



HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY **FOR PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES**

1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- 1.1 Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for its members, employees, volunteers, visitors and for anyone affected by its activities and to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.
- 1.2 The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which we will make to implement the policy are set out below.
- 1.3 The policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the Council's activities change in nature and size. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it is operated will be reviewed every second year.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Overall the final responsibility for health and safety in the Council and for compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulations made under the Act and the Occupiers Liability Act is that of the Parish Council of Heathfield and Waldron. The Clerk is responsible for this policy being carried out and for safety at the Council's premises.
- 2.2 All employees have the responsibility to co-operate to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- 2.3 Whenever an employee notices a health or safety problem which they are not able to put right, they must tell the Assistant Clerk or in her absence the Clerk.
- 2.5 The Accident Record Book is kept in the Parish Council offices. All accidents shall be reported to the Clerk who will record them in the Accident Record book.

3. FIRST AID

- 3.1 A first aid box is located in the reception area of the Parish Council offices.
- 3.2 The Clerical Assistant on reception is responsible for the First Aid box and for ensuring that the contents are within date.

4. FIRE SAFETY

- 4.1 Fire extinguishers shall be visually inspected monthly as part of the Office Risk Assessment. Fire extinguishers shall be maintained annually (currently Haven Security)
- 4.2 The fire alarm system at the Parish Council offices shall be tested weekly by the Clerical Assistant who will also keep a log sheet.
A fire drill shall be held annually at the Parish Council offices. Annual electrical certificates shall be obtained on all electrical equipment and on fixed electrical items every five years.
- 4.3 Fire exits, exit corridors, landings and staircases must be kept free from obstructions at all times.
- 4.4 Flammable materials should, where possible, be stored in the cupboard under the sink in the kitchen. Air fresheners will be allowed in the toilets, however no cleaning materials should be stored in the two downstairs toilets.
- 4.5 Notices shall be displayed giving directions for the evacuation of buildings in the event of fire. All staff must be fully conversant with the Fire Evacuation Procedures displayed in the office. The assembly point is the Parish Council's car park. Providing it is safe to do so, one member of staff who is on the ground floor should ensure that the ground floor is evacuated and if it is safe to do so to check that no-one is in the basement and should exit the building via the front or side door. Providing it is safe to do so, one member of staff on the first floor should ensure that all rooms on the first floor are evacuated.
- 4.6 All staff must familiarise themselves on how to use the different fire extinguishers.
- 4.7 Waste paper bins must be emptied each week.

5. TRAINING

- 5.1 The Clerk has overall responsibility for training.

6. SPECIFIC POLICIES

- 6.1 Policies for particular premises and activities are attached as Annexes as follows:
- Manual handling at work
 - COSHH – manual cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

7. EMPLOYMENT OF CONTRACTORS

- 7.1 The Clerk will ensure that any contractors have the relevant public liability insurance for the work they are undertaking for the Parish Council and where applicable that a risk assessment is provided.

8. SMOKING

8.1 Smoking is not allowed in the Parish Council office.

9. HEATING, LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

9.1 Temperature must reach a minimum of 16 degrees C after the first hour of working time and be maintained between 16 and 20 degrees C throughout the working day.

9.2 Free standing heaters must not be used unless specifically authorised. When these are so authorised, they must comply fully with Fire Regulations and the area around them must be kept clear of any paper or other flammable materials, and be sited away from desks and chairs.

9.3 Office lighting. 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.

10. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

10.1 All electrical equipment shall be inspected in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/635)

10.2 Mains must not be overloaded. It is important that the correct socket outlet and plug top face (where these are available) is used for each item of electrical equipment.

10.3 13amp plugs can be used for appliances with a loading capacity maximum of 13 amps. Fuses must be fitted to suit current load of the equipment being used, e.g. desk lamp: 3 amp fuse; 2-bar heater, kettle: 13 amp fuse. Fuses are available with ratings of 3, 5, 7, 10 and 13 amps. The current load is normally shown on the item of equipment. When in doubt, do not guess, seek qualified advice.

10.4 Only electrical equipment provided by the Council should be used and electric points must not be overloaded by means of multi-adaptors. All heaters and fans should be switched off when not in use.

10.5 Leads from points for various desk uses should not present a hazard by trailing across areas of access. Extension leads should not be overloaded.

10.6 Defective equipment must never be used. Staff should not attempt to effect repairs to electrical equipment, unless competent to do so.

11. FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT

11.1 Heavy equipment and furniture must not be moved by office staff.

- 11.2 Office equipment whether manually or electrically operated, must not be used by unauthorised, untrained personnel.
- 11.3 Filing cabinets should always have sufficient weight in the bottom drawer to prevent the cabinet from tipping when a full top drawer is opened. Filing cabinet and desk drawers must always be closed immediately after use. Drawer filing cabinets 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. Damaged or defective cabinets must not be used.
- 11.4 High shelves should only be reached through the use of steps provided for that purpose. It is dangerous to stand on desks and chairs, particularly those fitted with castors and this should be avoided at all times.

12. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

- 12.1 If there is heavy snowfall or other adverse weather such as storms or floods, staff should contact the Clerk if they are unable, or it is unsafe for them to get into work. If the situation improves during the day and it is safe for them to travel into work and later return home, they should make every effort to get to the office, unless they have made other arrangements with the Clerk. The Clerk will inform the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of any closures of the office.
- 12.2 If the Clerk, or the Assistant Clerk in his/her absence, feels that snowfall or other adverse weather is sufficient for it to be likely to be unsafe for staff to remain at the office until the end of the work day, they should be given the option to leave early and if possible to work from home instead, if this is not possible they will not be required to make up the time.
- 12.3 Where staff are unable to attend work they will be required to make up the work hours that have been lost within one calendar month. If they have been able to work from home these hours will be go towards the lost work hours.
- 12.4 If the Clerk makes the decision to shut the office, the Assistant Clerk, if he/she is available, will place a notice on the office door confirming that the office is shut due to adverse weather and giving an emergency telephone number for contact. The Clerk will also put a notice on the Parish Council website and will contact the representatives of anyone who has a booking for the office meeting room. The Clerk will inform the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the office closure.
- 12.5 With regard to the lone worker policy, if only one staff member is able to be in the office it will be shut to members of the public.
- 12.6 If there is heavy ice overnight the Grounds Maintenance contractor will arrange for the driveway and parking area to be gritted, prior to staff commencing work.

Display Screen Equipment

The Council understands that the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 apply to work with display screen equipment (DSE). Compliance with the DSE regulations are in addition to the general duties on employers contained within the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974.

The use of DSE by staff will be subject to risk assessment — the assessment will be followed by the provision, maintenance and monitoring of appropriate control measures to minimise any hazards

Individual DSE users and their workstations will be assessed and appropriate control measures introduced to reduce any risks identified — these might include changes to DSE equipment itself (eg a new mouse, screen or keyboard) or changes to chairs, workstations, lighting, posture, etc

Workstation assessments will be regularly reviewed as appropriate, or reviewed wherever there have been changes such as where a member of staff moves to a new workstation or uses a temporary or shared workstation

Staff using DSE will be encouraged to take regular breaks from DSE work for a short period each hour i.e. by a change of work activity to something that does not involve DSE use

A DSE safety checklist and information pack will be made available to all staff who use DSE which supports them in assessing and adjusting their own workstations and working habits

Staff who use DSE for a significant part of their working time will be eligible for an annual eyesight test which will be paid for by the Council.

DSE workstation risk assessments should identify any reasonable adjustments which need to be made under the Equality Act 2010 — these might include specialist IT equipment or adaptations to chairs and workstations required for staff who have disabilities or ongoing health issues.

Representatives of the staffing sub-committee will work with the Clerk to review and investigate any incidents, accidents or staff health issues that may be related to DSE work. The results of any review and any lessons learnt will be used to inform and improve safety procedures.

Helen Johnson August 2021