

The Rectorial Benefice of Aberavon

www.parishofaberavon.org

Health and Safety Policy for The Rectorial Benefice of Aberavon

The Parish Policy is to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy environment, equipment and systems of work for all who come to our church and visit the graveyard and plot for the burial of cremated remains at St Mary's

The Parochial Church Council accepts responsibility for the health and safety of those who use our buildings, visit the graveyard and plot for the burial of cremated remains at St Mary's, and undertake voluntary work in our buildings or grounds.

This policy will be kept up to date as new areas of care are found necessary, or legislation changes.

In addition to updating, a complete safety audit will be carried out by the Fabric Committee of the Parochial Church Council every year. The policy and the way in which it is operated will also be reviewed every year.

The Rector, Team Vicar, Assistant clergy, Churchwardens and other members of the Parochial Church Council will be aware of their responsibilities for the following topics: -

- **Reporting of accidents**

Sunday school teachers, churchwardens and others with positions of responsibility will record accidents in the appropriate Accident Book.

- **Fire Prevention and Precautions**

The Fabric Committee of the Parochial Church Council will ensure that regular inspections of the churches take place, and will consider fire prevention and precautions during such inspection. The churchwardens will ensure that the fire extinguishers in the church are maintained annually and replaced after discharge.

- **Provision of telephone**

The Parochial Church Council is unable to provide a telephone in every church or church hall at this time but requires churchwardens, sidesmen and leaders of all groups who use our buildings to bring along their own mobile telephone for use in emergencies.

- **Transport**

The person responsible for organising any vehicular transport for children, young people or adults will use only reputable coach, minibus and taxi firms, and where the transport is to be in private cars will ensure that the drivers have adequate insurance cover for the type of journey being undertaken.

- **First Aid**

There is no nominated person for First Aid in our churches at present.

- **Contractors on church premises**

The Rector of Churchwardens will liaise with the architect or other responsible person in charge of the contract being executed to ensure that proper and adequate insurance is held by all contractors undertaking work in the church or church hall, or in the church or hall grounds. The Rector or Churchwardens will inform EIG of any work being undertaken which may affect the insurance provisions.

- **Emergency procedures (e.g. gas leaks and fires)**

The person who discovers a problem should be aware of the procedures for dealing with it:

- Fire in the church: Shout "Fire" and ensure the churchwarden on duty realises what is happening.

The churchwardens or sidesman will respond appropriately by telephoning the emergency services and helping with the evacuation of the building.

- The external doors at the rear of the building must be opened before every service and must remain unlocked throughout the service. They must be securely locked at the end of the service.

- In the case of a gas leak the person discovering the leak should inform the leader of the event, who will turn off the gas supply. The main gas meter must be clearly marked on a plan of each church

- In the case of an accident always call an ambulance if there is any doubt about the seriousness of the situation, or if someone becomes unconscious.

- **Emergency exits**

Exits in the church will be clearly marked using National standard signs. All bolts or other locks will be in the open position when the church is in use. The exterior pathways will be kept clear of hazards, including overgrowth of vegetation and moss.

- **Hazardous substances**

Petrol must not be stored in any building.

- **Dispensing of medicine**

No one is allowed to dispense medication of any nature to a child, young person or adult on premises for which the Parochial Church Council has responsibility. Plasters are not to be given to (or placed upon wounds suffered by) children or young persons under 18 years of age. They may be given to adults, who can use them if they so wish.

- **Inclement weather**

The churchwardens will liaise with appropriate members of the congregation to ensure that all adequate precautions are taken to clear paths of wet leaves, snow and ice to ensure the safety of all who come to use the churches during inclement weather.

- **Assaults on persons in the church, hall, or grounds.**

If any one acts in an intimidating manner towards another person within the confines of church property, threatens an assault or causes an assault upon a person the police should be contacted immediately by dialling 999. Take no risks and do not wait for anyone else to make the call.

- **Gas and electrical inspections and repairs**

The Churchwardens will arrange for the necessary inspections at the appropriate intervals, by suitably qualified persons, and will ensure the retention of inspection certificates. Gas vents will be properly and regularly checked to ensure they are free of overgrown vegetation or other accumulated rubbish. Routine maintenance and repairs will only be carried out by suitably qualified persons with an adequate and current insurance indemnity. Boundary walls and fences will be maintained in good order, and the fabric committee will ensure repairs are carried out as quickly as possible to prevent accidents.

- **Cleanliness and Rubbish**

The Churchwardens will instruct those responsible for cleaning the church that it is necessary for the rubbish to be available for collection at the appropriate times, and that in accordance with NeathPort Talbot Bye Laws must not be put out onto the street more than 12 hours before collection. Rubbish will not be allowed to accumulate in the vestry, sacristy or other parts of the church. Wherever possible we will recycle all refuse in accordance with County policy.

- **Lighting**

Care will be taken to ensure adequate lighting levels both internally and externally.

- **Ladders**

Volunteers will only be allowed to use ladders if there is a second person present.

- **Sound system**

An induction loop system will be fitted in all church for the hard of hearing, and the Churchwardens will ensure this continues to conform to all British Standards.

- **Quinquennial Inspections**

The Rector and Churchwardens will draw to the attention of the Parochial Church Council, and the Health and Safety Officer, any matters noted in the Quinquennial Inspections that appertain to Health and Safety or the Disability Discrimination Act

- **Votive lights**

The use of votive candles is an ancient expression of prayer and part of the spirituality of the Church. Lights must only be lit in the appropriate stand or holder, and may be left burning until they have extinguished themselves. However, all reasonable care will be taken to ensure that parents understand the risks involved in allowing young children and other young persons to play in areas where votive candles are burning.

Health and Safety inspections will be carried out annually by the Fabric Committee of the Parochial Church Council. H & S inspections will be carried out by the designated person every three months and a report of the inspection shall be logged in the appropriate book, to be found in the Sacristy.

Agreed at the meeting of the Parochial Church Council on

Signed _____ **Rector**

Date _____

**STATEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
AND
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECTORIAL BENEFICE OF ABERAVON
(as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act)**

PART 1:**Statement of the employer's policy and attitude towards health and safety.**

The Rectorial Benefice of Aberavon's general statement of safety policy is published in their Health and Safety Policy.

PART 2:**Organisation intended to carry out the policy.**

- 2.1 This statement covers the organisation and arrangements for The Rectorial Benefice of Aberavon, in order for the policy to be thoroughly implemented.
- 2.2 The aim of this statement is to ensure that all reasonable, practicable steps are taken to secure the health and safety and welfare of all persons using the premises owned by the Church.
- 2.3 The responsibilities of various individuals.

2.3.1 The Rector and Churchwardens

The ultimate responsibility for all safety organisation and activity rests with the Parochial Church Council. However, it is the Rector and Churchwardens, who shall:-

be the focal point for the day to day references on safety and give advice or indicate sources of advice.

The Health and Safety Officer together with members of the Fabric Committee shall:

- a. co-ordinate the implementation of the approved safety procedures in the Parish;
- b. maintain contact with outside agencies able to offer expert advice;
- c. make arrangements for investigation of premises, including the church grounds, on a regular basis, and ensure that they are kept informed of accidents and hazardous situations;
- d. review from time to time:-
 - i) the provision of first aid in the church
 - ii) the emergency regulations
 and make recommendations for improving the procedures laid down;
- e. review regularly the dissemination of safety information concerning the Parish;
- f. recommend necessary changes and improvements in facilities;
- g. inform the Parochial Church Council from time to time of any changes to the Policy.

2.3.2 All Employees

The Health and Safety at Work Act states: "It shall be the duty of every employee while at work:

- a) to take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and any other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work, and,
- b) as regards any duty or requirements imposed on his/her employer or any other person by or

under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him/her so far as it is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with”.

The Act also states: -

“No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions”.

In order that the laws are observed and responsibilities to worshippers and other visitors to the church and hall are carried out, all employees are expected: -

- a) to know the special safety measures and arrangements to be adopted in their own working areas and to ensure that they are applied;
- b) to observe standards of dress consistent with safety and/or hygiene;
- c) to exercise good standards of housekeeping and cleanliness;
- d) to know and apply the emergency procedures in respect of fire and first aid;
- e) to co-operate with other employees in promoting improved safety measures on parish premises;
- f) to use and not wilfully misuse, neglect or interfere with, things provided for their own safety and/or the safety of others;
- g) to co-operate with the appointed safety representatives and the enforcement officers of the Health and Safety Executive or Public Health Authority.

2.3.3 The Health and Safety Officer

The person appointed by the Parochial Church Council shall

- a) have a general responsibility for the application of the Parish’s safety policy and is directly responsible to the Rector for the application of existing safety measures and procedures within the Church
- b) where necessary, establish and maintain safe working practices including arrangements for ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- c) resolve any health and safety problem referred to him/her and refer to the Rector and Churchwardens any of these problems for which he/she cannot achieve a satisfactory solution within the resources available.
- d) carry out a regular safety inspection of the activities for which they are responsible and, where necessary submit a report to the Rector and Churchwarden.
- e) ensure as far as is reasonable & practicable the provision of sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable others to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.
- f) where appropriate, seek the advice and guidance.
- g) propose to the Parochial Church Council requirements for safety equipment and advice on additions or improvements to plant, tools, equipment or machinery, which are dangerous or potentially so.

2.3.4 Special Obligations of Sunday School Teachers and others with responsibility for children on church premises

The safety of children is the responsibility of the teacher or other adult in charge of a group.

If for any reason (e.g. the condition or location of equipment, the physical state of the room), teachers consider they cannot accept this responsibility, they should discuss the matter with the Rector before continuing with the meeting.

Sunday school teachers and other adults in a supervisory capacity are expected:

- a) to exercise effective supervision of and to know the emergency procedures
- b) to know the special safety measures to be adopted and to implement them.
- c) to give clear instructions and warnings as often as necessary.
- d) to follow safe working procedures personally.
- e) to make recommendations to the Health and Safety Officer on safety equipment and on additions or improvements to plant, tools, equipment or machinery which are dangerous or potentially so.

2.3.5 Children, Young persons, Parents and Guardians

It is expected that children and young persons will

- a) exercise personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and others as commensurate with their age and responsibility;
- b) observe standards of dress consistent with safety and/or hygiene
- c) observe all safety rules of the parish and in particular the instruction of supervising adults given in an emergency.
- d) use and not wilfully misuse, neglect or interfere with things provided for their safety.

It is expected that parents and guardians will

- e) exercise personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and those in their care;
- f) observe standards of dress consistent with safety and/or hygiene
- g) observe all safety rules of the parish and in particular the instruction of supervising adults given in an emergency;
- h) use and not wilfully misuse, neglect or interfere with things provided for safety;
- i) be aware that the burning of votive candles is an ancient practice of the Church as a sign of prayer and respect, and understand the dangers of allowing those in their care to play freely in an area where votive candles are burning.

2.3.6 Visitors

Regular visitors and other users of the premises should be required to observe the safety rules of the Parish. In particular, any volunteer should be made aware of the health and safety arrangements applicable to them by the Health and Safety Officer or the Churchwardens.

PART 3: Arrangements Established to Carry out the Policy

To enable the Parochial Church Council to meet the requirements of the legislation referred to in this document, the Rector, Churchwardens, Sidespersons, members of the Council and all other regular worshippers must follow the following procedures and arrangements:

3.1 Accidents

All accidents must be reported to the Churchwardens. As soon as possible after each incident, the circumstances must be fully and accurately reported in the appropriate accident book obtainable from the Sacristy. Where necessary, detailed statements should be obtained from witnesses.

ALL accidents *however trivial* must be recorded in the accident book. In the event of a serious incident the Insurance Company should be informed immediately by the Churchwardens.

Notification, where appropriate, of the Health and Safety Executive, will be the responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer of the Parochial Church Council.

**** A serious incident is defined as "where the parent/guardian of a child or young person is required to be contacted or where medical attention by Ambulance, at hospital or doctors/dentists surgery is required by any person."***

3.2 First Aid

In cases of illness or accident, first aid should be rendered only as far as knowledge and skill admit. The patient should be given all possible reassurances, and if absolutely necessary, removed from danger. There is a first aid box in each church. There is no nominated person for First Aid in our churches.

3.3 Transport to Hospital

If an ambulance is required, the emergency "999" service should be contacted by whoever is first on the scene.

A responsible adult should accompany any child or young person to hospital, where the parents are absent from the scene and delay is regarded as unwise by the medical team who have responded to the 999 call. It may be appropriate to transport a child or young person to a casualty department without using the ambulance service in cases of less severe nature, and wherever possible the parents/guardians must be contacted and asked to arrange this. If they cannot be contacted or cannot arrange transport, **two** responsible adults may volunteer to substitute, with the approval of the Rector or Churchwardens or other competent person in authority at the time. The volunteer driver must be asked if he or she has adequate insurance cover to undertake such a journey with a passenger.

3.4 Administration of Medicines

No-one is to administer medicine to any other person of whatever age.

3.5 Emergency Procedures

- a. It is the duty of all Parochial Church Council Members, all Sunday School teachers, and all other adults who supervise church sponsored groups to carry out these procedures as detailed above, and to be aware of emergency exits.
- b. The rear doors must be unlocked at St Mary's, St Agnes' and St Paul's when the church is in use, and at Holy Tribnity it must be possible to freely open the fire doors as and when needed.

3.6 Environment

Defects in heating, lighting, ventilation, etc, should be reported to the Churchwardens who will liaise with the Fabric Committee so that repairs may be initiated with an approved contractor.

3.8 Fabric Committee's Responsibility for Health and Safety

The Fabric Committee is a sub committee of the Parochial Church Council. The committee must appoint or co-opt the person designated by the Parochial Church Council as Health and Safety Officer, who may attend meetings of that committee even if not wishing to become a member of the Parochial Church Council.

As part of its overall responsibilities the following will be standard agenda items:-

- i) discussion of all accidents which have occurred since the last meeting, and of any remedial action that was taken to prevent a re-occurrence;
- ii) the arrangements for the next quarterly inspection of the premises and grounds and consideration of any matters arising from the previous inspection;
- iii) consideration of the implementation in the church, grounds or hall of any safety instructions advice issued by the Governing Body, Representative Body, Diocesan authority or the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group;
- iv) consideration of progress on remedying any hazards which may have occurred;
- v) at the first meeting of the new term of Office following the Annual Vestry Meeting, to review the content of the Parish's statement of health and safety arrangements and to monitor its implementation.

After each meeting, agreed action-sheets will be prepared. These will be sent to the Rector and Churchwardens for their information.

3.9 Inspections

The Fabric Committee will arrange for the safety inspection of each church premises each quarter. The committee may delegate this to the Health and Safety Officer. Reports will be made to the Parochial Church Council.

Electrical Inspections

The electrical equipment and installation will be checked by a qualified person every two years, and the appropriate certificate of safety logged and kept in a safe place.

Gas Inspections

The gas installation and all gas equipment will be serviced annually and the appropriate certificate logged and kept in a safe place.

3.11 New members of the Parochial Church Council, Sidesmen etc.

All new members of the PCC or other volunteers in key positions of authority will receive a copy of this document, and a detailed verbal explanation of procedures.

3.12 Conclusion

It is the responsibility of everyone to make these arrangements work. This will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that working conditions are safe and that the participants in our activities remain accident free.

If an enforcement notice or prohibition notice is served by an enforcement officer (e.g. Factories Inspector or Environmental Health Officer), the Rector should immediately advise the Parochial Church Council. If a prohibition notice is issued with immediate effect, the activities should cease forthwith.

Any person noticing a failure to comply with this statement of organisation and arrangements, or other advice/guidance issued by the Rector, Churchwardens or Parochial Church Council in pursuance of the safety policy, should immediately report the circumstances to the Rector or Churchwardens. They should then report the matter to the Health and Safety Officer and agree how to initiate appropriate remedial action.

Hazardous situations should also be reported immediately and the same procedure followed. Suggestions by any person to improve standards of health and safety are welcomed by the Parochial Church Council.

Appendix A Key Issues: Summary And Responsibilities

All surfaces that are walked on must be in good condition - broken tiles, stones, slippery surfaces, carpets, mats and rugs must not present a hazard.	Fabric committee.
Emergency exits must have locks and bolts released during use of buildings, gas vents must be clear of vegetation and rubbish, exits must have clear pathways, and all pathways & drains around the Church must be clear at all times to prevent hazard.	Wardens /sidespersons/ fabric committee
Accidents must be entered in the accident books.	Person responsible on duty at the time.
Serious incidents should be reported to the EIG	Wardens
Rubbish must not be allowed to accumulate	Cleaners Wardens
Electrical and gas installations must be inspected by properly qualified persons	Churchwardens
Removal of ice, leaves etc. from paths to make them safe for use	Churchwardens
No one is to dispense medicines of any nature to any member of the congregation	All members
Provision of a mobile telephone for use in church	The person designated in charge at any given time.
Fire equipment to be in good order	Fabric Committee. Wardens.
Fire equipment maintenance	Fabric Committee Wardens.
Liaison with EIG when contractors are on site	Rector and Churchwardens
Transport arrangements: adequate insurance cover	Those in charge of the outing.
First Aid	No one is to administer First Aid who is not suitably qualified
Safety of equipment etc. used by Sunday School or other youth group leader	Leader of the group
Safety of equipment etc. used by any other church organisation	Leader of the group