. If you are particularly concerned about their behaviour, or if you feel that an offence may be committed you should take yourself away from the church and telephone the police.

3. If you are working alone in the muniment room or the vestries, in addition to the above advice, you are also advised to make yourself secure by locking the door into the main church and any external doors other than the main west door.

ANNEX 8: Travelling to and from the church on church business – policy.

If you wish to use your own car to travel to and from the church on church business (e.g.to conduct or lead a service, to transport papers etc.) your car insurance must meet the requirements of business travel. The church insurance will not extend to insuring you for your travel in such circumstances. This position applies whether or not St Mary's or other church funds provide re-imbursement for the costs of travel.

ANNEX 9: Handling & portage of cash and valuables – policy.

Cash
Cash collected at services should be placed in the vicar's vestry safe. It will be collected by the Treasurer and banked as soon as possible. The Treasurer will inform the churchwardens when a large sum (over £1000) has been collected and arrangements will be made to provide additional support (e.g., a driver) to accompany the Treasurer or person acting on his or her behalf.

Communion celebrated in the community
A communion set is available for use in parishioner's homes etc. The set will be signed out and a record retained in the vicar's vestry safe.

Silverware
Church silverware should be kept in boxes provide for its storage in the vicar's vestry safe and only brought out for use. It should not be left unattended.

ANNEX 10: Accepting persons into homes.

Housegroups

Householders who host housegroups or other openly advertised events do so at their own risk. It is advised that those wishing to attend, who are not members of the church community should only be able to do so by prior appointment, for instance by a telephone call beforehand. Where the host is concerned about the individual they should be asked not to attend until they have met with a responsible person at the church beforehand such as the churchwarden or incumbent.

ANNEX 11: The annual church fête

A full risk assessment must be carried out prior to the annual church fête taking account of the areas to be used and the activates that are to be provided. Outside organisations displaying at the fête will be required to have their own liability insurance and must be asked to provide a copy.

Key items for consideration (not exhaustive) to be completed before the fête

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Additional action to be taken during the fête	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Slips and trips in the church itself	Volunteers and visitors may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages	We carry out general good housekeeping. All areas are well lit including stairs. There are no trailing leads or cables. The church is regularly cleaned. Adequate storage is provided.	Chairs and tables for teas should be placed so as not to block access to doors. A nominated person should be on hand to ensure security and safety of visitors.		On day of fête	
Church Tower	Access to the church tower ids no longer considered safe for genera visiting without an additional handrail being fitted.					
Glebe Field – minor accidents, slips trips and falls	There is an element of risk to all visitors as the field is generally used as animal pasture.	Trees are regularly checked and maintained, walls repaired and the farmer renting the field is required to keep it in good order.	• Field topped and cleared before fête. • Check of field the night before the fête to remove any obvious hazards. • Alcohol to be retained on the Glebe Field and under supervision.		On day of fête	
Glebe Field _ general Hazards	Visitors from the temporary arrangements for the fête – falling tables, electricity, tents, BBQ.		• Tables to be carefully sited on level ground. • Electricity to be supplied from Vestry to audio system on a single lead. • All other electricity to be provided by a generator in the Glebe Field • Tents to be erected and checked. • Area around BBQ to be kept clear of people and combustible material. • Identified personnel to provide assistance to any injury or person requiring urgent medical assistance such as St John's Ambulance •		On day of fête	
Churchyard	Visitors to churchyard, examining graves.	The graveyard is maintained by the Sexton.	Churchyard team to tidy up in days before fête.		By day before the fête	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Additional action to be taken during the fête	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
	Unstable gravestones and trips, slips and falls on paths.	Grass is cut regularly, and trees maintained. Pathways have recently received repair and the hazardous area around the front porch has been restored and improved with new flagstones. Recent renovation to three table tombs as part of a long term programme.				

St Mary's Church Bitton

ANNEX 12: Tours of the church tower and roof

Church Tower
The church tower is reached by spiral stairs from the choir vestry porch. It should not be made freely accessible to the public except under supervision of an appropriate person.

The principal hazards are slips on the stairway leading to the tower exacerbated by two-way traffic. Danger of death from falling from the tower itself.

To mitigate this risk, the stairs must be regularly cleaned. The stairway has been repaired with concrete edges to steps. Roof has recently been renovated. Access to the tower is limited to 3 persons at one time, and a one-way system must be instituted on the stairway. Visitors should be advised of the need to take care and to keep away from the edge of the tower. Access to the tower is prohibited to persons under the age of 12 unless accompanied by a parent or responsible person.

The Roof
Access to roofs should only be undertaken by a professional person who is trained for working at height.

ANNEX 13: Change ringing bells.

	Identified hazard	Control measures
1. Service ringing - All types **UPDATED JANUARY 2026**	The band The ropes	1. In most circumstances, the tower captain or deputy will be in attendance. If this is not the case, the band must agree who will be in charge. 2. Bells should be left in the 'down' position when not in use during the working week between 7am Monday and 6pm Friday with public holidays excepted. When there is a practice scheduled for Monday evening, the bells may be left 'up' from the weekend until then, but should be rung down when the practice ends. 3. Outside of this period, if bells are left in the 'up' position for any other justifiable reason, the tower captain or deputy must record the reason for the bells being left up.. A record book should be held in the Ringing Chamber for this purpose and will be open for inspection. 4. When bells are to be left in the 'up' position after ringing, the tail ends must be hoisted to the ceiling out of the way using the 'spider'. A warning notice must be displayed on the spider to warn that the bells are in a dangerous position, and the chamber door locked shut on exit. Additionally, the notice on the tower door, on the ground floor must display the danger notice. If access is required to the bell chamber, whilst the bells are 'up', then this must be under the control of the tower captain or deputy and the reasons recorded.
2 Band practices both local and Branch	The band The ropes	See note 1 above See note 2 above
3. Periodic bell and frame maintenance	The bells and ropes The frame Staffing	Only on specific functions should the bells be worked on in the "up" position. When this is the case, the bell must be anchored to the frame with sufficiently strong cable ties, so that they don't move When working within the frame, attention should be drawn to items such as pulley's and bolt heads that protrude. Use of a torch, and gloves is encouraged Only experienced and knowledgeable ringers should carry out routine maintenance or repairs
4. Visiting bands	Number of ringers in the chamber Experience of unknown ringers Fire safety and Evacuation	No more than 25 ringers should be in the ringing chamber at any time. Visiting bands will have a person in charge of the event, this person is responsible for the band Visiting bands should be made aware of the Fire safety and Evacuation procedure notice poster
5. Ellacombe chimes	Releasing and locking the chime ropes Use of the chime frame	Before and after using the Ellacombe chimes, the lock must be moved from its normal locked position. When chiming has been completed, , before the ropes are locked back into position, you must ensure the ropes going up to the bells are slack Ensure chime frame has it's protective mesh reinstalled after use, Due to the weight of the chiming It is advisable to use stout protective gloves whilst chiming the bells
6. Teaching ringers	Junior (8 - 17) Adult (18+)	No Junior ringer should teach another junior. Any adult teaching a junior ringer, must have an adult relative, or themselves, carried out a DBS check Only a suitable experienced and confident ringer should teach an adult
7. Fire safety and evacuation		All visitors and ringers should be aware of the Fire and Evacuation notice posted on the noticeboard

"Reference should be made to the governing body of change ringing

CODE OF CONDUCT: https://cccbr.org.uk/bellringing/code-for-ringing/
SAFEGUARDING PROCESS: https://cccbr.org.uk/safeguarding/resources/safeguarding-process-flows/"

St Mary's Church Bitton

ANNEX 14: Sponsored walks visits and outings.

Those participating in church community activities taking place away from the church (such as visits or theatre trips) should generally be advised that these are at their own risk. Advice may be given by the organiser in regard to suitable clothing, footwear and the need to bring food and water.

Where the activity is sponsored and organised by the church a specific assessment should be undertaken for the event, and adequate safeguards put in place to reduce the risk of harm. Our insurance company *Ecclesiastical* should be informed in good time beforehand by one of the churchwardens. All events must be fully supervised and supported by necessary equipment (first aid etc.).

ANNEX 15: Churchyard maintenance including grave digging.

The Sextons are responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard. A separate fund is established and used to ensure that grass is regularly mown during the summer months. A monthly tidying session takes place.

Footpaths must be subject to annual review and repairs undertaken as necessary.

The digging of graves should be undertaken using a mechanical digger, as appropriate and by contractor. Adequate signage and barriers should be erected where an open grave is to be left overnight.

Table tombs have been subject to a full survey and are being repaired.

ANNEX 16: The use and erection of temporary staging.

Temporary staging is available for use in the church. They are in two sizes:

1 metre square – may be moved by one person
2 metres x 1 metre – this should only be moved by 2 persons

A safe system for the construction and use of any other temporary staging should be drawn up and approved prior to erection.

CHECKLISTS & NOTICES

1. Food Safety Notices
2. Trained Persons
3. Risk Assessment Sheet
4. Annual Checklist

1. Food Safety

To be displayed where foodstuffs have been pre-prepared (e.g. cakes, jams etc

Fold

ALLERGENS

St Mary's Church Bitton

The produce for sale today has been prepared in a home environment and donated for this event. Ingredients cannot be guaranteed and unless stated otherwise, most produce may contain items that could cause an allergic reaction in some.

The volunteers will be happy to advise on ingredients where they are known.

As food has been prepared in a domestic kitchen, cross contamination with non-ingredient allergens cannot be wholly avoided.

Allergen Notice 1

To be displayed where foodstuffs are prepared for sale (e.g. BBQ at fete)

Fold

ALLERGENS

St Mary's Church Bitton

If you have a food allergy or special dietary requirement, please inform one of the volunteers who can advise on contents and availability.

Thank you.

Allergen Notice 2

ALLERGEN CHECKLIST

To be completed for each item on sale

ITEM:_____

Tick the relevant box if the item contains the listed ingredient:

Celery		Molluscs	
Cereals containing gluten		Mustard	
Crustaceans (Shellfish)		Nuts (other than peanuts)	
Eggs		Peanuts	
Fish		Sesame seeds	
Lupin		Soya	
Milk and other dairy		Sulphites	

Suitable for vegetarians ☐

Suitable for vegans ☐

FURTHER ADVICE

FOOD LABELS

EXAMPLE

St Mary's Church Bitton

Coffee & Walnut Cake

Ingredients: Eggs. Flour, Baking Powder, Walnuts, Butter, Coffee Essence.

Advisory: Contains Nuts / Dairy

Fold

St Mary's Church Bitton

Ingredients:

Advisory:

2. Trained Persons

2.1 First Aid

Name	Type of Training Undertaken	Date	Expiry

2.2 Working at Height

Name	Type of Training Undertaken	Date	Expiry

2.3 Other

Name	Type of Training Undertaken	Date	Expiry

3. RISK ASSESSMENT SHEET

For use to examine any area of risk, slips, trips falls etc. May be adapted to suit circumstances. Copy should be retained and passed to PCC Secretary

Activity or Area being risk assessed_____

Date:_____ Completed by:_____

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Additional action to be taken	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done?

4. ANNUAL CHECKLIST To be reviewed at each PCC meeting

CHECKLIST FOR YEAR BEGINNING 1 JANUARY _____

Item	Quarterly (initial and date)	Annual or Date Due (initial and date)	Remarks
Church Evacuation Exercise Annual in July			
Church Hall Evacuation Exercise Annual in July			
Portable Electrical Equipment Visual check of leads etc			
Portable Electrical Equipment Professional electrician test (required every 3 years)			Next due date:
Fixed Electrical Equipment Visual check of leads etc			
Fixed Electrical Equipment Professional electrician test (required every 3 years)			
Fire Extinguishers Visual check on location and operation			
Fire Extinguishers Professional review and refill			Next due date:
Slips Trips and Falls Annual Risk Assessment of Church			
Slips Trips and Falls Annual Risk Assessment of Churchyard			
Slips Trips and Falls Annual Risk Assessment of Church Hall			

Item	Quarterly (initial and date)	Annual (initial and date)	Remarks
Lightning Conductor To be checked by contractor every 30 months			Next due date:
Boiler House & Equipment Annual Service			Next due date:
Lighting Full test of lighting and replacement of bulbs etc			
Inspection of buildings and glazing			