

Awbridge Parish Council

Health and Safety Policy

Contextual information

Awbridge is a small parish council. It has one employee (Clerk/RFO), who works 6.5 hours per week and is home-based. The council supplies the clerk with a laptop computer. The council owns no buildings or land. It holds its meetings in a room hired at Awbridge village hall. The village hall committee has its own health and safety policy which covers hirers and visitors, including members of the public who are attending meetings of the parish council. The scope of this policy is designed to reflect this operational environment.

Background

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 imposes duties on employers, the self-employed and employees to protect health and safety.

Section 2 of the 1974 Act requires every employer to ensure, as far as is reasonable practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. This duty extends to parish councils who employ officers who work from home.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Section 2(3) requires that, 'except in such cases as may be prescribed, *it shall be the duty of every employer to prepare and as often as may be appropriate revise a **written statement** of his general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of his employees and the organisation and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out that policy, and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all of his employees*'.

The Employers' Health and Safety Policy Statements (Exception) Regulations 1975/1584 confirms that employers with fewer than 5 employees are exempt from the Section 2(3) duty. Although Awbridge Parish Council falls within this exemption, the council has taken the decision to follow the advice contained in the NALC Legal Topic Note (LTN) 23, dated July 2015 and, as a matter of good practice, put in place this written policy.

Policy Statement

Awbridge Parish Council (hereinafter referred to as APC) recognises it's duty as an employer under Health and Safety at Work legislation to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work.

Health and Safety - Organisation

APC understands it must, as an employer, as far as is reasonable:

- a. ensure that the buildings and other areas or places in which people are employed to work, are safe and without risks to health;
- b. consider the work being done and any special needs of individual staff;
- c. provide and maintain a working environment (including facilities such as toilets, rest areas and the like) which is safe and without risks to health and adequate in terms of heating, lighting, ventilation and seating, etc.;
- d. provide and maintain plant, machinery, equipment, tools, appliances and systems of work which are safe and without risk to health;
- e. arrange that employees are not put at risk (or exposed to risk) in connection with the use, handling, storage or transport of dangerous articles and substances such as chemicals, dusts, noxious fumes or vapours, etc.;
- f. safeguard its employees from inappropriate behaviour by others;
- g. provide as much information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees;

The parish council understands that it also has a duty of care to conduct its activities, as far as is reasonably practical, in such a way as to ensure that persons not in its employment (contractors, tradesmen, etc.) who may be affected thereby are not needlessly exposed to risks to their health and safety. That same general duty of care extends to other persons (member of the public, guests, etc.) who may be affected by the way APC it conducts its activities.

The parish council carries employer's liability and accidental injury insurance cover for officers and members. It also carries public liability cover.

Health and Safety - Compliance

APC currently has one employee who fills the dual role of parish clerk and responsible financial officer. The clerk principally works from home providing administrative and management support to APC. The clerk is required to complete an annual self-assessment of his/her working environment and highlight any specific issues, including those relating to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, with the parish council. Any issues arising in-year should be raised directly with the parish council in advance of the yearly self-assessment. An appointed member of the parish council may, on occasion and at a time convenient to the clerk, also carry out a workplace assessment.

Additionally, the clerk's workplace is at Awbridge Village Hall for the purposes of attending parish council meetings. This venue is covered by the health and safety measures implemented by the Awbridge Village Hall Committee.

A grievance procedure is in place to safeguard the clerk from inappropriate behaviour by others. It is the policy of the parish council that the clerk should not receive members of the general public at his/her home workplace for the purposes of parish council business. Arrangements should be made to meet members of the public at Awbridge Village Hall or other mutually convenient venue and in the

company of a parish councillor. Members of the parish council may come to the clerk's home workplace by arrangement. The internal auditor will meet with the clerk at least once per year at his/her home workplace to carry out the internal audit.

Support in the form of providing appropriate information, training and supervision for the clerk is given by the parish council where necessary to ensure that health and safety is maintained in the work place and in the way in which the parish council conducts its activities.

The parish council organises, and members participate in an annual litter pick around the village. Each councillor and member of the public participating has been given a copy of APC's health and safety guidance for safe litter picking, which is based on 'Information for Community Litter Pickers' issued by Test Valley Borough Council. As part of the process of planning for the litter pick, a member of the council will carry out a written risk assessment of the task. Prior to commencement of the litter pick, the group leader will make volunteers aware of the hazards identified and the control measures in place.

Members of the parish council from time to time carry out property/site visits in connection with planning applications notified to the parish council by Test Valley Borough Council. It is the policy of the parish council that no member of the council should undertake a lone visit to properties/sites, and that any visits to properties/sites are made with the permission, and under the supervision, of the property owner or site manager/agent.

The parish council does not undertake, nor is it responsible for the clearance of snow or ice from footpaths around the village, this being the responsibility of Hampshire County Council.

Monthly inspections of the war memorial and parish council notice boards are carried out by a member of the parish council. Any findings of concern and action to be reported to the next available monthly parish council meeting and minuted.

The parish council will issue a quarterly worksheet item requesting that the Lengthsman carries out an inspection of the bus shelter, roadside benches, stiles and kissing gates which are in the council's ownership. The lengthsman will be asked to notify the parish clerk of any remedial works/repairs required to keep these items in a condition safe for use by the public. The clerk shall seek the agreement of the parish council for any repairs/remedial works identified, except where there is an immediate danger to the public, when the clerk will arrange for the required works to be carried out without delay.

Roads and footpaths around the parish are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council. However, any faults which are reported to parish council meetings are recorded and referred to Hampshire County Council for repair in the interest of the safety of the public.

Date of meeting adopted:

Signed: (Chairman)