

# The Parish Council of Little Harrowden



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## Health and Safety Policy

Procedure created for, reviewed and adopted at the meeting of Little Harrowden Parish Council held on: 09.09.26

This policy shall be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier if required by changes to legislation, guidance or the Council's procedures. **Next review: September 2029**

**Signed:** .....

**Name:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **1. Policy Statement**

Little Harrowden Parish Council recognises its responsibilities as an employer and as a body whose activities, land, assets and events may affect employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers and members of the public. The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to provide and maintain safe and healthy working arrangements and to protect people who may be affected by its activities.

The Council will comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and guidance. In particular, it will assess and manage risks arising from its work and activities, provide appropriate information, instruction, equipment and supervision, and maintain its assets so far as is reasonably practicable.

Although the Council has fewer than five employees and is not legally required to have a written health and safety policy, it has adopted this policy as good governance and to provide a clear framework for managing health and safety.

The Council owns no buildings. It owns Lower Meadow dog walking area, the play area and children's play equipment including the MUGA, streetlights, Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and other street furniture including planters and seats. It also organises or supports community activities and events and uses volunteers. These activities and assets are therefore reflected in the arrangements below.

## **2. Responsibilities**

Little Harrowden Parish Council retains overall corporate responsibility for health and safety and for ensuring adequate arrangements and resources are in place. The Clerk, as Proper Officer, has day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy on behalf of the Council and will:

- keep informed of relevant health and safety requirements and advise the Council where action is required;
- ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are prepared for Council activities, events, volunteer tasks and relevant assets, and reviewed when circumstances materially change or following an accident or significant incident;
- maintain appropriate records of risk assessments, inspections, accidents, near misses and health and safety actions;
- arrange for identified defects or hazards to be reported, isolated or addressed according to the level of risk and within the Council's authority and resources;
- ensure contractors engaged by the Council are appropriately competent and, where relevant, provide evidence of insurance, risk assessments, method statements or safe systems of work;
- ensure volunteers receive appropriate information and instructions for the activity they undertake; and
- report significant health and safety matters to the Council.

Employees, councillors and volunteers undertaking activities on behalf of the Council must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions, follow the Council's risk assessments and instructions, use equipment and PPE correctly, and report hazards, accidents, near misses or defects promptly to the Clerk or activity organiser.

## **3. Risk Assessment and Safe Working**

The Council will identify hazards, assess the risks arising from its activities and assets, and eliminate or control those risks so far as is reasonably practicable in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Risk assessments will be proportionate to the activity and level of risk. They may include general Council activities, play areas and open spaces, trees, street furniture, events, volunteer activities, lone working, manual handling, work equipment and other specific tasks where appropriate.

Risk assessments will be reviewed where there is reason to believe they are no longer valid, following a significant incident or material change, and otherwise as part of the Council's regular risk-management arrangements. Event and volunteer risk assessments will be prepared or reviewed for the particular activity.

#### **4. Council Land, Play Area and Public Assets**

The Council will take reasonable care to ensure that land and assets for which it is responsible are reasonably safe for their intended and foreseeable use, having regard to its duties under the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 and other applicable legislation.

The play area, children's play equipment and MUGA will be subject to an appropriate inspection and maintenance regime, including routine visual/operational inspections and an annual independent specialist inspection by an appropriately certified body. The Council currently arranges the annual independent specialist inspection through RoSPA. Defects will be assessed according to risk and appropriate action taken, which may include monitoring, repair, isolation or removal from use.

Lower Meadow, street furniture, planters, seats and other Council-owned assets will be inspected or monitored on a proportionate, risk-based basis. Trees for which the Council is responsible will be subject to appropriate inspection or specialist survey according to their condition, location and level of risk.

Streetlights and VAS units will be maintained through competent contractors where electrical, highway or specialist work is required. Councillors, employees and volunteers must not undertake electrical or specialist maintenance unless competent and authorised to do so.

#### **5. Village Hall - Custodian Trustee**

The Council owns no buildings but acts as custodian trustee of Little Harrowden Village Hall. Custodian trusteeship does not, of itself, mean that the Council manages the day-to-day operation of the hall. Health and safety responsibility will depend on the trust arrangements and who has control of the premises or the relevant activity.

The Council will maintain clarity with the managing trustees or management committee about their respective responsibilities. Where the Council organises its own meeting or event at the Village Hall, it will follow the venue's applicable safety and fire arrangements and will assess risks arising from the Council's own activity. Where responsibility or control is shared, the parties will co-operate and co-ordinate as appropriate.

#### **6. Volunteers and Community Activities**

The Council uses volunteers for activities including community litter picks, clean-up days and Community Speedwatch. The Council will take reasonable steps to ensure that volunteer activities it organises are properly planned and that volunteers are not exposed to avoidable risks.

A suitable activity-specific risk assessment will be completed or reviewed before each organised volunteer activity. There is no standard volunteer risk-assessment sign-off template. The Council uses its standard volunteer sign-in sheet, which is amended as necessary for the specific activity or event, together with a stand-alone risk assessment prepared for the particular hazards, needs and requirements of that activity. Volunteers will be given the relevant instructions and controls before taking part and will sign the attendance sheet to confirm attendance and that they have read and understood the applicable risk assessment, agreement or conditions.

Controls may include appropriate PPE, safe equipment, defined work areas, supervision or buddy arrangements, restrictions relating to roads or hazardous areas, first-aid arrangements and procedures for reporting hazardous waste, defects, accidents or incidents. Children participating in Council-organised activities must remain subject to appropriate parental or responsible-adult supervision unless a specific alternative arrangement has been formally established.

Community Speedwatch activities will be carried out in accordance with the requirements, training and operating procedures of the police or other body responsible for the scheme, together with any Council risk assessment applicable to its involvement.

## **7. Events**

The Council organises or supports community events including the Christmas light switch-on, Remembrance Sunday and similar community occasions. Each Council-organised event will be considered individually and a suitable and sufficient event risk assessment will be completed or reviewed before the event.

Event arrangements will take account, where relevant, of the venue or site, numbers attending, traffic and pedestrian movement, weather, temporary equipment, electricity, lighting, fire and emergency arrangements, first aid, contractors, volunteers, children and vulnerable persons, accessibility and any other significant hazards.

Where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as amended) applies to a Council-organised event or temporary event arrangements, and the Council is the responsible person or otherwise has duties because of the extent of its control, the Council will ensure that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is completed and appropriate fire precautions and emergency arrangements are recorded and implemented. This includes relevant open-air events and temporary event structures where the legislation applies.

Volunteers assisting at an event will receive relevant information and instructions. The Council's standard volunteer sign-in sheet will be amended as necessary for the particular event and used alongside the stand-alone event-specific risk assessment. Volunteers will sign the attendance sheet to confirm attendance and that they have read and understood the applicable risk assessment, agreement or conditions. Where third parties provide specialist services, equipment or activities, the Council will seek appropriate evidence of competence, insurance and risk controls where proportionate to the risk.

## **8. Contractors and Work Equipment**

Contractors will be selected with regard to their competence for the work concerned. For higher-risk or specialist work the Council may require appropriate insurance, qualifications, risk assessments, method statements and safe systems of work before work begins.

Any equipment provided by the Council for use by employees or volunteers will be suitable for its intended purpose, maintained in a safe condition and used in accordance with instructions. Defective equipment must be taken out of use and reported. The Council will comply with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 where applicable.

Portable electrical equipment will be maintained according to risk. Routine visual checks will be used where appropriate and formal inspection or testing will be arranged where the equipment, environment, manufacturer's instructions or risk assessment indicates it is necessary; annual PAT testing is not automatically required.

## **9. Manual Handling, PPE and Hazardous Substances**

Hazardous manual handling will be avoided where reasonably practicable. Where it cannot be avoided, the task will be assessed and the risk reduced so far as reasonably practicable in accordance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. This includes occasional Council tasks such as moving equipment, tables, chairs, planters or event materials.

Where a risk assessment identifies PPE as necessary, suitable PPE will be provided or specified and must be used as instructed. Volunteers undertaking litter picks or clean-up activities will follow the PPE and equipment requirements set out in the relevant activity risk assessment.

Where Council activities involve substances hazardous to health, including cleaning or maintenance substances, appropriate controls will be applied under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. Volunteers must not handle unidentified or potentially hazardous waste, chemicals, asbestos or sharps except where a specific safe procedure and suitable equipment have been provided.

## **10. Lone Working and Personal Safety**

The Council will consider lone-working risks where an employee, councillor or volunteer is carrying out Council business without close or direct supervision. Appropriate controls may include informing another person of location and expected return time, carrying a charged mobile phone, avoiding isolated or higher-risk situations, meeting in public or suitable locations, and withdrawing from situations involving aggression or unacceptable risk.

No person is expected to continue an activity where they reasonably believe there is an immediate and serious risk to their safety. Any threatening, aggressive or violent incident arising from Council work should be reported promptly to the Clerk and, where necessary, to the police.

## **11. Home Working and Display Screen Equipment**

The Council's responsibilities as an employer apply to home working. The Clerk's normal workstation and working arrangements will be considered through an appropriate home-working/display screen equipment assessment. A basic Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment will be completed for the Clerk's home workstation and reviewed where there is a significant change or where concerns arise. The Council will comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 where applicable, including appropriate workstation arrangements, breaks or changes of activity and eye tests for qualifying display screen users. The Council also recognises its duty to assess and manage the risk of work-related stress and will take reasonable steps to support the Clerk in maintaining a manageable workload, appropriate working arrangements and access to support, taking account of the particular circumstances of a sole or very small workforce.

## **12. Meetings, Venues, Fire and Emergency Arrangements**

As the Council owns no buildings, it will familiarise itself with and follow the relevant health, safety, fire and emergency arrangements of premises used for Council meetings or activities. Where appropriate, attendees will be made aware of emergency exits, assembly points or other relevant arrangements.

For Council-organised outdoor or temporary events, emergency arrangements will be proportionate to the event risk assessment and may include access for emergency services, evacuation or cancellation arrangements, first aid, communications and adverse-weather procedures.

## **13. First Aid, Accidents, Near Misses and RIDDOR**

Appropriate first-aid arrangements will be identified through risk assessment for Council activities and events. The Council will maintain a record of accidents and significant near misses notified to it and will review incidents where necessary to identify whether further controls are required.

The Clerk will determine whether an incident is reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) and, where the Council is the responsible person, will ensure that the required report is made to the appropriate enforcing authority within the statutory timescale. Reportable deaths, specified injuries and dangerous occurrences must be notified without delay and the report received within 10 days of the incident; over-seven-day injuries must be reported within 15 days of the incident. Reportable occupational diseases must be reported when the Council receives a written diagnosis from a doctor confirming that the employee has a reportable disease linked to occupational exposure.

Accident and incident records will be handled and retained in accordance with the Council's Records Retention Policy and data protection requirements.

## **14. Insurance**

The Council will maintain Employers' Liability insurance as required because it employs staff, together with appropriate public liability and other insurance cover relevant to its activities and assets. The Council will comply with any reasonable risk-management or notification requirements of its insurers.

## **15. Information, Instruction, Training and Consultation**

The Council will provide employees, councillors and volunteers with health and safety information, instruction or training appropriate to the activities they undertake. The Clerk will undertake or refresh relevant health and safety training where appropriate to the role.

The Council will consult its employee on health and safety matters as required and will take account of relevant concerns raised by councillors, contractors, volunteers or members of the public.

## **16. Review and Monitoring**

This policy will be formally reviewed in accordance with the review period stated on the front page, or earlier following significant legislative or guidance changes, a material change in Council activities or assets, a serious accident or incident, or where experience indicates that the policy is no longer effective.

The three-year review period for this policy does not replace the more frequent review of individual risk assessments, inspections, event arrangements or safety controls where required by risk, change or circumstances.