

St. Thomas the Martyr Winchelsea

PCC's Health and Safety and Fire Risk Policy

Health and welfare statement

The PCC is committed to the health, welfare and safety of all Church users and visitors and will treat the rectification of reported defects in equipment or procedures as a matter of priority.

Emergency Evacuation

The Church has 3 doors, the main west door (1425mm), the east door via the vestry (1000mm) and the south door (940mm) via the boiler room. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation due to fire or other causes, church users will guide people from the building by the most appropriate door(s) and congregate by the war memorial. The Rector and/or Churchwardens, or designated persons will be responsible for ensuring the Church is clear of people and informing the emergency services on their arrival.

Inspections

The Churchwardens will ensure that inspections take place as follows and are duly recorded in a central register:

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|---------------------------|---------------|
| • Fire Extinguishers | Annually |
| • Central Heating Systems | Annually |
| • Health and Safety | Annually |
| • Electrical Systems | Every 5 years |
| • Electrical Equipment | Every 2 years |
| • Lightning Conductors | Annually |
| • Fire Safety | Every 2 years |
| • Asbestos | Every 5 years |

Health and Safety Certificates

Any contractor engaged in work on the church must have completed a H&S assessment. For work which is expected to last for more than 30 days, or which involves more than 5 people on site at any one time, a H&S plan must be drawn up, which is overseen by a planning supervisor. This will normally be the Diocesan Architect. A copy of H&S certificate is to be retained on file.

General Conduct

Health and Safety and fire prevention is the responsibility of all church users. Specialist training will be arranged if necessary, but generally commonsense will apply. In particular:

- The safety harness is to be used when accessing the bell tower.
- Ladders, when used, are to be tended by another person.
- Candles are not to be left burning when the Church is closed.

Risk Assessment

A general risk assessment, designed to cover events held in the Church, including services, Church Market, concerts and lectures and a fire risk assessment is set out below.

General Risk Assessment

This risk assessment applies to all events including all services, Church Market, concerts and lectures held in St Thomas's Church, whether held under the auspices of the Church itself, the Church School, or a private organisation hiring the church under a Hiring Agreement

The Assessment was undertaken by John Rodley, Churchwarden, on 1 June 15, covering the church and churchyard and is reviewed both annually and prior to any private event taking place.

Risk Details:

Hazard	Controls	Likelihood	Severity	Rating	Additional Controls
Churchyard slips on paths.	Notices on gates reminding users to take care.	3	2	6	Seek to fund abrasion of flagstones.
Churchyard monument stability.	Regular inspection.	1	3	3	Arrange topple test as required.
Kitchen hot water scalds.	Brief users.	2	1	2	Adjust temp as necessary.
Nave falls from ladders when decorating.	Brief users. No lone working. Check ladder stability, height and footing.	1	2	2	Approval to work to be obtained from CWs.
Trips due to wires and furnishings.	Wires tucked away close to walls. Furnishings do not obstruct access.	2	1	2	Regular inspection.
Injury due to manual handling of fittings.	Brief users. No lone working.	2	1	2	Ensure supervision.
Ability to evacuate large numbers.	Place evacuation route notices. Brief at start of event.	1	2	2	Check maximum numbers expected.
Contamination of food offered for sale.	Limit sales to items of known provenance.	1	3	3	Check quality prior to event.
Combustible material poorly stowed.	Regularly check stowage. Determine need for retention.	3	2	6	Achieve greater de-cluttering. Candles snuffed when church closed.
Falling decoration, masonry or hangings.	None.	1	3	3	Seek to fund rectification of QQR defects.
Falls from bell tower ladder.	Use safety harness. Access only by cleared personnel.	1	3	3	Visual inspection whenever used.

Fire Risk Assessment

Overall, the assessment is considered to be low, given the construction of the building. However, the fire risks that exist are associated with:

- The Boiler when it is in operation and the gas supplies to it. The actual risk of combustion is mitigated by an annual service, defect rectification and automatic gas supply cut off. The boiler room door is fire resistant.
- The electrical system and individual appliances in use in the church. The actual risk is mitigated by a 5 yearly electrical inspection and a 2 yearly PAT process.
- The roof due to lightning strikes and collateral damage to wooden fittings and hangings within the church. The actual risk is mitigated by the fitting of a lightning conductor, which is tested annually.
- Flammable material, mainly paperwork and portable decoration that exists in the church, the latter being particularly prevalent at festivals. The risk is mitigated by regularly checking the adequacy and safety of stowage, as well as regular reduction of stock.
- Candles, votive candles and incense. The risk is mitigated by ensuring that nothing is left burning while the church is unoccupied. The exception is the votive candles, which are kept away from combustible material and are snuffed when the church is closed.
- Vandalism, about which very little can be done.

Were any fire to start, it is assessed as very unlikely that it would spread rapidly and that there would be time to evacuate the Church, given the measures in place so to do. This is similarly the case with smoke hazards, the high roof acting as a smoke reservoir. For all high capacity events and services, a sentry is placed at the main access, which is kept open or is tended.

Personal Safety

The risk to personal safety due to fire is also assessed to be low, given numbers generally in the church and the likelihood of combustion. When tested in 2014, 200 people were evacuated without haste in 4.5 minutes.

Appropriate exit signage is in place for events and portable torches are available for designated users. Church users with declared disabilities are allocated seating and are offered first use of a refuge area in the upper and lower vestry if required.

6 portable fire extinguishers are available and are checked every 2 years.

There is no risk of collateral damage to neighbours or their property.

