



ST AGNES PARISH COUNCIL

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Health, Safety & Welfare Policy

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Statement of general policy

St Agnes Parish Council fully accepts the obligations placed upon it by the various Acts of Parliament covering health, safety and welfare. The Council requires its Proper Officer to ensure that the following policy is implemented and to report annually on its effectiveness. The Council's Proper Officer and Safety Officer currently lie as the role of the Clerk, and therefore any reference in this document to discussions between the two Officers can be taken as not applicable. The Council may in future separate the role of Safety Officer and Proper Officer.

Management organisation and arrangements

This policy has been prepared and published under the requirements of Health & Safety At Work legislation. The purpose of the policy is to establish general standards for health, safety and welfare at work and to distribute responsibility for their achievement to all officers and members of the Council.

Management responsibilities

The Proper Officer has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Council's policy. In particular he is responsible for ensuring that the policy is widely communicated and that its effectiveness is monitored.

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer is a nominated person responsible for co-ordinating effective health and safety policies and controls across the organisation. This shall be the Clerk unless otherwise specified.

The Safety Officer is responsible for:

- the production and maintenance of the Council's policy and ensuring that the Guidelines are consistent with policy;
- its application;
- monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of the policy;
- the provision of general advice about the implication of the law;
- the identification of health and safety training needs. The safety officer also acts on behalf of the Proper Officer, as the Council's formal link with the Health and Safety Executive, Environment Health Departments and other external agencies;
- the production and maintenance of Health and Safety Codes of Practice for each aspect of the services within the Council.

Health and safety management process

The provision of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, associated Codes of Practice and E.C. Directives will be adopted as required standards within the Council. Responsibility for Health, Safety and Welfare matters shall be explicitly stated in job descriptions.

The Council requires Councillors and Officers to approach Health, Safety and Welfare in a systematic way, by identifying hazards and problems, planning improvements, taking executive action and monitoring results so

that the majority of Health, Safety and Welfare needs will be met from locally held budgets as part of day-to-day management, although many Health and Safety problems can be rectified at little additional cost.

For major additional expenditure, cases of need will be submitted to the Proper Officer.

If unpredictable Health and Safety issues arise during the year, the Proper Officer must assess the degree of risk, in deciding the necessary resources and actions to commit to addressing these issues.

Health, safety and welfare guidelines

It is the policy of the Council to require the Proper Officer to produce appropriate Health, Safety and Welfare policies or guidelines. These should embody the minimum standards for Health, Safety and Welfare.

It shall be the responsibility of the Officers of the Council to bring to the attention of all members of the Council the provisions of the guidelines, and to consult with appropriate Health and Safety representatives about the updating of these guidelines.

Identification of health and safety hazards and problems

It is the policy of the Council to require a thorough examination of Health, Safety and Welfare performance against established standards, at least annually. The 'Safety Audit' procedure is incorporated within annual risk assessments conducted by the Council.

The information obtained by the Audit will be used to form the basis of the plan for the Council for the following year.

The responsibility for ensuring that audit activity is carried out as part of this policy rests with the Proper Officer and will be carried out by the Safety Officer.

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure that any deficiencies highlighted in the Audit are dealt with as speedily as possible.

In addition to carrying out Safety Audits, it is the responsibility of the Proper Officer to check, at least quarterly, all portable equipment, including electrical appliances, in their area, and to ensure that all problems are immediately dealt with.

It must be emphasised that all members and officers of the Council have a continual responsibility for the elimination of hazards in order to maintain a safe working environment. Any hazard which is identified must be reported to the safety officer as soon as possible.

Safety representatives

The Council will support the Safety Officer in carrying out the role and give all reasonable assistance. Safety Officer will be encouraged to discuss specific health and safety issues with the Proper Officer. They may also formally report hazardous or unsafe circumstances to the Proper Officer and will be formally notified of the remedial action taken or be given a reason why the action cannot be taken.

Training

Health and Safety training shall be incorporated within annual training programmes, as part of the development of a systematic training plan. Health and Safety training needs will, therefore, be identified and planned for in the same manner as other training needs.

Four areas of need shall be given special priority:

- training for Officers and Members of the Council, to equip them with an understanding of their responsibilities under this policy, and the role and purpose of safety representatives;
- training for safety representatives to enable them to discharge their function;
- training for all members of staff and Councillors to acquaint them with the main provisions of the law and its practical implication, the main features of this policy and key safety rules;

- induction and in-service training for staff at all levels to acquaint them fully with new requirements and hazards.

Records, statistics and monitoring

The Council will operate systems for recording, analysis and presentation of information about accidents, hazard situations and untoward occurrences. Advice on systems will be provided by the Safety Officer, in conjunction, where appropriate with specialist advisory bodies for example local Environmental Health Departments, and the responsibility for the operation of these systems rests with managers and supervisors at all levels. Information obtained from the analysis of accident statistics must be acted upon and, where necessary, bids for additional expenditure made to the Proper Officer.

Reports to the health and safety executive

The responsibility for meeting the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 to the Health and Safety Executive, shall rest with the Proper Officer as delegated to the Safety Officer.

Specialist advisory bodies

Certain bodies and the individual members of those bodies, have always had a Health and Safety role, most notably, the Health & Safety executive, or local Environmental Health Departments. If further specialist advice is required, this may be obtained by Managers from expert individuals or bodies outside the Council.

First aid

It is the policy of the Council to make provision for First Aid and the training of 'First Aiders' in accordance with the First Aid Regulations (1982). The Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring the Regulations are implemented and for identifying training needs.

Fire

The Proper Officer is responsible for ensuring that the staff receive adequate fire training, and that nominated fire officers are designated in all Council premises.

In addition the Council will nominate a Fire Officer (this may be the Safety Officer or someone external to the Council)

- report and advise on the standard of fire safety in the Council's premises and the standard of fire training of its staff;
- undertake overall responsibility for fire training;
- assist in the investigation of all fires in the Council's premises and to submit reports of such incidents.

Condemnation and disposal of equipment

Procedures for the, condemnation and disposal of equipment are set out in the Council's Standing Financial Instructions. Officers introducing new equipment should have new equipment checked by the Safety Officer.

Lifting and handling

Officers are responsible for informing staff of safe lifting techniques. The Safety Officer will identify specific training needs.

Control of substances hazardous to health

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) require the Council to identify those substances which are in use and which are hazardous to health (as legally defined) and to assess the risk of those substances. The Council must also provide and use controls to prevent exposure to substances hazardous to health; maintain controls by monitoring exposure, or by health surveillance of employees; and provide information, instruction and training for employees on all these matters. The Safety Officer is responsible for implementing these Regulations. Information held regarding COSHH is located at the Council's three public toilet buildings.

Computer installations and visual display units

All new computer installations must adhere to the British Standard Specifications and comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Control of working time

The Council is committed to the principles of the Working Time Regulations (1998). All other requirements of the regulations e.g. in relation to breaks, night workers, working hours etc. will be complied with.

Health and safety and the individual employee

The Health and Safety at Work Act requires each employee 'to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by their acts and omissions' and co-operate with management to enable management to carry out their responsibilities under the Act. Employees have equal responsibility with the Council for Health and Safety at Work.

The refusal of any employee to meet their obligations will be regarded as a matter to be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. In normal circumstances counselling of the employee should be sufficient. With a continuing problem, or where an employee leaves themselves or other employees open to risk or injury, it may be necessary to implement the formal stages of the Disciplinary Procedure.

People working on council premises not employed by the council

Persons working in the Council premises who are employed by other organisations are expected to follow Council Health and Safety Policies with regard to their personal safety and their method of work. This responsibility will be included in contracts or working arrangements. Similarly seconded Council employees working in other host premises will be expected to follow the host employers Health and Safety Policy.

Visitors and members of the public

The Council wishes to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare of visitors to Council establishments will be of the highest standard.

Any member of staff who notices persons acting in a way which would endanger other staff, should normally inform the Proper Officer. If the danger is immediate, common sense must be used to give warning, call for assistance or give aid as necessary. It is equally important not to over-react to a situation.

Contractors

The Council wishes to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare of Contractors working in the Council's establishments will be of the highest standards. In addition, Contractors and their employees have an obligation so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure all equipment, materials and premises under their control are safe and without risks to health.

Contractors must also observe the Council's Fire Safety Procedures. These obligations will be drawn to the attention of the Contractors in the contract document issued to them. In addition a Council Manager will be identified in the contract as having authority to stop the work of Contractors who are placing themselves, other staff, or visitors at risk. Any member of staff who judges there is a risk where contractors are working, should inform their Manager immediately.

In tendering, Contractors will be asked to confirm they have a written Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. The Council's Manager with responsibility for the Contract will be responsible for monitoring the Health and Safety performance of the Contractor and the Contractor's performance will be a factor in deciding whether or not to invite the Contractor to tender again.