Local Government for Langton Green, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Old Groombridge

LONE WORKER POLICY

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and others who work alone are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and to outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff who work alone.
The policy also aims to raise awareness of safety issues relating to lone working

Legal requirements

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that employers have to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and that self-employed persons have to ensure that they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, in both cases so far as is reasonably practicable. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on employers, to identify significant risks to employees and others affected by an employer's activities, and to reduce those risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

Definition of a lone worker

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from colleagues without close or direct supervision – for example

- office staff working alone in the Parish Office
- councillors on council business
- employees visiting sites for inspection or other works
- employees maintaining the Council's assets

Risks

The primary risks are

- workplace – open to all visitors; safety
- security - personal
- equipment – manual operation and safety
- possible confrontation – in all situations
- illness

Guidance

Lone workers, whether employed by Speldhurst Parish Council or not, should take reasonable care not to put themselves at undue risk by evaluating each situation and taking appropriate steps, for example

- it is recommended that the office door should remain locked when working alone and only opened when the visitor has identified themselves
- confrontation should be avoided whenever possible including withdrawing from the situation
- a mobile phone should be carried at all times
- all visits or appointments should be made with another clerk or councillor whenever possible
- notes should be left advising of their whereabouts

Should an incident occur it is the responsibility of the person affected to notify the clerk or chairman immediately, first by phone and then by written report.

Summary

Lone working environments present a unique health and safety problem. Speldhurst Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer for providing safe and healthy working conditions for all its employees. Employees and contractors are reminded, however, that they have to care for their own safety and that of other workers (and other persons who might be affected by their activities).