



St. Mark's Church Community Centre

Policy Documents

1. **Constitution**
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3. **Policies**

St Mark's Church is a registered charity (charity number 1164416)
known as The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the
Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark, Bedford.
Also known as St Mark's Church Community Centre

*St Mark's Church, Diocese of St Albans
Part of the worldwide Anglican Church*

Policies agreed by the Trustees of the
PCC of St Marks Church, Bedford,
April 2025. Charles Royden (Chair of Trustees)

St. Mark's Church Community Centre
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April 2025

Constitution

St Mark's Church is a registered charity known as

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mark, Bedford.
Also known as St Mark's Church Community Centre.

Full details of our constitution, charity registration, policies and minutes of meetings can be found on our website www.stmarkschurch.com

The purpose of the charity is recorded as

1. The celebration of public worship and sacraments
2. The teaching of the Christian faith
3. Promoting and supporting the Christian mission and evangelism
4. Pastoral work (including visiting the sick and the bereaved)
5. The provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community (including, but not restricted to, the elderly, the young, and other groups with disabilities and or special needs)
6. The provision of a sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation
7. Promoting the whole mission of the Church through provision of activities for senior citizens, parent and toddlers and special needs groups.
8. Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas
9. The taking of religious assemblies in schools

St Mark's states that it provides for the community in the following statement

The church community centre operates as a resource for community life opening. The centre has facilities for groups to meet simultaneously therefore a day-care centre of people with learning disabilities may operate at the same time as a pre-school, the credit union and a group engaged in adult learning. The premises are entirely accessible throughout for all people and are made available without restriction on a low cost, multi-occupancy basis.

St Mark's is an Inclusive Church

St Mark's Church affiliated to the charity Inclusive Church
(Registered Charity No 1102676) on 4 February 2024.

- We believe in inclusive church — church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.
- We will continue to challenge the church where it discriminates against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity or sexuality.
- We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ. We believe in a Church which is scripturally faithful and seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation. We believe in a Church which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ



Aims and Objectives of our Community Centre

Our Mission Statement

St. Mark's Church Community Centre will be a foundation and resource for the positive development and growth of the individual and community life.

We will achieve this by

1. Working alongside other agencies, statutory bodies and charities to offer a partnership approach to community needs
2. Providing an efficient and well managed suite of premises conforming to the highest standards of health and safety
3. Valuing the importance of satisfactory training, supervision and support for all staff and volunteers involved in the work of the Centre
4. Recognising our responsibility to all groups within the community and ensuring a welcoming and safe environment where all individuals are valued irrespective of age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, appearance or marital status
5. Listening and obtaining feedback from those who use our services through regular use of assessment and monitoring tools. Evaluating our provision and maintaining an awareness of the constant need for our evolution and growth to meet the demands of a changing society

St Mark's Church Data Protection Policy

The Data Protection Act 1998 protects individuals concerning information which is held about them. (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29>). The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mark's has notified the Information Commissioner (A8185767) in respect of its activities in relation to the Data Protection Act. The PCC holds information regarding the Electoral Roll, Employee Records, Financial Giving and Gift Aid and uses CCTV for the purpose of crime prevention. St Mark's Church takes the holding of personal information seriously and seeks at all times to be fully compliant with the Data Protection Act. (Information Commissioners Office 0303 123 1113) St Mark's Church will therefore treat all personal information as private and confidential and not disclose without written permission any data about any person to anyone other than the Church Leadership Team or other appointed person specifically engaged in an authorised position of the church when they require that data for carrying out duties related to that position.

Data Principles

St Mark's Church fully endorses and adheres to the eight principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 which sets out eight principles on the use of personal data. Personal data may only be obtained, held or disclosed to others if

1. Its use is fair and lawful.
2. It is to be used only for specified purposes. Individuals should be told, in broad terms, what you are going to do with the information (unless it is obvious) before you use it and given the opportunity to opt out of it being so used.
3. Information is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose to be used.
4. It is accurate and up-to-date - so periodically all information held should be checked to ensure it remains accurate.
5. The information is kept for no longer than necessary for the purpose - records of pastoral care discussions, for example, should not be kept for several years unless this can be justified.
6. Individuals' subject access rights are honoured.
7. It is kept securely - addresses and phone numbers should not be left where they are open to abuse, and access to more sensitive information should be particularly restricted by either computer passwords or locks on filing cabinets etc as appropriate. [Please note that the church electoral roll is a public document consisting of names and addresses only, as required by ecclesiastical law which takes priority over this principle. However if requested it would not be available in a form with telephone numbers or emails]
8. Information should not be transferred to any country outside Europe without adequate data protection being in place.

There are four exceptional circumstances to the above permitted by law:

1. Where we are legally compelled to do so.
2. Where there is a duty to the public to disclose.
3. Where disclosure is required to protect your interest.
4. Where disclosure is made at your request or with your consent.
- 5.

St Mark's requires data to be kept for the following uses

1. Pastoral Care of Church Members and employees
2. Day-to-Day Administration of the Church
3. Preparation of ministry rotas and church services
4. Maintaining financial records of giving for audit and tax purposes
5. Electoral roll and membership of groups and committees
6. Contacting members to advise them of Church Activities
7. Distributing church information and newsletters
8. Records of employees

The following principles will guide our data protection policy

In order to do this the following practice will be implemented

1. The Vicar of St Mark's Church will act as Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
2. All data held will be subject to secure storage.
3. We will only hold information which is fair and lawful under the Data Protection Act.
4. Individuals will be informed and agree to how we hold and use this data.
5. Any person can seek to have their details removed at any time.
6. Information will be kept up to date and remain accurate.
7. No data or personal details will ever be shared with any other party unless express written permission has been obtained
8. An Electoral Roll Officer will be appointed annually at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting with responsibility to maintain accurate recording of data. Mrs Avril Williams has been appointed as Electoral Roll Officer.
9. Appropriate training will be provided to the Data Protection Officer and Electoral Roll Officer and any person having access to stored data.
10. A record inventory will be conducted annually of all lists of data. This will enable St Mark's Church to respond to any information requests within the statutory deadlines. The inventory holds data relating to records, areas of the church and groups, and individuals which create and use them, this helps with compliance as we know what records we hold, how we store them, for how long and when they are due for destruction or other action. It is crucial that the inventory is kept up to date by adding new files or records as soon as they are created and we will have procedures to ensure that new records are added to the inventory. To meet Freedom of Information requirements, our inventory will contain information about records we have destroyed as well as records we still hold. When records are destroyed this will be noted on the inventory but the inventory record will remain in place.
11. The Churchwardens will have access and agree any other person who may have access to data.
12. Any printed copies of data will be held in the church safe or locked filing cabinet.
13. Digital copies will be held on password protected computers with up to date anti-virus software and off site storage. Data will not be circulated on memory sticks and old hard drives will be destroyed when computers reach end of life.
14. Information will be securely destroyed as soon as it is no longer required by law or necessary for the use for which it was supplied in keeping with this policy. Paper copies will be shredded on the church shredder and computer files will be erased together with temporary files and all backups.
15. Prior to each Annual Parochial Church Meeting there will be a full review of all details to ensure accuracy and every six years a completely new Electoral Roll will be prepared.
16. All individuals who are the subject of personal data held by St Mark's Church are entitled to ask what information is held about them and why. They will be advised how to gain access to it, how it is kept up to date and what St Mark's Church does to comply with its obligations under the 1998 Data Protection Act.
17. Any person who wishes to exercise the right to see data should make the request in writing to the Data Controller, using the standard letter which is available on line from www.ico.gov.uk
18. We have a process in place and anybody who has information held about them will be given a copy of that information with both paper and computer records. We may charge a fee of up to £10 upon request and will always respond within 40 days of a request being made. This covers all information held on computer and any correspondence and other papers which are reasonably accessible.
19. The ministers and officers of the church will not hold pastoral information or other records of any information which will not be subsequently required by law or for public records of baptism, weddings or funerals.
20. Wedding, Baptism and Funeral records are public documents and available to view by arrangement upon request. These will be kept accurately and safely in the church safe.

21. All CCTV footage will be destroyed after 21 days unless required for a specific lawful purpose.
22. Correct email etiquette will be observed to ensure that when sending emails to multiple email addresses blind carbon copy (Bcc) is used as opposed to carbon copy (Cc). Emails addresses are private and permission must be obtained before sharing with others.
23. Gift Aid Declarations will be kept for six years after the donor's last donation.
24. Planned Giving Envelopes will be kept relating to claims which have not yet been made and for all envelopes from the last 12 months and a 1-month sample of envelopes from each of the preceding 6 years. All other envelopes will be destroyed.
25. One off donations. We will retain bank paying in books and one-off Gift Aid envelopes for six full calendar years after the date of the donation, or the date the Gift Aid was claimed, whichever is the later.

This policy will be made widely available to all church members and persons who may have data held about them. It will be monitored and reviewed by the Church Leadership team and agreed annually at each Annual Parochial Church Council. A copy will be kept with the church policy documents and published online at our church website www.stmarkschurch.com

If any person believes that St Mark's Church is not complying with correct data protection procedures then they should in the first instance report the matter to the Data Protection Officer. (Vicar of St Mark's Church). If unsatisfied they should report concerns to the office of the Information Commissioner at www.ico.org.uk Head Office. Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 if you prefer to use a national rate number Fax: 01625 524 510

St Mark's Church Health and Safety Policy

The Trustees of St Mark's Church Council understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church community centre. We also know that, where we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law. In particular, we know that as an employer having five or more employees, we are required to have a written health and safety policy. We have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

General statement of policy

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the church community centre or churchyard or grounds. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) accepts its 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 employee and 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 community centre plays his or her part in its implementation. Further detail 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 and made available to others on request.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is the Centre Manager Mrs Wendy Rider

They will ensure that the standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained

1. Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained
2. Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately
3. Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests
4. Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary
5. Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained
6. They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church
7. Carries out fire drills
8. Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

The Chair of Church Council will be responsible for the provision and maintenance of the Safety Practice Statement. This practice statement will detail the recommended structure and associated responsibilities for the management of Health and Safety and arrangements to be made to discharge efficiently this Health and Safety Policy.

They will ensure that

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

All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.

They will ensure that they:

1. Read this policy and understand what is required of them
2. Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others
3. Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures
4. Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with
5. Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards
6. Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely
7. Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so
8. Report any accident
9. 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.

General Arrangements

Competent Assistance

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations. Where an appointment is made, we will record the details here. Our appointed person to assist us is Mrs Wendy Rider

Risk Assessment

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

Information and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and 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

1. First Aiders should be used where possible for the treatment of any person who
2. becomes ill or who is injured on the premises. A doctor or ambulance will be called as
3. appropriate.
4. The Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring stocks of first aid in the first aid box.
5. In accordance with the Employer's Liability Act an accident book is kept in the Church
6. Office. An entry must be made in the accident book whenever any injury or illness
7. occurs, however trivial, regardless of whether any first aid assistance is required. This is
8. required even in cases where a group keeps their own separate record.
9. Children registering for care in any group using the premises should complete a registration form stating next of kin, arrangements for contact in an emergency and name of doctor.
10. No staff or volunteers should administer medicines to any client.
11. It is important to use plastic gloves when treating bleeding injuries or when cleaning any bodily fluids or waste.
12. 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 employees and volunteers. Our first aid box

is located in the kitchen. Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is Mrs Wendy Rider

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 employees, 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 Office

Monitoring

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

Contractors

If we employ contractors, we make sure that they have their own health & 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 Church Office

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will then 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 we have made.

Church Buildings

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings 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 fences 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.

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 starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed.

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 made 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

1. The key Health and Safety Manager will ensure that regular inspections are carried out of all fire fighting equipment, including the operation of all alarms, evacuation exits and lighting.
2. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that corridors, and access areas are kept clear at all times and free movement is afforded to wheelchair users.
3. All staff and volunteers should ensure that they are conversant with agreed emergency and Health and Safety procedures.
4. All groups using the premises should ensure that they carry out practice evacuation procedures and these should be recorded in the inspection book.
5. The no smoking policy in place for the Church Community Centre should be observed in all agreed places.
6. Fire safety and the procedure to follow in the event of a fire is displayed prominently in the centre

Heating Systems

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

Hazardous Substances

We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products and petrol. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking, any necessary precautions that are specified.

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 practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting.

Preparation of Food

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, we use a 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. Our premises are regularly inspected by the Local Authority and we have maintained a consistent 5 star rating.

Slips and Trips

We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may 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.

Working at Height

Where possible we will try and avoid the need for 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 employees and volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety.

Security

All users of St Mark's Church Community Centre must look after valuables at all times, whether they be your own or belonging to the Church Centre or other group. The Church Council accepts no responsibility whatsoever for the keeping of valuables, money personal belongings etc. Staff and volunteers are advised strongly to take every precaution not to leave articles of value lying about offices, in desks etc. It is advised that items of value should be protected under a personal insurance policy. Secure lockers are provided in the foyer for personal belongings.

Closure of the Building - Locking Up

It is important when leaving the premises to ensure that the building is left in a secure and safe condition. Users should be aware when they are the last to leave the premises. All lights, gas and electrical appliances should be turned off apart from those on time switches, refrigeration equipment and surveillance system. Windows and doors should be left secure and alarm systems activated by authorised keyholders when appropriate. Fire doors must never be left wedged open.

Car Park

1. Pedestrians should observe special vigilance when going to and from the buildings.
2. Pedestrians should be vigilant when approaching or leaving St. Mark's Church Community Centre and are requested to use the footpath entrance at the top of Calder Rise rather than cross the car park. This avoids manoeuvring vehicles.
3. Be aware that ambulances and heavy vehicles frequently visit the premises.
4. Special attention should be paid to children and parents are advised to always accompany children and take hold of their hands.
5. Child safety locks are used at all times on internal doors in the hall area when pre-school is in operation.
6. Users of the Centre are reminded that safe parking of their vehicles in roads outside the church park is an important responsibility and inconsiderate parking can cause a hazard to local residents.
7. The car park should not be used as a play area for children.

St Mark's Church

Health and Safety Checklist

Responsibility

Health & Safety is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council. At the same time, individuals are responsible for alerting the Church Centre Manager if they identify issues that need attention. It is therefore important that those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults know who is responsible for maintenance of the premises they use. Our Health and safety Policy is set out as suggested by Ecclesiastical Insurance using their guidance on a wide range of Health and Safety issues. It is important that their guidelines are followed to ensure that the parish/project remains fully covered by insurance.

<http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/index.aspx>

Below are the recommended standards:

Premises

- People always learn and enjoy activities if they are warm and comfortable, therefore, within the limitations of the premises meeting places should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated.
- They should be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available. Hygienic drying facilities should be provided.
- There should be enough space available for the intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.
Currently
St Mark's has achieved the highest standard of 5
- Drinking water is freely available and St mark's is signed up to the Refill scheme

Additional Needs

- We welcome children, young people & vulnerable adults with additional needs.
- We make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities.
- We ask the parents/carers about how best to meet the child, young person or vulnerable adult's particular needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the parent/carer.
- We make reasonable adjustments to meet the possible additional needs of future children and adults.

Health & Safety

- Groups have access to the church phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults are made aware of the fire procedures.
- A fire drill is be carried out regularly.
- The Church Centre Manager ensures that fire extinguishers are checked regularly and that smoke detectors are fitted and tested throughout the building.
- No smoking or vaping is permitted in any part of the building.
- Alcohol must not be used by those who have children, young people or vulnerable adults in their care or at a time when their use could affect their care.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer for the safety of their child, young person or vulnerable adult on the journey to and from the group.
- A First Aid kit and Accident Book are available on the premises. Workers and volunteers are encouraged to attend First Aid training. A list of first aiders in the parish is compiled and kept available.
- All accidents must be recorded in the accident book.
- A checklist is set out on the following page.

Health & Safety Checklist for all Groups

St Mark's has separate policies for children and vulnerable adults but the check list will be of help to all user groups. Please check those boxes which are for you to record your own activities

A. First Aid

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Is there a designated First Aider with up to date training available during all activities? | Yes | No |
| There is an up-to-date First Aid Kit available both on the premises and for activities away from the premises? | Yes | No |
| Are all accidents recorded? | Yes | No |

B. Fire safety

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Do regular fire drills take place? | Yes | No |
| Are fire notices displayed informing people what to do in case of fire? | Yes | No |
| Are fire appliances suitable and serviced regularly? | Yes | No |
| Has the local Fire Prevention Officer visited the premises? | Yes | No |

C. Disabled access

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Is there suitable access and provision made for disabled people? | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|

D. Register and consents

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Is a register kept of all those in attendance? | Yes | No |
| Has a Registration Form been completed for each child/young person/vulnerable adult? | Yes | No |
| Are Parental Consent Forms obtained for day trips and residential activities? | Yes | No |

E. Staffing and security

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Are adult/child ratios appropriate for the group and for the activity? | Yes | No |
| Are the places where children, young people or vulnerable adults meet safe and secure from unwelcome people? | Yes | No |
| Is it possible for children, young people or vulnerable adults to slip outside without leaders noticing? | Yes | No |

F. Review

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Is this check list reviewed annually? | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|

G. Records

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Has a copy of this checklist been filed with the parish office? | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|

Signed

Designation

Date

Equality Policy

Statement

St Mark's Parochial Church Council (PCC) is committed to encouraging equality and diversity. This Equality Policy is based on current legislation and it is informed by the belief that all people are created equal in God's image. The Christian faith is based on the teachings of Jesus who demonstrated in his ministry an overt intention to include those who were marginalised. He challenged accepted behaviours which excluded people on grounds such as gender, race and religion and he demonstrated that discrimination and victimisation are unacceptable.

St Mark's Church seeks to follow this example and be an inclusive church community centre where all are respected and able to give of their best. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation whether intentional or not. St Mark's Church also recognises that the church has a poor history of discrimination and that church law still enshrines discriminatory practices in its legislation. Whilst St Mark's Church is obliged to act within church law, it will follow in the tradition of Jesus and those within the church who over generations have challenged discrimination and worked towards equality and fairness for all. Employees, volunteers and all church members have a duty to cooperate with the PCC to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination.

St Mark's Church adheres to The Equality Act 2010 and will not unlawfully discriminate because of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation. This policy relates to all activities of St Mark's Church and includes ministers, employees, volunteers, members and those providing services to the church. Each person must act in accordance with this policy, creating an environment free from discrimination.

Exceptions

Discrimination on grounds of religion or belief is lawful if it can be demonstrated that there is an Occupational Requirement (OR) for the person to be of a particular religion or belief, having regard to the nature and context of the employment and to the ethos of the organisation. The application of the OR must also be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. St Mark's is a Christian Church therefore it reserves the right to exercise legal exemptions under the Equality Act 2010 where it is declared that Christian faith is integral to the work. Such an OR would be the employment of ministers and involvement of volunteers in Christian worship.

For previous offenders there may necessarily be cases where the criminal record of a person requires places restrictions upon a person. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from activities or employment, this will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

The Church Responsibility

In order for the Equality Policy to be fully effective, the responsibility for ensuring that its terms are adhered to will lie with the Chair of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is, however, the responsibility of all people to actively promote equality within their own spheres of responsibility. St Marks' Church will inform its members of their responsibilities and opportunities under the Equal Rights Legislation and will make sure that the Equality Policy is known to all members, volunteers and employees.

Promoting Dignity

It should not be overlooked that discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment can take many forms, e.g. age, religion, belief, skin colour, sexual orientation or perception of, disability – even dialect or accent – can all form the basis of unwanted aggression and behaviour.

Victimisation We recognise that discrimination can take many forms both direct, where a person is treated less favourably for a reason unconnected with their ability and Indirect discrimination when a condition, rule, policy or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular group of people. Victimisation is defined as singling out of an individual for harsh treatment, or unfair action/sanction. Victimisation in the widest sense of the word is also a form of harassment and those exposed to or subject to such action need protection from bullies.

Harassment This is defined as unwanted, unreciprocated and/or uninvited comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an employee's job security, or create an intimidating working environment. Harassment is particularly liable to occur as part of sexual or racial discrimination. Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Under the Criminal Justice Act 1994, harassment was made a criminal offence punishable by a substantial fine and/or a prison sentence of up to six months and under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 a criminal offence with unlimited fines and imprisonment of up to five years.

St Mark's Church will not accept any circumstances of bullying, harassment, victimisation or unlawful discrimination whether these acts are committed by members of the public, church members employees or volunteers. Such acts by employees will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken.

Church Services and activities Events & Activities

St Mark's Church has a long history of caring for a wide range of groups with disabilities and we will continue to proactively engage and support people and groups which do not receive adequate support in our community. This ethos will impact upon the services, activities and facilities which the Church provides. Previously this has included both financial and practical support to welcome groups with physical and learning disabilities. In the delivery of our services and activities St Mark's Church will make reasonable adjustments so that they are accessible and provided fairly to all people who seek to participate

Grievance Procedure

The PCC encourages concerns to be raised and will take action against any person who is found to infringe its Equalities Policy. If any person believes that they have been subject to discrimination then they must raise the matter with the Chair of the PCC immediately. If this is not possible the matter should be raised formally, in writing, within one week of the alleged offence.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and investigated. No person will receive unfair treatment as a result of raising a concern, however false allegations by employees which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

St Mark's Church takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy and any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.

- All reports should be made direct to the Vicar or any member of the Church Leadership Team. The complainant may be accompanied by a person of their choice.
- Make a note of the time, date, place and any other relevant data.
- Make a note of any witnesses, or persons in the immediate neighbourhood who may not have witnessed the event but may at least be able to corroborate that the persons involved were at the location at the time stated.
- Whenever possible, the anonymity of the employee complaining of harassment will be maintained.
- A record will be made of as many details as possible regarding the complaint, including details of any witnesses etc.
- Within no later than five working days, the complainant will be advised of any action

taken and suggested resolution.

- A resume of the action taken and any resolution must be given to the complainant in writing and a copy held with the notes regarding the complaint. If the solution is satisfactory to the complainant, the matter should be concluded. Any notes relating to the case will be held under the Data Protection Policy of the PCC
- If the solution is not satisfactory to the complainant, the matter should be referred to the Leadership Team and an alternative solution attempted to be agreed. This may require further investigations and the subsequent decision will be made known to the complainant within five working days. This decision will be binding and conclude the enquiry internally.
- If in the course of the investigations at whatever level, it is proved or it is admitted that discrimination or harassment did take place it will be considered as gross misconduct for the purposes of disciplinary procedures for all employees. In such circumstances this may lead to dismissal and it is mandatory that the person responsible is given a formal warning.
- If in the course of the investigations it is believed that a criminal offence has occurred the complainant will be supported in taking the matter to the police.

This policy has been approved by the Trustees of the Church Council who ensure that this policy is known to all members, and users of the church and community centre. The Trustees will monitor the effectiveness and regularly review and develop this Policy. They will also provide education and training in the principles and practice of equalities.

Policy for Safeguarding Children

Parish of St Mark Bedford in the Church of England Diocese of St Albans

- We are committed to implementing a safeguarding children policy and accepting the Church of England Policy 'Promoting a safer Church' (*Please see copy available on our website www.stmarkschurch.com*)
- We will review and endorse the safeguarding policies annually so that all members are aware of their responsibilities.
- The highest standards will be maintained in all the Church's contacts with children and young people and adult volunteers will be given appropriate support and opportunities for training.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made that a child or young person for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
- This Trustees will co-operate fully with the statutory agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse.
- We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.
- The Trustees of the Church Council acknowledge their responsibility for all work with children and young people done in the name of the Church and require all those engaged in such work to be properly appointed and supported in accordance with the Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment.

We have appointed as our Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Mr Mike Cooper safeguarding@stmarkschurch.com Tel. 01234 342613 / 07973 569219

Policy for Safeguarding Adults when they are Vulnerable 2016

The Parish of St Mark, Bedford in the Church of England Diocese of St Albans

1. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that all adults should be offered respect and given inclusion and empowerment within the Church.
2. We are committed to implementing a safeguarding policy for adults when they are vulnerable accepting the Church of England Promoting a Safe Church - Church Safeguarding Policy (*which is available on our website www.stmarkschurch.com*) and to be responsive to local parish requirements.
3. We will review and endorse all safeguarding policies annually so that all members are aware of their responsibilities.
4. We will carefully select those working with vulnerable groups and these workers will be given appropriate support and opportunities for training.
5. We will respond without delay to every complaint made that a vulnerable adult for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
6. This Parish will cooperate fully with the statutory agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations.
7. We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any adult who has suffered abuse.
8. We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended in a manner which could affect adults who are vulnerable.
9. The PCC acknowledges its responsibility for all work with vulnerable people done in the name of the Church and requires all those engaged in such work to be properly appointed and supported in accordance with the Church of England Practice Guidance Safer Recruitment
- 10.

We have appointed as our Parish Safeguarding Adults Coordinator

Mr Mike Cooper safeguarding@stmarkschurch.com Tel. 07973 569219 / 342613

Safeguarding Requirements for Hirers of St Mark's Church

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mark's Parish Church has a Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. The PCC has agreed that all bookings for hire of the premises are to be conditional upon compliance with this policy unless you already have an equivalent policy of your own. You are required to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring; and that you carry full liability insurance for this.

In particular this means that:

1. You will comply with the attached good practice guide with children and young people or vulnerable adults unless you already have an equivalent
2. You will provide the church with a copy of your organisation's Safeguarding Policy/ies or if you do not have one adopt the current parish policy
3. You will recruit safely all current paid and voluntary workers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, by obtaining satisfactory disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service where eligible, and keeping records of dates and disclosure numbers indefinitely
4. You will keep a list of the names of all paid and voluntary workers with regular and direct contact with children/vulnerable adults, and update it annually
5. You will always have at least two leaders over the age of 18 years in any group of children and young people, no matter how small the group
6. No person under 18 years will be left in charge of any children or young people of any age
7. No child or group of children or young people should be left unattended at any time;
8. A register of children, young people or vulnerable adults attending the activity will be kept securely. This will include details of their name, contact details of parent/guardian/carer etc., date of birth and next of kin;
9. You will immediately (within 24 hours) inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of:
 - (a) the occurrence of any incidents or allegations of abuse or causes of concern and contact details for the person in your organisation who is dealing with it
 - (b) any known offenders against children or vulnerable adults seeking to join your membership, and manage such allegations or agreements with offenders in co-operation with statutory agencies, and with the church.

We have appointed as our Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Mr Mike Cooper safeguarding@stmarkschurch.com Tel. 01234 342613 / 07973 569219

Declaration

I agree to abide by appropriate safeguarding procedures. I understand that my booking agreement may be terminated in the event of my failing to comply with these procedures.

Signed on behalf of

(Name of the organisation)

By

(Name of authorised person)

Please sign two copies, one to be retained by the church, and one by the organisation

Delegation by St Mark's Church PCC Members Reporting of Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission

1. Background

1.1 The members of the PCC, as charity trustees, are responsible for reporting ALL Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission in a timely manner. The trustees delegate the reporting of Serious Incidents in accordance with these Resolutions.

1.2 The Charity Commission has approved specific Church of England guidance and templates for PCCs to use when reporting Serious Incidents to it ("PCC Guidance"). The PCC Guidance separates Serious Incidents into two types: safeguarding Serious Incidents and all other Serious Incidents. Safeguarding Serious Incidents are reported in a different way from how all other Serious Incidents are reported and so there are separate delegations for reporting safeguarding and non-safeguarding Serious Incidents.

1.3 If a safeguarding incident occurs within the PCC, the person with responsibility for safeguarding in the PCC (PCCSO) must inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and respond to and manage the incident in accordance with the relevant House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Guidance.

1.4 Where a non-safeguarding incident is identified, The Vicar or Chair of the PCC should be informed immediately. The Vicar as Chair of the PCC is responsible for taking such immediate steps or actions as may be required to secure and protect the PCC's property, assets and reputation, in accordance with any internal policies or procedures.

2. DELEGATION of responsibility to report SAFEGUARDING Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission in accordance with the PCC Guidance

2.1 In order to facilitate the confidential and timely reporting of any safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission, the responsibility for any decisions relating to the reporting of safeguarding Serious Incidents is delegated to The Safeguarding Officer Mrs Janet Day.

2.2 In order to facilitate the confidential and timely reporting of any Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission, the responsibility for any decisions relating to the reporting of Serious Incidents is delegated to The Vicar as Chair of Trustees of St Marks Church Council.

St Mark's Church Safe Use of Images Policy

The following information applies to all St Mark's Church activities. However there are specific rules which apply to St Mark's Church Preschool which must be adhered to at all times. These include the fact that cameras, or other equipment capable of recording any images, including telephones are not allowed in the preschool at any time. They must be deposited in the secure container provided immediately upon entrance to the preschool.

- The Data Protection Act 2018 places certain duties on us to ensure that we have relevant consent to take and publish images and that we keep all data secure.
- Always ensure that you have checked whether there are reasons that a particular person cannot be photographed or identified, especially if it is a child.
- You must obtain the permission of all the people who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before you record the footage. That means children as well as adults.
- If you are taking images at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this may be regarded as a public area so you do not need to get the permission of everyone in a crowd shot. However, there is no clear guidance on this so if in doubt, avoid using such images and use a library image instead.
- It is a requirement of the Data Protection Act that you safeguard your images (both digital and hard copies) by storing them securely and only allow use by those authorised to do so. When you are finished with images, destroy or delete them.
- If you hold copies of images on file, you can't release these without up-to-date consent forms. Take care with images that you have archived. An image taken at a specific time and in specific circumstances can not necessarily be used again at a later date or in a different context. Doing so can result in legal action.

When publishing images of children and young people, follow these guidelines:

- If you publish their picture, do not publish a name
- If you publish their name, do not publish a picture
- Do not publish full names, addresses or e-mail addresses
- Do not publish individual close-up portraits
- When publishing children's' work simply label it as by 'John'
- Give adult leaders and parents the opportunity to request that their contact information is not included in any published material

If parents are permitted to take images during or after an event or service, make it clear from the start that they must be for private use only and ask for them not to put the images on the internet or on Social Media (particularly if a parent posts a picture on the web that shows children other than just their own child).

If the picture is being used for public use then consent must be obtained.

Consider providing written guidance to parents beforehand and/or make an announcement at the start of the event/service.

Consent

When taking images, ensure you have written permission to take and publish the images before you start. This permission should cover:

- How the image will be used (i.e. for a one-off article or as a general resource that could appear in a number of contexts)
- How it will not be used (i.e. alongside articles or text that are of potentially sensitive or offensive subjects)

- Where it will be used / who will it be available to (i.e. in internal/public-facing printed newsletters, on the web or on a website, in a DVD, in local and/or national media, in exhibitions etc.)
- How long it will be used for (i.e. once only, for 2 years, 3 years, indefinitely etc. Be mindful that people's circumstances change and it can become inappropriate to continue to use a photo)

Consent Form

Please see our consent form.

- For children under 18 years old, the form should be completed by a parent or guardian.
- Consent forms should also be obtained for adults, particularly if they are considered 'vulnerable', for example those with learning disabilities. The parent/guardian or social worker may give written consent in these circumstances.
- Be aware that some people may require help to understand and complete a consent form, need the information translated into a different language or have it supplied in a different format.
- Completed consent paperwork should be kept on file for the duration of the time the image is being used. Once this time is up, the image should be destroyed.
- Do not use an image unless you know that you have permission to do so. If you are unsure, use an alternative.

Copyright

Copyright law applies to almost everything, and can be complex and ambiguous.

A few basic points are listed below:

- Copyright automatically belongs to the person who created the work. In the UK it does not need to be registered. Take care with any images you release to the media, it is your responsibility to check with the owner of the copyright that it is OK to use them.
- If you are using someone else's image you must get their written permission, and always credit the artist
- Images are protected for the lifetime of the creator and for 70 years after his/her death
- Downloading images from the internet and using them on your church website without the copyright owners consent may breach copyright laws, and could be considered a criminal offence, leading to heavy fines. Be aware that picture agencies and photographers are increasingly using software to track their images.
- If you put something on the web, you must obtain electronic global broadcasting rights from the owner of the copyright.

Context

- Be careful about the context in which you use an image, especially if it is of children.
- If you're using it for publicity specifically related to an event, there should be little problem as long as the relevant consents have been obtained.
- For information that covers sensitive areas always use a library picture. Using pictures of real children alongside these subjects could result in legal action by parents / carers.
- Do not use a photo in a context that is different to that stated on the consent form.
- Ensure that images cannot be construed as being provocative.
- When taking/using images, be representative of diversity by reflecting gender, race and disability.

New media

'New media' describes anything that relies on digital technology or computerised methods of communication, for example the internet, email, streaming, multimedia storage devices, mobile phones, podcasts, webcams, websites, blogs, social media, chatrooms etc.

New media is now very widely used; along with this increased use comes an increased responsibility to consider how we use images safely within the new technology.

The information shared by new media is more accessible than in non-digital formats; it is easy for people to amend, manipulate or copy images, which makes them more open to

abuse. As such we must be more vigilant than ever about obtaining the relevant consent to publish images, how we publish them and monitoring their use.

If you plan to use an image in any form of new media, you should obtain electronic global broadcasting rights from the owner of the copyright and ensure that the consent form states that the image will be used in digital formats, including the web.

If you are a web-publisher, do not use an image that has been uploaded onto the system by someone else without checking with the original publisher/owner that the relevant permissions have been obtained.

Do not pixelate (blur) an image in order to obscure the face of the person in it – use an alternative picture.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

When using images in new media, you must comply with the DDA. The DDA applies to everyone who provides a service to the public. Service providers must ensure that they do not discriminate against disabled persons when using new media images. In order to comply with the DDA, you will need to ensure that all images have meta-tags and that you do not overlay a photo with text.

Releasing images to the media

The legislation governing whether or not the media can publish an image is complicated and ambiguous. If you are in any doubt about having an image published, do not release it to the media.

If you do release an image to the media, be aware that you are responsible for checking that all the relevant written consents have been obtained for the people in it and the owner of the copyright agrees to the image being published. If the media publishes an image you have supplied and the consents have not been obtained, responsibility falls to you.

The laws surrounding this issue are becoming stricter, especially for pictures of children and vulnerable adults. Be extremely cautious not to release any pictures of children who are in care, under wardship or involved in family law cases. The same applies for adults who may be at risk from domestic abuse or similar. The legal implications are serious.

St Mark's Church Image Consent Form

Occasionally, we take photographs of the children at our church. We may use these images in our church magazine or in other printed publications that we produce, in displays and on our website. We may also make video or webcam recordings for training, or other church use. We also send images to the news media, or our church may be visited by the media who will take their own photographs or film footage (for example, of a visiting dignitary or other high profile event). Children will often appear in these images. The news media may use the images in printed publications (including local or national newspapers), on televised news programmes or on their website. They then store them in their archive. They may also syndicate the photos to other media for possible use, either in printed publications, on websites, or both.

When we submit photographs and information to the media, we have no control on when, where, if or how they will be used. To comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, we need your permission before we can photograph or make any recordings of your child.

Conditions of use

1. This form is valid for the period of time your child attends this church. Images of your child will not be used after this time. Please write to the church office@stmarkschurch.com if you wish to withdraw consent at any time.
2. The images we take will be of activities that show the church and children in a positive light.
3. Embarrassing or distressing images will not be used. The images will not be associated with negative or sensitive issues.
4. We may use group photographs or footage with very general labels e.g. 'Sunday School'.
5. We will only use images of pupils who are suitably dressed.
6. We will make every effort to ensure that we do not allow images to be taken of any children for whom we do not have permission or who are 'at risk' or disallowed from having their photographs taken for legal or social reasons.
7. We will take all reasonable measures to ensure the images are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended. However we cannot guarantee this and take no responsibility for the way images are used by other websites or publishers or for any consequences arising from publication.

Please note that websites can be viewed throughout the world and not just in the United Kingdom where UK law applies. In giving your consent you understand that images may be used in printed and electronic form.

To give your consent, please complete the information below and return the form to the church.

I give permission for my child's image to be taken and used in publicity material for the church, including printed and electronic publications, video and webcam recordings and on websites
I give permission for images of my child to be used by the news media in printed and/or electronic form and stored in their archives. This might include images sent to the news media by the church and images / footage the media may take themselves if invited to the church to cover an event.

I have read and understood the information overleaf.

Name of child: _____

Parent's or carer's signature: _____

Name (in block capitals) _____ Date: _____

If you require help completing this form, please contact your church Safeguarding Officer – Mr Mike Cooper safeguarding@stmarkschurch.com 01234 342613

St Mark's Church Domestic Abuse Policy



Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities –

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity –

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised –

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care –

- ensuring informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to any one please contact

Safeguarding Officer Mr Michael Cooper
safeguarding@stmarkschurch.com 01234 342613

Safeguarding Requirements for Hirers of St Mark's Church

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mark's Parish Church has a Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. The PCC has agreed that all bookings for hire of the premises are to be conditional upon compliance with this policy unless you already have an equivalent policy of your own. You are required to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring; and that you carry full liability insurance for this.

In particular this means that:

1. You will comply with the attached good practice guide with children and young people or vulnerable adults unless you already have an equivalent
2. You will provide the church with a copy of your organisation's Safeguarding Policy/ies or if you do not have one adopt the current parish policy
3. You will recruit safely all current paid and voluntary workers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, by obtaining satisfactory disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service where eligible, and keeping records of dates and disclosure numbers indefinitely
4. You will keep a list of the names of all paid and voluntary workers with regular and direct contact with children/vulnerable adults, and update it annually
5. You will always have at least two leaders over the age of 18 years in any group of children and young people, no matter how small the group
6. No person under 18 years will be left in charge of any children or young people of any age
7. No child or group of children or young people should be left unattended at any time;
8. A register of children, young people or vulnerable adults attending the activity will be kept securely. This will include details of their name, contact details of parent/guardian/carer etc., date of birth and next of kin;
9. You will immediately (within 24 hours) inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of:
 - (a) the occurrence of any incidents or allegations of abuse or causes of concern and contact details for the person in your organisation who is dealing with it
 - (b) any known offenders against children or vulnerable adults seeking to join your membership, and manage such allegations or agreements with offenders in co-operation with statutory agencies, and with the church.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer for St Mark's Parish Church is
Mr Mike Cooper safeguarding@stmarkschurch.com 01234 342613

Declaration

I agree to abide by appropriate safeguarding procedures. I understand that my booking agreement may be terminated in the event of my failing to comply with these procedures.

Organisation

Signed by authorised person

Date

Please sign two copies, one to be retained by the church, and one by the organisation

Manual Handling Policy

Statistics show that manual handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury in the workplace. This policy is intended to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries and provide guidance on the measures that should be taken to ensure safe lifting and carrying in the workplace.

Under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR), manual handling is interpreted as the transporting or supporting of any load. Regulation 4 of MHOR requires the employer to avoid the need for hazardous manual handling activities, so far as is reason to practicable. Where it is not possible to eliminate hazardous manual handling, an assessment must be undertaken to determine the level of risk. Suitable controls must then be introduced to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest extent reasonably practicable. This may be achieved by the use of automation, mechanical aids or redesigning the system of work or even the workplace itself.

Before lifting any load each person must assess the tasks, the load, the individual, the environment and any other factors which may affect its safe lifting and carrying (for example the use of personal protective equipment). Assessments should be reviewed when there is a significant change in:

1. The activity or process
2. The working environment
3. The numbers or abilities of personnel
4. The nature of the load(s) to be handled.

Reassessment may also be required where accident/absence statistics show that the original control measures were not sufficiently effective. No employee should lift heavy objects and when a load is heavy or the centre of gravity is not positioned centrally then help must be obtained and at least two persons should share the weight. There is no maximum weight that a person can be required to handle. Tasks should be assessed on the basis of an ergonomic approach to manual handling operations in the workplace, i.e. fitting the task to suit personal abilities and limitations.

St Mark's will ensure that operations which involve manual handling are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable.

An assessment of manual handling activities will be carried out by competent persons. Risks which are identified will be reduced the lowest level reasonably practicable. The following factors should be considered during the assessment.

The task

1. Bending and stooping to lift a load significantly increases the risk of a back injury.
2. Items should ideally be lifted from no higher than knee-height to no higher than shoulder height.
3. Outside this range, lifting capacity is reduced and the risk of injury is increased.
4. When items are required to be lifted from above shoulder height, a stand or suitable means of access should be used.
5. Items which are pushed or pulled should be as near to waist level as possible. Pushing is preferred, particularly where the back can rest against a fixed object to give leverage.
6. Carrying distances should be minimised, especially if the task is regularly repeated.
7. Repetitive tasks should be avoided whenever possible.
8. Tasks which involves lifting and carrying should be designed in such a way as to allow for significant rest breaks (rotation of tasks) or to avoid fatigue.
9. Avoid tasks which require twisting the body where ever possible.

The load

1. The Load should be kept as near as possible to the body trunk to reduce strain and should be not of such size as to obscure vision.

2. An indication of the weight of the load and the centre of gravity should be provided where appropriate. Unstable loads should be handled with particular caution. The change in the centre of gravity is likely to result in over balancing.
3. Ensure there is a secure hand hold, using gloves were necessary to protect against sharp edges or splinters.

The individual

1. Consideration must be given to age, body weight and physical fitness.
2. Regard must be given to personal limitation, employees must not attempt to handle those which are beyond thier individual capability. Assistance must be sought where this is necessary.
3. Persons with genuine physical or clinical reasons for avoiding lifting should be made allowance for, as should pregnant women, who should not be required to undertake hazardous lifting or carrying tasks.
4. Significant knowledge and understanding of the work is an important factor in reducing the risk of injury.
5. Individuals undertaking lifting of carrying will be given suitable instruction, training and information to undertake the task with minimum risk.

The working environment

1. There must be adequate space to enable the activity to be conducted in safety and the transportation route must be free from obstruction.
2. Lighting, heating and weather conditions must be taken into account.
3. Floors another working services must be in a safe condition, and adequate ventilation is required, particularly where there is no natural ventilation

Other factors

The use of personal protective equipment may be necessary whilst carrying out manual handling activities. If the use of personal protective equipment restricts safe and easy movement, this should be reported. Constant interruptions from other employees must also be avoided, as this can reduce the concentration of an individual.

Duties of managers and supervisors

Managers or supervisors must ensure that

1. Manual handling assessments are carried out were relevant and records are kept
2. Employees are properly supervised
3. Adequate information and training is provided to persons carrying out manual handling activities
4. Any injuries or incidents relating to manual handling are investigated, with remedial action taken
5. Employees adhere to safe systems of work
6. Safety arrangements for manual handling operations are regularly monitored and reviewed
7. Employees undertaking manual handling activities are asked if there are any reasons of health and safety which prevent them from undertaking the work
8. Special arrangements are made, when necessary, for individuals with health conditions who could be adversely affected by manual handling operations

Duties of Employees

Employees must ensure that:

1. They report to management (in confidence) any personal conditions which may be detrimentally affected by the manual handling activity
2. They comply with instruction and training which has provided in safe manual handling activities

3. Their own health and safety is not put at risk when carrying out manual handling activities
4. They use equipment which has been provided to minimise the risk from manual handling activities
5. Any problems relating to the activities are reported to a responsible person
6. Suitable information and training, will be provided to persons who are required to carry out manual handling activities.
7. Training needs will be identified and reviewed by the responsible person.
8. Refresher training will also be given at reasonable intervals.
9. Employees will be informed of the approximate weight of loads which are handled and objects which have eccentric weight distribution.

Safe System of Work

Poor lifting and carrying techniques can result in discomfort and increase the risk of injury. In extreme circumstances, these injuries can have permanent effects. These risks can be reduced by adopting the following simple precautions:

1. Ensure that formalised systems of work have been designed for the work activity are complied with.
2. Make full and proper use of aids to lifting and carrying, such as trolleys, and lifting equipment
3. Store heavy items between the shoulder and hip height. Where possible only store small, light items above shoulder or below knee height.
4. Use the legs and knees to bend and lift - do not stoop or bend the back.
5. Avoid tasks which require stretching or twisting.
6. Ensure that regular rest breaks are taken where manual handling activities are repetitive to prevent the onset of fatigue.
7. Ensure that there are no sharp, hot or cold edges which could cause injury.
8. Ensure that walkways are free from obstructions.
9. Make full and proper use of personal protective equipment.
10. Report any problems or concerns associated with manual handling operations to a responsible person without delay.

Pastoral Visiting Policy

Pastoral Care is an important part of our church and community life. Much of this occurs in the church in an informal and unofficial way as Christians seek to help in practical ways and to encourage one another in the faith. Formal or official Pastoral Care is different, Pastoral Care is carried out by church representatives on behalf of the church community, and this leaflet is intended for Pastoral Visitors appointed in this capacity.

Pastoral Visitors working with adults who may be vulnerable in a church or faith based context should strive for the highest standards of practice. They are in a position of trust whether they are paid employees or volunteers and irrespective of the setting. These church workers and volunteers therefore have a duty of care towards those with whom they come into contact. In view of this, we ensure that the procedures we have in place not only safeguard vulnerable persons, but serve to protect staff and volunteers from unsubstantiated allegations, improper conduct and misunderstandings.

Church members who are suffering illness, are housebound or in hospital may be offered visits from the Pastoral Care team. Pastoral Visits are made to offer friendship, help, support and contact with the community of faith. These visits may include practical help, giving information and/or helping people to make their own decisions by listening to them articulate their concerns. Listening well is fundamental to all good pastoral care. It is not intended that visitors should make people's decisions for them. The role of the visitor is not that of pastoral counselling or spiritual guidance which should be left for those with appropriate training. It is, however, appropriate for Pastoral Visitors to give account for the hope within them if asked by the person whom they visit. It is also appropriate and natural for spiritual encouragement to flow from those who know and love the Lord to those who seek more of him.

Pastoral Support Team Co-ordinator (PSTC)

The Pastoral Care Group Leader is The Reverend Canon Charles Royden. The PSTC is responsible for the selection, induction, support and supervision of all Pastoral Visitors. Pastoral Visitors will be selected and invited to join the Pastoral Care Team by the PSTC.

New Pastoral Visitors

Pastoral Visitors will be asked to complete a Confidential Declaration Form and be subject to DBS clearance. References will also be requested. New Pastoral Visitors must attend St Mark's Church and be on the Church Electoral Roll.

Making Pastoral Visits

Lone Working

Pastoral Visitors must be accompanied on any visits by another Pastoral Visitor, we do not conduct lone working unless it is previously agreed and to a recognised member of the congregation.

Training

An informal programme of continuing development is provided for all Pastoral Visitors which involves Pastoral Care Team meetings which provide an opportunity to talk through any pastoral care issues in a confidential setting.

Record Keeping

The only records which are kept as part of pastoral care will be maintained by the PSTC. Pastoral Visitors should communicate any necessary information to the PSTC following a visit.

Time Keeping

When making pastoral visits suggest how long the meeting might be for and to check whether this is a convenient length of time for the other person. Failure to maintain clear time boundaries can result in both parties feeling unsafe and out of control.

Professional Advice

Where a person's needs are recognised as being outside the Pastoral Visitor's competence, they should seek the agreement of the person to refer them to someone who can offer appropriate help.

Considering the Clients

Home visits can be potentially risky situations therefore Pastoral Visitors must take care to deal cautiously with persons who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs and persons who are suffering from mental illness or impairment. They must not put their personal safety, or that of others, at risk.

Where there are concerns about visiting someone of the opposite sex (in line with guidance provided by the PSTC), then the team member should discuss this with the PSTC in order that they may make alternative arrangements or, after consideration, authorise the visit to go ahead.

Safe Working

Pastoral visitors should always carry a switched-on mobile phone on a home visit, and ensure that they have informed the PSTC about a visit before it takes place and again after it has been completed.

Calling cards should be left and where possible encourage the person whom they are visiting to talk to and pass on a calling card to other family members and/or friends about the visit.

All visits should be conducted in the morning or early afternoon.

Confidentiality and Respect

Whatever a Pastoral Visitor is told by a person to whom they are offering pastoral care must be treated with respect and kept confidential. Pastoral Visitors are encouraged to seek advice from the PSTC or Parish Safeguarding Representative when faced with ethical dilemmas regarding confidentiality and the law. However, if there is a risk of harm, Pastoral Visitors should consider it their duty to break a confidence.

Pastoral visitors should respect the views of every person to whom they provide pastoral care. They will not exploit financially, emotionally or sexually any person to whom they are providing pastoral care.

Touch

The appropriate use of touch is a key aspect of maintaining ethical boundaries in pastoral care. Touch can show care in unique and important ways that communicate much more deeply than words. However, the reality of sexual abuse in our culture increases the need for awareness of how easily physical expressions of care and comfort may be misunderstood. Men more than women may feel that the only safe option is to avoid all but the most formal physical contact. However, in moments of deep human distress, such as bereavement, a rigid avoidance of physical contact may in itself be damaging. If there is hesitation or refusal of touch this should always be accepted without question.

Gifts

It is not unusual for people being visited to offer gifts, such as an ornament or trinket. Tactful refusal is always required, not simply because it can compromise the role of the Pastoral Visitor but it could also lead to future concerns that items have been taken dishonestly. Be particularly mindful that by innocently admiring ornaments or jewellery, you may unwittingly prompt people to offer the item as a gift.

Pastoral Visitors should also be mindful that offering even small gifts to people they visit could compromise the visitor's independence and objectivity, and could also create a feeling from the person visited that they must offer something in return.

Environment and Sustainability Policy

Introduction

St Mark's Church Community Centre is committed to ensuring that wherever possible we operate our Community Centre in a manner which is compatible with sound a environmental Policy which seeks to help restore and sustain a better environment for all. We identify sustainability as

"meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Sustainability is a process of ensuring the wise use of all resources within a framework in which environmental, social and economic factors are integrated. We are committed to placing sustainability at the heart of our action, encouraging all users to consider sustainability choices in the operation of their activities. We will reduce, reuse and recover.

We will seek to engage in a process of continual environmental awareness and improvement. We will operate in a manner which maximises social benefit while minimising any adverse impacts to the local community. We will maximise the efficient use of energy and materials, continually improve pollution prevention measures and increase use of renewable resources.

Transport

We will seek to promote measures which reduce the need for travel to and from the Community Centre, such as consideration of timing of meetings to avoid unnecessary journeys. St Mark's Church Community Centre will provide facilities which encourage users to consider transport option which have reduced adverse impact upon the environment. We will offer secure parking for bicycles and areas in which outdoor clothing may be stored by users.

Energy

Our Centre buildings are of modern construction with cavity walls and double glazed window units, including those of stained glass. we have extensively improved all insulation and installed solar thermal hot water and Solar PV to produce energy on site. Heating of all rooms is by hot-water radiators supplied from efficient condensing gas-fired boilers. All radiators are fitted with thermostatic valves. The boilers are regularly serviced to maintain efficiency. A 2-channel 7-day programmable timer is used to controls the boilers and the programme is updated weekly to cater for the changes in the Centre bookings and to eliminate unnecessary heating.

Electricity is used for lighting, office equipment, CCTV, food storage, dishwashing and (drinking) water heating. we have fitted LED, long-life low wattage bulbs wherever possible to minimise electricity consumption. All office equipment, when in regular use have 'standby' facilities and are switched off when the Centre is closed. Some security lighting does remain on, however timers are fitted to prevent unnecessary use after the last occupants have left the building. There are also passive infra-red detectors which switch on and off when motion is detected.

We have water features in the gardens, these are fitted with low energy pumps and are activated only by motion detectors and then switched off following a short time delay.

Water

Water is monitored using a water meter.

Waste Management

Several 'Wheelie Bins' are used at the Centre. We participate in Bedford Borough Council's segregated waste collection and recycling programme to ensure recycling of cans, glass, textiles. We will also ensure recycling of special waste, including mobile telephones. The Centre Office staff are always on hand to advise any Group in the case of any special waste handling situations that may arise. Waste paper is recycled, a shredder unit is provided to enable confidential waste to also be recycled.

Purchasing

We will constantly monitor our purchasing and use of materials and consumption to determine the impact of our choices upon the environment. We will seek to be prudent in our choice of resources and develop procurement procedures which consider all elements of the supply chain to ensure social, ethical and environmental criteria are integrated into programmes aimed at achieving best value. Consideration will be given to the sourcing of materials and where possible local alternatives selected which minimise unnecessary travel. Purchasing in bulk may also be a means of reducing packaging and transportation. We will minimise waste and encourage repair, reuse and recycling before considering the responsible disposal of surplus materials

Plastics

Consideration will be given to avoid all disposable items where alternatives offer more sustainable solutions. Throw away pens, plastic cups and disposable items will be evaluated for better alternatives. Specifically wherever possible we will eliminate single use plastics in our premises.

Stationery

We will seek to make use of recycled paper. Paper which is not recycled will be produced using TCF (Totally Chlorine Free) pulp and 100% degradable and recyclable. Paper will only be used where guarantees can be obtained that wood suppliers employ a sustainable forestry plan. of the paper used in the Centre will be recycled and bleach free

All cartridges for ink printers and toner cartridges are to be recycled.

Centre Grounds and Gardens

St. Mark's Church Centre is surrounded to the North and South by extensive and high quality cultivated gardens, grassed areas and shrubbery borders. These areas are tended by volunteers who use minimal amounts of Pesticides and Herbicides in exceptional circumstances and NO peat. Much use is made of bark chippings to suppress weeds.

Building.

We will promote continual improvement in maintenance practices and establish sustainability guidelines for architects and contractors working on new build and refurbishment projects. We will ensure that all building development conforms to the highest standards and makes sustainability issues a priority. Exceptional levels of insulation, use of recycled plastics and reclaimed materials are important means of assisting in the legally binding international commitment to reduce emissions of the six main greenhouse gases by 12.5% (compared to 1990) during the five year period 2008-12. The UK government signed its agreement to this in the 'Kyoto Agreement.'

Pollution

Every attempt is to be made to minimise the amount of pollution caused by the centre and its users.

Clinical waste,

Items including nappies should wherever possible be reduced through the use of degradable alternatives.

Chemicals.

The only chemicals normally used at the Centre are those used for cleaning and dish washing. Bleaching agents will be avoided wherever possible and choices made of products which are environmentally friendly. Handling and disposal of these is governed by the COSHH regulations.

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE:-

1. The person discovering the fire should **sound the alarm** using the nearest break glass.
2. If there is no member in the Church office, ring the Fire Brigade immediately.
3. Attack the fire, if possible, with the appliances situated in the foyer but without taking personal risk.
4. On hearing the alarm evacuate the building using the fire exists, closing all doors behind you.
5. Assemble in the **Car Park**.
6. **Do Not stop** to collect personal belongings.
7. **Do not re enter** the building until advised by Fire Officer or member of Church staff.