

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

for

**St Martins Church Exning
St Philips with St Etheldreda, Newmarket**

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Our policy is to identify potential sources of fire and minimise the risks associated with them. We also develop procedures to ensure safe evacuation of all people within the churches in the event of fire occurring. Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to address changes of circumstances.

Signed:

Date:

17th October 2023

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Responsibility of the vicar

Overall responsibility for fire safety is that of the vicar, or in a vacancy, the churchwardens, who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy Fire Regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice.

Specific responsibilities may be delegated to church personnel.

2. Responsibility of the churchwardens

Responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary is with the Churchwardens:

Mr John Pascall

Mr Derek Bryant

3. Responsibility of the Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council has general responsibility to ensure that the fire policy is implemented.

ASSESSMENTS OF RISKS AND MANAGEMENT OF THOSE RISKS

Three principal sources of fire can be identified in the churches

- 1) Gas
- 2) Naked flames – including candles and implements to light them
- 3) Electricity

Risks associated with 1 and 2 will be minimised by regular (annual) maintenance of the gas boilers providing water/heating for the church and regular electrical safety inspections (5-yearly).

Inevitably, in a church the presence of naked flames is a real danger, and is particularly acute during services either when large numbers of people are closely together whilst holding candles (e.g., the annual Christingle service) or when people are moving whilst holding candles or lighted tapers. The principal risks in these cases are accidental lighting of hair or clothing but could also involve the danger of candles lighting flammable material surrounding them (e.g. in floral displays incorporating candles) of lighted flames being dropped on to carpets or altar cloths etc.

It is difficult to eliminate these risks entirely but they can be minimised by reducing the movement of people whilst candles are alight.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

In the event of fire the first priorities are the protection of life. Should the fire be on a person's body, a fire blanket is available in each church as a first method of extinguishing the flames. Fire extinguishers are available as a second approach.

In the event of a more general fire, it is the responsibility of the person leading the service to order an immediate evacuation using the amplification system. It is their responsibility to co-ordinate the evacuation assisted by the sidespeople and churchwardens. Particular priority must be given to the assisted evacuation of the infirm and the young. High-power torches are available to light the church in the event of high levels of smoke accumulation.

It is the responsibility of those leading the services and the sidespeople to be aware of all available exits and the location of fire-fighting equipment/torches.

All fire-fighting equipment should be checked before all services to ensure its presence and functionality. In the case of fire extinguishers these are checked at regular intervals (?) by external contractors, but it is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council to ensure that such checking takes place.

Evacuation of people from the tower in the event of fire presents particular problems. It is important that the availability of a fire extinguisher in the ringing chamber is ensured at all times. It is also important that flammable materials are not stored at the bottom/under the stairs leading to the bell-tower.