

## **BOURTON ON THE WATER PARISH COUNCIL ("the Council")**

### **LONE WORKING POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

Because the Council is a small organisation all Council staff are, at some point, lone workers. The Clerk, Assistant, Finance Officer and Caretaker are all based at the Community Centre and often work alone either in the office or on the premises. Members of the Council also encounter members of the public when conducting Council business.

Working alone is not a hazard, however, in some circumstances it may increase risk for a number of reasons.

It is not possible to anticipate every eventuality in a document like this and it is therefore intended as a guide for staff to help them devise safe systems of working for lone working in all foreseeable circumstances.

This can be achieved by the staff and Members risk-assessing the working environment and applying this Guidance. The purpose of this document is to establish the way in which the Council applies health and safety controls and responsibilities for lone workers, either operating on Council premises or working alone away from the Council.

It's recognised that often it is necessary for staff and Council members to work alone, and sometimes away from their normal place of work, carrying out site visits, inspections and the like. The Council, as a caring employer, is concerned to take steps to increase the support and protection of its staff and members whilst working alone and/or away from the office.

These guidelines attempt to balance the Council's need to carry on its business without causing its staff or members to be vulnerable to assault or other forms of aggression. It is expected that through adoption of the following guidelines, the likelihood of incidents can be reduced to a minimum. Regardless, arrangements for support for employees are in place should they be required.

#### **Legislation**

The primary requirement of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 imposes a 'duty of care' on organisations for all its employees. This duty is reinforced by various other acts and regulations, such as the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR), which stresses the requirements for risk assessments.

#### **Defining Terms**

The term *lone working* within the meaning of this policy, applies to persons operating singularly, as given by the following examples:-

- A member of staff or the Council working alone in the Community Centre, both within and outside normal working hours.
- A member of staff or the Council travelling between the Council office and other sites, such as Cemeteries, bank etc.
- A member of the Council meeting the public for an arranged or ad hoc meeting to discuss Council business;

## **LONE WORKING PROCEDURES & GUIDANCE**

### **Guidelines for Early and Late Working:**

A member of staff or the Council, working alone outside normal working hours, is at greater risk either from intruders to the Centre or from personal accident when there is no help available. The best solution is to avoid such lone working, either by home-working or by planned activity involving two or more people.

If it is unavoidable, sensible precautions should be taken:

- The Chairman (or other Council member) should be made aware in advance of any that such work is taking place and ensure that staff or Council members know of any special arrangements required on entering or leaving the premises/office and how to make the premises secure.
- When working alone, outside normal office hours, the front door to the Centre and the office/meeting room doors should be locked. On no account should these doors be opened to any visitor (unless by prior arrangement).
- The member of staff or Council should ensure that their spouse or partner or a friend knows that they are working early or late, at what time they expect to return and whom to contact if they do not.
- Staff should understand the availability of first aid, which will be limited in these cases, or other emergency arrangements and how to summon help if required.

### **Guidelines for Staff Working Alone during Office Hours:**

- The office door should be kept locked and staff should liaise with visitors via the reception window only, unless for visits by prior appointment.
- If any visitor acts in a manner that suggests they may become violent, or act in an inappropriate or confrontational manner then there is no expectation on the Council that the employee should accept the situation.
- The employee must request that the person leaves the building immediately and closes the reception window.
- If any visitor is unwilling to leave the employee must report the incident immediately to the Police and a Council member.

### **Guidelines for Staff/Council Members Making Site Visits:**

The majority of site visits are unlikely to lead to risk however, at the discretion of the member of staff or Council, and particularly if the visit involves meeting persons not known, the following guidelines apply.

- The Clerk or the Assistant should record details of visits made by them in their office diary with the time, date, location and the contact details of the person/company involved.
- Members of Council should ensure office staff are aware of visits/meetings with third parties, and staff must record details of the time, date, location and the contact details of the person/company involved in their office diary.
- Wherever possible, all staff/members should carry a mobile phone which is switched on and useable.
- In case of vehicle breakdown – observe procedure in “travelling tips” below.

### **Requirements of staff and Council members**

All staff and Council members:

- Must appreciate the risks and hazards involved with working alone;
- Are required to follow safe working procedures contained within this document and have awareness of emergency procedures.
- Are required to co-operate with these efforts to ensure safe working, and to report any concerns or training needs to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

### **Travelling Tips - Going by car**

- Keep your vehicle in good working order by regular servicing and, if appropriate, a valid MOT certificate to reduce the risk of breakdowns. Join an emergency breakdown service;

- Take a charged mobile phone but remember that you must NOT use a mobile telephone whilst moving, even with hands free equipment.
- Know where you are going and how to get there. Plan your route in advance and carry with you any maps or instructions you need to find your destination.
- If you do get lost, only ask for directions at a well-lit public place; e.g. a petrol station.
- Travel by main roads and well-lit streets.
- Keep the car locked when you are driving and windows up, especially in towns where you might have to stop at junctions or traffic lights.
- Never leave valuable items on the passenger seat - handbags, for example. Visible valuables encourage snatch thieves. Lock valuables in the boot when you leave your car to go to the appointment.
- Lock your car whenever you leave it, even if you are just going into the service station to pay for petrol.
- When you park during the day, ask yourself what the area or car park will be like if you return to your car after dark.
- Always park your car in the direction of escape; this avoids the need to manoeuvre if you need to leave in a hurry.
- Do not stop for people who flag you down. If you think they need help, drive to a safe place and call for help on their behalf.
- If you feel threatened by other drivers, drive to the nearest police station, ambulance station or fire station. Failing this, go to a well-lit and populated petrol station.
- If you are prevented from moving off keep the engine running, make sure the doors are locked and make as much noise as possible. Your car is fitted with a horn - use it.

Date of last review: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Date of this review: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Date of next review: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024