

Risk Assessment

Activity General Church Use – to be used in conjunction with event specific risk assessments			
Date of Assessment 16-11-2025		By The Revd Max Drinkwater in consultation with Churchwardens	
What are the risks?	Who might be affected?	What are you doing to reduce the risk?	What further action needs to be taken?
Main Church Areas The floor is all on one level and should not present a trip hazard. There are cables trailing across the south aisle in front of the pulpit and across the chancel behind the altar, covered by raised cable guards which are stuck to the floor. The entrance to the church is ramped with a handrail along the length of the porch. Water and debris, especially fallen leaves, sometimes gather in this area presenting a slip hazard. In wet weather, water can track into the entrance foyer on people's feet. The gates to the porch and inner wooden doors are heavy and can cause injury if incorrectly operated. The inner glass door is automatic and has a safety response so should not present a hazard.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy. Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy. Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure cable guards are secure and cables do not come loose. Ensure main thoroughfares are kept clear of clutter. Use handrail for support. Stewards ensure that the porch is clear of hazards when opening church, especially in adverse weather conditions. Stewards monitor water in the entrance foyer in adverse weather conditions and clear as needed. Only trained stewards should operate the gates or inner wooden doors. The inner glass door should be left on the 'automatic' setting when the church is in use.	Review placement of cables and possibilities to better integrate cables into the fabric of the church.

Rainwater has been known to ingress through the roof and windows during adverse weather conditions.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy.	Ensure floor is clear of hazards when opening church, especially in adverse weather conditions. Mop up any water and cordon wet areas if needed.	Regularly ensure drains and gutters are clear and in good working order. Review windows and roof as part of ongoing maintenance and inspection of the fabric of the church.
Heating is provided by blowers around the edge of the nave, fed by hot water pipes in grills beneath the floor. There are also overhead heaters in the choir and chapel.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy.	Ensure space in front of heaters is clear, especially of free-standing display units. Do not seat people directly in front of heaters. Ensure grills are secure so that there is no access to hot water pipes.	Clean blower filters annually. Regularly inspect fire extinguishers and safety equipment as part of routine maintenance. Keep an up-to-date log of inspections.
Votive candles are available for people to light at the entrance to the chapel. Gas lighters are provided which do not remain alight after use.	Congregation, visitors, clergy.	Ensure area around votive candle stand is kept clear of flammable material, especially free-standing display units and flower displays.	As above.
Fire exits are provided through the main entrance, through the community area and through the organ or vestry.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy.	Ensure all fire exits are unlocked while the church is in use and escape routes, are kept clear at all times, including through the organ and vestry, and are marked by self-illuminating notices. Ensure seating during busy services maintains clear escape routes.	Provide appropriate fire safety equipment in visible locations in the nave, near to exits.
There is portable electrical equipment in regular use in the nave, especially the electric piano, keyboards, sound equipment, laptop and camera.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure equipment is in good working order before each use.	Regularly inspect and test portable appliances as part of routine maintenance. Keep an up-to-date log of inspections.
The font has a counter-weighted cover which is secured open by a rope.	Congregation, clergy.	Ensure font cover is kept closed when not in use. Secure font cover open using rope and hook when in use.	
Chairs and choir stalls, which are heavy, can be rearranged for services and events as needed.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Competent people to rearrange furniture, taking care to follow good lifting and carrying procedure.	

The organ is a complicated and delicate instrument, accessed through a door in the choir pews.	Organist	Keep the organ console locked when not in use. Access given to competent, authorised people only. The organist should access the console through the door provided.	
The grand piano is a delicate instrument. It can be moved as needed.	Pianist, congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Competent people to move the piano, taking care to follow good lifting and carrying procedure. If the lid of the piano is to be propped open, it should be done securely.	
Day-to-day use of the church could still result in accidents, even where risk is mitigated.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	First aid boxes and accident report books are located in the kitchen and vestry. Health and safety posters are displayed in the community area and vestry. The PCC have a health and safety policy.	Regularly review the health and safety policy, general risk assessment and event-specific risk assessments.
Community Area			
The floor is all on one level and should not present a trip hazard.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy.	Ensure main thoroughfares are kept clear of clutter.	
The main entrance to the community area is through the inner door to the entrance foyer. There is also an external door which can be used for intermittent access, especially to access the toilets, which contains a wicket door. There is a small step when the external doors are open, and their wicket door opens with a large beam at foot level.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	If regular access is required through the external doors, the full door should be opened. A portable ramp is provided next to the external doors.	
Rainwater has been known to ingress underneath the external doors during adverse weather conditions.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure floor is clear of hazards when opening church, especially in adverse weather conditions. Mop up any water	Review condition of external doors and consider preventative measures to stop water ingress.

Heating is provided by blowers around the edge of the community area, fed by hot water pipes in grills beneath the floor.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy.	and cordon wet areas if needed.	
Fire exits are provided through the main entrance, through the external doors area or through the sliding doors into the nave.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, choir, clergy.	Ensure space in front of heaters is clear, especially of free-standing display units. Do not seat people directly in front of heaters. Ensure grills are secure so that there is no access to hot water pipes.	Clean blower filters annually. Regularly inspect fire extinguishers and safety equipment as part of routine maintenance. Keep an up-to-date log of inspections.
There is portable electrical equipment in regular use in the community area.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure all fire exits are unlocked while the church is in use and escape routes are kept clear at all times. Ensure seating during busy services maintains clear escape routes.	Provide appropriate fire safety equipment in visible locations in the community area, near to exits.
There are sliding doors which can be opened between the community area and the nave.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure equipment is in good working order before each use.	Regularly inspect and test portable appliances as part of routine maintenance. Keep an up-to-date log of inspections.
Loft space above the community area is accessed via a ladder and trap-door. The ladder is kept on the wall in the kitchen.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Competent people to operate sliding doors, taking care to follow good lifting and carrying procedure.	Regularly maintain sliding doors to ensure good operation.
Hazardous material, including cleaning products, is stored in the cleaning cupboard.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Competent people to operate ladder and trap-door, taking care to follow good lifting and carrying procedure. Ensure ladder is secure and attended during use and that the area below is kept clear. Do not leave ladder out while not in use. Replace securely.	Review use of loft space periodically and consider other, safer means of access in the long term.
Events which involve eating include additional risks, including choking, allergic reactions and illness from poor	Congregation, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Hazardous material to be stored securely and away from the public, especially children.	
		Follow policy on food safety and hygiene at all times and respond to instructions from West Suffolk	Regularly review food safety and hygiene policy.

food hygiene.		Council, with whom we are registered as a food provider. Ensure that volunteers are provided with adequate training and that there is someone with a level two food hygiene certificate present at all times if food is being served or level three if food is being prepared. Clearly display allergen information on all food being served. There is an anti-choking device located in the kitchen.	
Vestry			
There is portable electrical equipment in regular use in the vestry, especially the internet router and photocopier.	Stewards, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure equipment is in good working order before each use.	Regularly inspect and test portable appliances as part of routine maintenance. Keep an up-to-date log of inspections.
The two boilers in the vestry are gas-fired.	Stewards, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure equipment is in good working order before each use. If gas can be smelled, switch off supply immediately using the tap in the bottom of the vestment cupboard, avoid lighting any naked flames, evacuate the building and seek professional assistance.	Regularly inspect and maintain boilers as part of routine maintenance. Install a carbon monoxide monitor and smoke detector in the vestry.
Hazardous material, including candle oil, is stored in the vestry.	Stewards, volunteers, clergy.	Hazardous material to be stored securely and away from the public, especially children.	
Kitchen			
The kitchen is used by different groups who also use the church or community area.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure kitchen is left clean and tidy, including the floor and surface. Ensure bins are emptied. Remove used tea towels for cleaning. Ensure opened food is stored appropriately and	Keep an up-to-date log and certificates for those who have completed food hygiene training and encourage volunteers to complete training. Consider long-term improvements to

There is portable electrical equipment in regular use in the kitchen, especially the oven, microwave, kettles, urn, coffee machine and fridge.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	labelled, and perished food removed.	facilities.
There is equipment for cooking and heating in regular use in the kitchen.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy.	Ensure equipment is in good working order before each use.	Regularly inspect and test portable appliances as part of routine maintenance. Keep an up-to-date log of inspections.
		Follow good food preparation procedures. Keep the number of people in the kitchen at any one time to a minimum. Where there is significant food preparation undertaken, ensure that preparation is supervised by trained people.	Keep an up-to-date log and certificates for those who have completed food hygiene training. Periodically review provision of equipment in kitchen.
Tower			
Access to the tower is via a steep, narrow spiral staircase. There is a rope handrail provided.	Bellringers, volunteers, visitors.	Restrict access to the tower to competent persons over the age of seven. Use handrail for support. Supervise the public when opening the tower and complete an additional risk assessment. Keep tower locked when not in use.	
The bells are rung from a first-floor ringing chamber. The key to the tower roof is kept in the ringing chamber.	Bellringers, volunteers, visitors.	Keep ringing chamber locked when not in use. Only trained, competent people to ring bells. Hang ropes on the hook provided when not in use. Lower bells between ringing sessions when practicable, and clearly display when bells are left up.	
The clock chamber and bell chamber both present significant hazards, including moving parts and heavy machinery. The bell ropes pass through the clock chamber.	Bellringers, volunteers, visitors.	Access only to trained, competent people. No access to bell chamber or clock chamber at all while bells are up.	

The tower roof is surrounded by a castellated parapet at chest height. Access is required for e.g. changing the flag. The lead roof contains multiple ridges and can become slippery when wet. There is a step down from the staircase onto the roof.	Volunteers, visitors.	Access only to competent people. In adverse weather conditions, take extreme caution and access only when strictly necessary.	Keep temporary step from staircase secure. Consider long term measure to improve access.
Fire exits are provided through the tower door and, in exceptional circumstances, through the window in the ringing room into the nave and onto the tower roof.	Bellringers, volunteers, visitors.	Ensure escape routes are kept clear at all times.	Provide appropriate fire safety equipment in visible locations in the tower, separate to that used in the church, near to exits.
Roof Access to the roof is via a narrow, steep, dark spiral staircase. The roof is gently pitched. There is a low castellated wall at the edge. Access to upper levels is by ladder. The roof is subject to a build up of moss and pigeon guano. There is lead on the roofs which may be targeted by thieves.	Volunteers. Volunteers. Volunteers, PCC. Volunteers, PCC.	Access only to competent, authorised people. Keep door locked when not in use. Limit access to only when strictly necessary. Take extra care when navigating roof, especially in inclement weather. Restrict access during adverse weather conditions. Take extra care when using ladders, and use only as instructed by their safe use policy. Keep roof clear of debris. Clean thoroughly at regular intervals. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment while clearing hazardous material. Maintain alarm system and keep in active use at all times unless access is required. Access only to authorised people, wearing appropriate identifying	Have safe use policy for ladders available.

		clothing.	
Toilets Toilets are used by the church and by those authorised by West Suffolk Council. Keys are kept in the kitchen. West Suffolk Council are responsible for cleaning and maintenance. Floors can become slippery when wet, either because of water tracked in from outside or because of spillages or leaks inside. External building can be subject to vandalism, including broken glass.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, other toilet users. Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, other toilet users. Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, other toilet users.	Keep keys securely and replace after every use. Cleaning contractors clean on a Sunday morning after heavy usage on a Friday and Saturday. Users to report unclean conditions to church stewards, who clear or alert cleaning contractors. Users to report damage to church stewards, who assess, clear or cordon as necessary, and alert cleaning contractors and/or council.	Liaise with West Suffolk Council to periodically review access arrangements.
External Maintenance of the churchyard remains the responsibility of the PCC and is managed by West Suffolk Council, including upkeep of the paths, grass cutting, plant and tree maintenance and upkeep of churchyard walls. Most of the churchyard is level but there are multiple sets of steps to the north side of the church bordering Market Square and the High Street. The church is an historic building and there is some damage to external masonry.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, general public. Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, general public. Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, general public.	Damage or unsafe conditions to be reported to church stewards, who assess, clear or cordon as necessary, and alert council. Exercise caution around steps and use the walls provided for support. Report damage to church stewards who assess. Where there is danger of falling masonry, clear and cordon as	Liaise with West Suffolk Council to periodically review condition of churchyard. Review fabric of church as part of routine maintenance.

Pigeons cause damage to the church building and can carry disease that is harmful to humans.	Congregation, stewards, visitors, volunteers, clergy, general public.	necessary. Discourage public from feeding pigeons using signage provided by West Suffolk Council.	Periodically review measures to control pigeon population in consultation with local authorities.
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Capacity

The maximum number of people that the nave alone is reasonably capable of holding is **100**. The maximum number of people that the nave and community area, with the bi-fold doors open, is capable of holding is **200**. Events which are expected to exceed this capacity must undertake an additional risk assessment, which would explain how the event undertakes to maintain personal safety in the event of a fire or other critical incident, including complying with the [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill 2024](#). It must also give due consideration to the risk to the fabric of the building.

Key people:

The Revd Max Drinkwater, rector and health and safety officer

Jane Eccleston, churchwarden

Nigel Missen, buildings officer