

Health and Safety Policy

St Brandon's Parish Church

**Brancepeth
Durham**

Our Health and Safety Policy

As a church we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit and use our church or churchyard.

We also know that, where we control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

This policy follows, in the main, the guidelines provided by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Co. Ltd. at their website www.ecclesiastical.com/healthandsafety, where further information can be found.

General statement of our policy

Our policy is to ensure, as far is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our volunteers, congregation, visitors, and others who may use the church and churchyard. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) accepts overall responsibility for this. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will appoint a member of the PCC to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation. We will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

Further details about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept in the church as well as made available on our church website www.stbrandon.org.uk

Signed:

C.J.Waterman, PCC Secretary

on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as agreed at a meeting on ...16/03/2026.....

Organisation and Responsibility

The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is:

Mike Higton

Who will ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained
- Where necessary specialist health and safety assistance is obtained
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified as soon as possible
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church
- They set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy. They are:

Carol Beeby

Mike Higton

They will ensure that:

- All volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments
- Adequate information and training is provided for those who need it
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of the policy
- They set a personal example on matters of health and safety

All **volunteers** have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves.

They will ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so this might be dealt with
- Warn any new volunteers of known hazards
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so
- Report any accident
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks.

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety objectives. Where an appointment is made we will record the details here.

Risk Assessment

We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they may no longer be valid.

Information and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for volunteers.

Our first aid box is located in the **Church Kitchen**

Our person in charge of the first aid arrangements is **Carol Beeby**

Accident Reporting

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Our Accident Book is kept in the **Church Kitchen**

Monitoring

We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any electrical, lifting or work equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure they remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make.

Contractors

If we employ contractors we make sure they have their own safety policy and public and Employers Liability Insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.

Record Keeping

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in the **Vestry**

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our building and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will implement any plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (for example building contractors). We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans that we have made.

Bell Ringing

We will ensure that adequate precautions are in place to protect bellringers and other groups who may enter the ringing room and bell chamber. This will include any evacuation procedure, a safe means of heating, the provision of fire extinguishers, the provision of emergency lighting, and the notification of safety procedures to visiting bellringers.

Church Building

We will ensure that the fabric of our building is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable bearing in mind that a faculty may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

Churchyard

We will ensure that boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair. We will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe. Headstones, tombs and monuments will be checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained.

Construction Work

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work commences. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these as necessary.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliances is maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks where appropriate.

Events

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

Fire

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect they are no longer valid.

Heating System

We will ensure that our gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected as practicably possible and keep records of the checks made.

Hazardous Substances

We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products. We will ensure that they are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking any necessary precautions that are specified. No petrol is stored on site.

Lifting Equipment

We will ensure that any lifting equipment is properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.

Manual Handling

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practicable, we will make use of lifting aids (such as, trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting.

Off-site activities

Where organised off-site activities take place in the Church's name (such as a Sunday School trip), we will ensure a risk assessment has been carried out, the risks are minimised, and identified actions to ensure the activity takes place safely are followed. Where off-site activities involve use of other premises (such as the Youth Club using the Village Hall), we will ensure that, in addition to a generic risk assessment, a health and safety checks carried out on a regular basis.

Preparation of Food

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, we use clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste.

Slips and Trips

We will implement suitable procedures to prevent trips or slips, taking into account on any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as, hand rails or lighting) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

Tower Tours

We do not provide tower tours but if exceptionally they were to occur a full risk assessment will be required in advance of the tour.

Working at Height

Where possible we will avoid the need to work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. We will keep records of any checks we make.

Working Alone

We will identify circumstances where our volunteers work alone, and implement precautions to ensure their safety.