



Health and Safety Policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Boxley Parish Council is committed to promoting health, safety and positive environmental practices. The council will maintain a safe and healthy workplace and protect the environment for the residents of Boxley.

Boxley Parish Council will adhere to relevant legislation and strive to implement the highest standards of health and safety contained within this legislation, supporting guidance and the best standards developed.

Boxley Parish Council's aims are set out by the following objectives;

- We aim to conduct our business so it meets or exceeds all applicable laws and regulations and minimises risk to our employees, the public and the environment.
- We are committed to continuously improving our health (both mental and physical), safety and environmental performance.
- We continually promote employee safety on and off the job; by providing necessary information, instruction, training, support and resources to all of our employees in order to achieve this commitment.
- We believe all occupational injuries and illnesses are preventable.
- We respect the diverse environments and cultures in which we operate.
- We endeavour to do business with companies and contractors which share our Health, Safety and Environment.
- We encourage reporting of all Health, Safety and Environment related hazards, potential hazards, incidents and near-hits. We take every report seriously, investigate to identify facts and ensure immunity for good-faith reporting of all incidents and issues.

The minimum acceptable standards of health and safety are those included in the legislation, but it is a key aim of the Parish Council to exceed those standards. The principal responsibility for health and safety rests with the Clerk of Boxley Parish Council.

This policy and associated documentation will be publicised to all employees and will be reviewed on a regular basis, to be updated or revalidated as appropriate.

Employees Responsibilities (Employee means those with both permanent & temporary contracts)

All employees have a duty co-operate with the Council to enable it to fulfil its obligation under current health and safety legislation, to contribute towards the development of a safer workplace and to report hazards, near misses, accidents, faulty equipment or any other associated problems with health and safety.

Employees must:

- Familiarise themselves with and conform to the health & safety regulations.
- Obey all safety rules and take reasonable care for their own health & safety.
- Not take any action which might endanger their health and safety or that of fellow workers.

- Where required, staff must wear appropriate safety equipment and use appropriate safety devices. Any additional safety equipment required must be reported to the Clerk.
- Report all accidents, damage and safety hazards without delay to the Clerk.
- Know the location of first aid facilities.
- Know what to do in the case of fire or other emergency and the location of firefighting equipment.
- Keep all fire exits, as well as passageways clear at all times and ensure fire exits are operational.

General Rules for All Employees

- Prior to using any equipment or machinery a visual safety inspection must be undertaken.
- Free standing heaters must not be used unless specifically authorised by the Clerk.
- Only electrical equipment provided by the Council should be used and electric points must not be overloaded by means of multi-adaptors. Where possible all mains sockets should be switched off when not in use.
- Mains must not be overloaded. It is important that the correct socket outlet and plug and fuse size is used for each item of electrical equipment.
- Supply cables/leads across floors etc. should not present a hazard by trailing across areas of access. Such extension leads are for temporary use only. See separate risk assessment for cleaning during periods of hire.
- Defective equipment must never be used. Staff should not attempt to effect repairs to electrical equipment, unless competent to do so.
- All heavy equipment and storage units should preferably be placed against the wall.
- Heavy equipment and furniture must not be moved by individuals.
- Safe lifting practices must be observed.
- High shelves should only be reached through the use of steps provided for that purpose.
- Office temperature should reach a minimum of 16 degrees Celsius after the first hour of working time and be maintained above 18 degrees Celsius throughout the working day.

Rules specific to Office Staff

- Filing cabinets and the coms cupboard should always have sufficient weight in the bottom drawer to prevent the cabinet from tipping when a full top drawer is opened. Filing cabinet and desk drawers must always be closed immediately after use. Damaged or defective cabinets must not be used.
- Office equipment whether manually or electrically operated, must not be used by unauthorised, untrained personnel.
- Workstations for office staff using computers etc. should conform to the guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) concerning position, seating and work practices.

Rules specific to Caretaking and Cleaning Staff

Cleaning products

- Label instructions on containers and packages are to be read and followed.
- All chemicals and strong cleaning fluids are stored in a locked cupboard.
- Products, particularly those containing hydrocarbon and other flammable solvents, must be stored away from extreme low temperatures, heat sources and naked flames.
- Appropriate protective clothing, such as gloves and overalls must be worn when handling corrosive substances. Protective clothing will be provided by the parish council.
- Care must be taken to avoid ingestion, inhalation and skin contact of all chemical substances. Spillage must be cleaned up immediately while observing all precautions.

- Products must not be mixed due to the possibility of hazardous chemical reaction for example bleach which will produce chlorine gas if mixed with acidic cleansers (e.g. Harpic) or other acidic substances.
- No unauthorised cleaning products shall be used in the hall or on the hall floor.

No member of staff is allowed to use the large ladder, to reach the middle hall lights, without permission from the parish office and without a second member of staff being present.

Access to the attic must only be undertaken when a second member of staff is present.

Glass or any sharp materials must only be cleaned up and disposed of in accordance with the Sharps and Hazardous Waste Policy and Procedures (contained within the Beechen Hall Manual).

Boxley Parish Council's Health and Safety responsibilities

Boxley Parish Council will provide suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training to employees as necessary to perform their duties and tasks in a safe manner and any necessary refresher training. The Council will provide Health and Safety induction training with an initial outline induction on the first day, followed by more detailed induction within a one month period.

It is the policy of Boxley Parish Council that all employees receive training in all safety aspects of their occupation. First Aid Training will be made available to office personnel.

Boxley Parish Council will implement arrangements to ensure all electrical equipment and services provided are appropriate to the working environment and adequately maintained, tested and inspected.

Boxley Parish Council will ensure that as soon as possible following commencement on their workstation, all designated "users" of computer equipment have their workstations risks assessed to identify changes to layout or additional equipment necessary to ensure a safe working environment.

Boxley Parish Council will ensure contractors are competent for the work they undertake and that suitable systems are in place to manage the risks from and to contractors working on Boxley Parish Council premises.

Boxley Parish Council will constantly review the management of health and safety by the following means:

Proactive Monitoring

- Building Inspections.

Reactive Monitoring

- The recording and reporting of accidents, incidents and near misses.
- Health Surveillance.
- Staff stress levels.
- Incident investigation.

Boxley Parish Council will have a regular examination of data, statements, records, operations and performances so to effectively evaluate and improve their effectiveness. Areas to be routinely audited include, internal controls, quality management, project management, water management, energy conservation, policy reviews.

Accurate maintenance records will be kept and regularly updated.

COSH folder will be kept up to date.

The Clerk is responsible for:-

- Establishing safe systems of work and procedures for carrying out the Health and Safety Policy of the Council, incorporating any regulations, approved codes of practice and other relevant legislation.
- Ensuring that safe working procedures are implemented and followed by staff and that a safe working environment is provided. This also applies to contractors and visitor to the Council's premises and land.
- Ensuring that all employees receive adequate training, information and supervision to maintain safe standards.
- Ensuring all safety rules are observed and that protective clothing and equipment, supplied by the Council, is worn or used where required.
- Ensuring that all machinery and equipment is properly maintained and safe to use.
- Ensuring that the mental welfare of all employees is protected as far as the Council is able and that its responsibility to identify and manage stress in the workplace is recognised.
- Boxley Parish Council will ensure that arrangements exist for dealing with persons whose judgment appears to be affected through the use of drugs or alcohol, and that they are not allowed to work or remain on Boxley Parish Council premises or other sites under our control whilst impaired.
- To record and investigate all accidents and to submit a full and prompt report to the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the relevant committee. Where necessary the Clerk will issue instructions to ensure such accidents are not repeated and where appropriate make recommendation on accident prevention. Where necessary the Clerk is to report these injuries, diseases and other dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive, normally by telephoning RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences).
- Arranging an annual inspection of all fire extinguishers on premises administered by the Council and to ensure replenishment/replacement whenever necessary.
- Arranging an inspection of all portable electrical equipment by a qualified person to be undertaken every 18 months.
- Ensuring all newly appointed staff (to include anyone in the office for Work Experience) have read and understand the Council's Health and Safety Policy in the Staff Handbook and such supplemental information as is applicable to that person's duties and responsibilities.
- Ensuring that all new staff receive adequate training in all health and safety aspects of their occupation.
- Ensuring all contractors and visitors comply with the responsibilities and duties set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and any subsequent legislation.

Specific Health and Safety Arrangements

First Aid

The First Aid Boxes are located in the kitchens at Beechen Hall and the Parish Council Office. A defibrillator is located on an external wall at the hall. The Clerk is responsible for carrying out periodic checks to ensure the contents and equipment are adequately maintained.

Fire Safety

Fire Extinguishers. It is the responsibility of the Clerk to organise an annual inspection of all fire extinguishers on premises administered by the Council and to ensure replenishment/replacement whenever necessary.

Fire Alarms

The Clerk or other named person will test the fire alarm every 2 weeks and note that this has been done in the record book provided for this purpose.

Emergency Lighting

The Parish Caretaker or other named person will test the emergency lighting every 4 weeks and note that this has been done in the record book provided for this purpose.

Fire Drills

Fire drills for office staff will be carried out periodically to test the adequacy of these procedures and a record kept. Regular hirers will be given the opportunity to book fire drills. The Clerk is the designated Fire Marshall.

Electrical Systems and equipment

All portable electrical equipment is checked by a qualified person as part of the hall's electrical safety check, undertaken every 12 months. Free standing heaters, when used, are positioned away from flammable materials etc. and are turned off when everyone leaves the premises or room. Mains should not be overloaded and the correct socket outlet, plug and fuse size must be used for each item of electrical equipment.

Adopted by Council September 2025