



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Health and Safety Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ("the 1974 Act") and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 ("the Regulations"), the Council accepts its duty to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions for Councillors, employees ("Officers") and volunteers.
- 1.3 The Council acknowledges its obligations under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984 ("the 1984 Act") in respect of visitors to its premises as defined in that Act.
- 1.4 The Council's policy is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment, and systems of work for all our Officers and volunteers, and to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.
- 1.5 The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which the Council will make to implement this Policy are set out below.

2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Council shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that it complies with the 1974 and 1984 Acts, the Regulations and any other relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidance, etc, and take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - information, instruction, training, supervision, equipment and facilities necessary to achieve safe working are provided;
 - relevant activities are undertaken in ways that health and safety risks are minimised; and
 - arrangements are in place for the safe use, handling, storage and disposal of all substances and equipment.
- 2.2 The Clerk is responsible for:
 - 2.2.1 the day-to-day management of health and safety in accordance with this Policy;
 - 2.2.2 ensuring that appropriate training is available to Councillors, Officers and volunteers;
 - 2.2.3 health and safety in relation to the parish office ("the Office") within Mortimer Library ("the Library").
- 2.3 The Parish Custodian is responsible for reporting to the Clerk any matter that may affect the health and safety of those working within or using parish council amenities, namely:
 - Mortimer Fairground;
 - the Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Cemetery (adjacent to St Mary's Churchyard);

- the pillbox on the corner of The Street and Mortimer Lane;
- the West End Road Car Park.

2.4 All Councillors, Officers and volunteers have a duty to work safely and not put others at risk.

3 Risk Assessments

3.1 The Council, through the Clerk, will regularly identify, assess, and mitigate health and safety risks associated with its activities and facilities.

3.2 Relevant risk assessments will be documented and updated as necessary.

3.3 Regular inspections and audits will be conducted to identify hazards and ensure compliance with this Policy.

4 Reporting

4.1 If any Councillor, Officer or volunteer identifies a health and safety risk falling within the ambit of this Policy that they cannot immediately rectify they must report it to the Clerk.

4.2 All relevant incidents must be reported in the first instance to the Clerk and recorded as appropriate in the circumstances.

4.3 In the event of a serious injury or dangerous occurrence, the Chairman, or in their absence the Vice Chairman, shall be informed immediately.

5 Specific Risks and Procedures

5.1 First Aid

A first aid box is located in the Office.

5.2 Fire Safety

- Fire extinguishers are available in the Library and are maintained annually by West Berkshire Council ("WBC");
- the fire alarm system at the Library is tested weekly by the Librarian and fire drills held in accordance with WBC procedures;
- electrical appliances within the Library are regularly inspected for safety by WBC;
- fire exits shall be kept free from obstructions;
- notices shall be displayed giving directions for the evacuation of buildings in the event of fire.

5.3 Personal Safety

- In the event that Officers are in a lone working situation at the Office or elsewhere, all doors should be kept locked;
- when lone working away from normal place of work, Officers should carry a mobile phone at all times;
- Councillors and Officers should ensure that someone knows where they are going if on non-routine Council business and when expected back;

- when lone working, all meetings with members of the public should be by appointment only, held at the Office where possible, and the Chairman and Clerk should be made aware of the appointment;
- any instance of abuse by a member of the public should be reported to the Clerk or Chairman as appropriate.

6 Parish office

6.1 Heating, lighting and ventilation

- The Office temperature must reach a minimum of 16°C by the end of the first hour of working time and be maintained at or above 16°C throughout the working day;
- free standing heaters must not be used unless specifically authorised, in which event they must not be left unattended, the area around them must be kept clear of any paper or other flammable materials, they must be sited away from desks and chairs, and must be switched off at the wall when not in use;
- desks should be placed to gain the maximum amount of light - free-standing desk lights should be avoided or placed so as to minimise the danger of trailing electrical leads.

6.2 Electrical equipment

- All electrical equipment (including the electrical cabinets on Mortimer Fairground) shall be maintained in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989;
- it is important that the correct socket outlet and plug top face (where these are available) is used for each item of electrical equipment;
- fuses must be fitted to all electrical appliance plugs to suit the current load of the equipment being used (when in doubt, do not guess - seek qualified advice);
- only electrical equipment provided by the Council should be used and electric points must not be overloaded by means of multi-adaptors;
- all electrical equipment should be switched off when not in use.
- care must be taken to avoid electrical leads being a trip hazard;
- extension leads must only be used for temporary purposes and should not exceed 3 metres in length;
- defective equipment must never be used;
- no-one should attempt to effect repairs to electrical equipment unless competent to do so.

6.3 Furniture, fittings and equipment

- Heavy equipment and furniture must not be moved by lone individuals;
- office equipment must not be used unless the individual is authorised and trained in its use as necessary;
- filing cabinets:

- should always have sufficient weight in the bottom drawer to prevent the cabinet from tipping when a full top drawer is opened;
- must always be closed immediately after use;
- should be inspected at least every six months to ensure correct loading and smoothness of operation, with particular regard to the effectiveness of the drawer stops;
- must not be used if damaged or defective;
- high shelves should only be reached through the use of steps provided for that purpose.

6.4 Fire precautions

- All Officers must be fully conversant with the "Fire Action" system displayed in the offices;
- exits must be kept clear at all times;
- flammable materials may only be stored in a fire-resistant structure or container (such as a metal cupboard or bin) and clearly marked as flammable;
- wastepaper bins must be of metal construction and emptied regularly.

7 Grounds Maintenance

- Only contractors or authorised Officers who have received training and instruction in the operation of particular machinery and equipment may use or operate such;
- all dangerous moving parts of machinery must be guarded - guards must not be removed except for the purpose of repair and maintenance and all machinery must comply with statutory regulations for guarding and use;
- the engines of any motorised equipment must be stopped before any inspection or adjustment is carried out (in the case of electrically operated machines the plug lead must be disconnected);
- all necessary care must be taken if the public, and especially children, are present in an area where machinery is in use;
- machinery must not be left unattended where the public might interfere with it;
- stones and similar objects must be cleared from the path of equipment to prevent such objects being projected from machinery;
- fuel tanks must only be filled in the open, with the engine stopped - no risk of naked flames, or smoking is allowed in the vicinity of a fuel tank or storage can, and fuel may only be stored in a safety can of a type approved and in a designated store;
- the manufacturer's instructions regarding the safe use of chemicals must be adhered to;
- appropriate protective clothing such as gloves, overalls, face masks, boots, etc must be used when operating machinery and/or using chemicals (including herbicides and pesticides);
- ladders and stepladders must be in good condition and free from defects and securely positioned at all times when in use.

- pathways on Council owned premises shall be inspected annually.