

Reviewed Oct 2018

**The Most Holy Trinity RC Church
92 High Street
Otford, Sevenoaks
TN14 5PH**



Dear Rev. David Gibbon

Firstly, please may we thank you for your time and hospitality during our visit on the **18th October 2018**. The purpose of which was to update risk assessments. The Risk Assessments are broken down into individual topics and contain our recommendations in priority order for your consideration.

For your convenience, the site-specific issues have been separated or grouped together as appropriate, with those applying to all sites as "All areas".

We now urge you to look at this report and make a plan of if and when you will be able to make these improvements. May I suggest that you annotate the margins provided in the reports with either:

- **Done** – with completion date, or;
- **To do** – with realistic target date for completion, or;
- **Not appropriate** – with brief explanation of why not.

This will show progress and focus your resources on those items that still need to be done against your priorities.

By stating "Not appropriate" you are declaring that either you disagree with the finding (which you have every right to do), or that you agree with the finding but have considered the degree of risk verses the cost of time and or resources and *are willing* to accept the risk, and would be able to defend your actions in court.

We hope that from the information in this report you will be in a position to discuss and hopefully agree a plan at our next visit, with a view to move the Parish towards compliance.

Please feel free to contact us if we can be of assistance between now and our next visit.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Smith

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1. General Overview

Each of the following sections contain summarised information from the full “risk assessments” contained within your Health and Safety system which are ultimately used to highlight our recommendations, and are delivered in “suggestion” form only. Many overlap each other in their requirements.

These tend to fall into three categories:

A. **“Seriously consider”**; we feel that this is urgent and is a regulatory requirement. For your convenience to enable you to quickly locate these items we have coloured them in red.

B. **“Consider”**; we feel that this important, but less urgent and is a regulatory requirement.

C. **“If possible”**; this is desirable and relevant to legislation, but not urgent.

Each Parish across the Diocese is different and each has achieved varying levels of compliance in their efforts to retain legality in the face of relentless governmental initiatives and legislation. This report aims to highlight the key areas at this time and not the whole weight of information that your system reveals. The idea is to develop a comprehensive plan, but manage each progressive requirement in “bite sized pieces” so as not to overwhelm you initially.

The very act of assessment resulting in a plan of action goes a long way in convincing the Health and Safety Executive of your positive attitude towards its directives. In the event of an accident or incident at your Parish, it enables us to defend you with evidence rather than just “verbal intentions”.

The system will evolve year-on-year and in itself gives you protection as you move along your plan.

2. Facility Risk Assessment

This is an assessment of the physical aspects of your Parish in general - buildings, grounds and car parks etc.

Its ultimate aims are to minimise any inherent dangers, whilst at the same time produce an environment capable of being approached, entered, used and evacuated, if necessary, safely, and by all members of the public.

We have split it into three sections:

- A. Approach, which relates to accessibility, pathways and parking.
- B. Entrance, which relates to the points of entry to each building.
- C. General hazards, which relate to all issues that could lead to a near miss, injury, or death of members of the public or staff on your premises.

<p>Approach</p> <p>Parking is available to the rear of the Church within the limits of those imposed by the Parish.</p> <p>Entrance</p> <p>Each entrance is clearly identifiable and are easily operated.</p> <p>General hazards – Externally</p> <p>The external escape routes require to be kept safe in the event of snow or icy conditions. Consider the provision of an additional salt boxes for rear car park exits located at the most likely point of need. These can then be stocked in good weather, padlocked, and then used as necessary during or before the onset of inclement weather.</p> <p>Consider including the external escape route in your regular facility checks ensuring there are and remains free, of obstructions, moss and algae growth. We seriously recommend this “facilities” checks include the surface conditions of all step/level changes in the Parish. Particularly with respect to the car park. This check should be at least monthly and prior to major events, and be recorded. Slips and trips are continuing to be one of the major areas where parishioners fall and become injured’</p> <p>Church</p> <p>Consider ensuring that the Kneelers are checked to confirm they have positive pressure to move them to the down position. (tighten or add friction washers). They should rest at least 'Two O'clock' position. Where not possible physical restraint in the form of ties and hooks should be installed and regularly checked after services or cleaning at each end of the kneeler. This less likely to cause injury by dropping onto a person’s foot or ankles.</p> <p>Consider signage to the entrance of the kitchen</p>	
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indicating ‘no children under the age of age of 12 are permitted in the kitchen area, and those aged from 12 to 16 require supervision by a responsible adult’.

This is particularly relevant when the Parish Priest, or his representative is not present to supervise. Exceptions can be made for organised and supervised activities.

To prevent structural damage to the Church Wall. **Consider** consulting a tree surgery on pruning or removal of the tree to prevent structural damage as appropriate. This will also prevent damage as appropriate from blocked gutters from the excess leaf’s falling from the tree.



3. Fire Risk Assessment

Commonly the most prominent but least understood element of Health and Safety, this assessment aims to highlight all the issues associated with not just the “**reaction to fire**”, but also the “**prevention of**” and “**preparation for**”.

It contains elements aimed at preventing fire through good management of waste and storage by identifying “**ignition sources**” and possible “**accelerants**” and removing or separating them.

It also addresses “**Emergency Procedures**” and the good practice associated with “**Training and the maintenance of all equipment associated with**” fire.

The fire risk assessment has been carried out and reported on separately.

4. Equality Act

Generally misinterpreted as being associated with “wheel chair users”, this assessment is primarily concerned with ensuring that all members of society can access and safely use your facilities without, in most cases, outside assistance. It recognises and addresses the requirements of the visually, ambulatory, audibly and generally physically impaired.

Under the Equality Act if disabled people could realistically expect to use your premises, then you must anticipate any reasonable adjustments that would make it easier for that right to be exercised.

It is evident that some efforts have already been made by the Parish to move towards legislative compliance and to ensure that all members of society can enjoy the full usage of, and be included in, all activities within the Parish.

Consider how you will provide for the visually and audibly impaired. This would include:

- The provision of Fire Wardens to monitor and assist persons experiencing difficulties in any emergency situation.
- That all steps along escape routes that the edges highlighted so those with visual impairment can more easily identify the step edges.

Consider the provisions for the escape of all persons permitted to use the Buildings. There is ramped entrance and disabled persons are permitted entry, then a viable 2nd escape route must also be provided. Therefore

Consider upgrading the ramp to full part M compliance. This would include high and low-level handrails to both sides, and edge protection to at least 4 inches to the edge of the ramp.



Consider providing a second exit with flat or ramped egress in case the front exit cannot be used.



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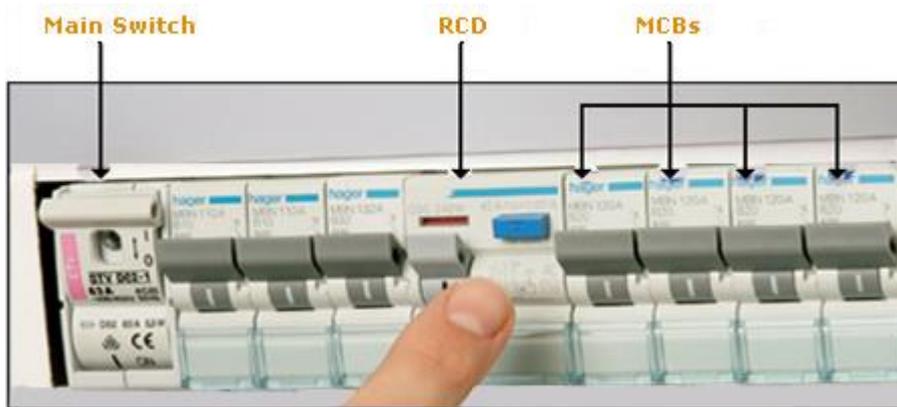
5. Electricity Risk Assessment

This assessment aims to highlight all the issues associated with the safe use of electrical systems and appliances, plus also addressing the current regulatory requirements for their testing, inspection and management.

As Precision are contracted to collate and test the “**Portable Electrical Appliances**” and report upon the fabric electrical system within your buildings, much of the effort required to maintain legality will have been completed.

All areas

Where there are already RCD protection circuits there is a requirement to carry out monthly (preferably, but at least 3 monthly) self-testing of the switches to ensure the safety device is functioning correctly. **Consider** including this test in the monthly facilities checks carried out in each building.



6. COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

Including such items as “Wax”, “Petrol”, “Bleach” and any other chemical that has a warning symbol such as irritant, burns, explosive, toxic, etc., this assessment aims to eventually promote safe storage and usage of all such materials. It focuses on preventing the misuse of

these substances, whether intentionally or innocently, and creating awareness of the role that good management can play in preventing fires and accidents caused by the failure to address the care that these materials require.

Other issues

Precision recommend that you continue to secure all COSHH related items in locked cupboards. The Parish Policy is that only anti-bacterial spray, hand cleaner and washing up liquid are allowed in public places for everyday use. All other substances, including cleaning products will be secured as per the standing policies. Only the Parish Priest, or someone authorised by the Parish Priest will be given access to COSHH related substances.



Those who use the substances must be aware of the safety requirements of Personal Protective Equipment, and the hazards associated with mixing substances.

Consider the provision of at least one secure storage location in each area (Church & Hall) for a of the more hazardous substances (see above).

Consider locking these cupboards to prevent unauthorised access and use of the substances, and placing the COSHH hazard sign on the cupboard.



Keys can then be issued only to those who have been authorised and trained to use the more hazardous substances safely. (Training may be limited to reading and the safety information ensuring they understand the hazards. This only needs to be done once).

Consider regular checks of the WC, Kitchenette especially under the sink and remove all substances that do not comply with the policies above. They should either be disposed of or placed in a secure (cleaner's) cupboard.

Kitchenette

The fridge provided for use of visitors then they must be maintained to current standards. This includes monitoring the temperature to ensure it does not rise above 5°C (fridge) or minus 15°C (freezer) for more than a few minutes after opening for access. A fridge/freezer thermometer is therefore needed.

A system to ensure no perishable food or drink are left in the fridge / freezer after the user has vacated the premises is strongly advised since out of date food can lead to food poisoning.

If food is to be served from the Parish Hall Kitchen then **seriously consider** informing all group leaders who may do so of the regulations concerning Allergens and the need to have information to give to those who may have allergies or intolerances to certain types of food.

Consider displaying the Allergen sign (example provided) where those who may wish to consume the products can see the sign prior to taking the product.

Think Allergy



When someone asks you if a food contains a particular ingredient – always check. From 13 December 2014, food businesses will need to provide information about allergenic ingredients in the food they serve.



For more information and advice about allergy, visit: food.gov.uk/allergy
A booklet Allergen Information for home foods is also available to download.

Which ingredients can cause a problem?

Church

Holy water fonts (stoups) should be subject to cleaning prior to refilling with holy water to reduce the build-up of harmful bacterium and algae. **If possible**; asking cleaners to carry out this task

7. Manual Handling

The current Regulations are applicable to a wide range of Manual Handling activities involving the transportation or supporting of a load, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving. The load may be inanimate (e.g. a box) or animate (e.g. a person). The latest research into self-reported work-related illness estimated that 1.1 million people in Britain

suffered from musculoskeletal disorders in 2001/02, including those caused by Manual Handling. These account for around half of all work-related ill health. Given the increasing demographic age of most volunteers and the general tasks they might perform in the Parish, it is easy to see that they may be vulnerable.

<p>General advice</p> <p>Consider the physical and mental state of each volunteer and task accordingly, despite their willingness to help.</p> <p>Consider only storing items above shoulder height if they can be placed and removed using only one hand. Items requiring 2 hands to move can be stored on lower shelving reducing the risk of back injury, the incorrect use of ladders, or of items falling and injuring anyone.</p> <p>Consider the size and weight of items to be moved and where appropriate ensure lifting aids, or extra people are available to assist in the move.</p>	
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8. First Aid at Work

Adequately provisioning for and predicting the possible requirements of buildings such as Churches and their Halls is of course complex, given the varying ways in which they are used.

However, each Parish has a duty of care to all users of their facilities and it is reasonable to expect that consideration is given to assessing the First Aid needs of each building.

<p>It is evident that First Aid Provision has been considered within the current Parish policies and first aid boxes have already been obtained.</p> <p>Consider checking the contents of the first aid box in the Kitchenette on a monthly basis in case it needs to be restocked, or out of date items need to be replaced.</p> <p>If possible keep accident sheets with the First Aid box.</p> <p>For data protection reasons the accident book / sheets should have completed forms removed to the Parish Office where they can be reviewed before filing.</p>	
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9. Stores and General Storage

Poor storage can easily lead to accidents and provide accelerants for ignition sources; this assessment aims to highlight such issues and to encourage good practice in this area.

General advice

Where high shelves are provided always **consider** that heavy or bulky items are stored on lower shelves, and only those items that can be carried up a ladder with one hand are stored on the high shelves

10. Lone Working Policies

Working alone can put people in a vulnerable position. It may be more difficult for them to summon help if things go wrong or if they are at risk. Whatever the reason for lone working, the HSE believes that people working alone should not be at greater risk in their jobs than other workers.

This assessment will hopefully lead to a policy being raised which will address and prevent risks to lone workers, and also advise how volunteers / employees can raise any problems with their employer.

General advice:

Consider not allow any person to work alone where the risk of injury is significant. Where there is a low risk of injury, but working alone is unavoidable then follow the lone working policies including a system for knowing who is present and obtaining their mobile number, thus ensuring they can contact the emergency services if needed and that they can be contacted by phone to evacuate. This removes the need to go into a burning building to raise the alarm.

Consider providing a visitor's sign in book which includes safety information and the recording of the persons mobile number

11. Violence at Work

The Health and Safety at Work Act places a legal duty upon an Organisation to ensure that all employees / volunteers, so far as is reasonably practicable, are protected from exposure to reasonably foreseeable violence.

This assessment hopes to identify possible vulnerable critical working practices that could result in violence to an employee / volunteer and therefore produce a policy to guard against these issues.

<p>General advice:</p> <p>Consider always pairing up volunteers in higher risk areas. Always travel in at least 2's when taking monies to the bank. If possible vary the day and time of travel.</p>	
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12. Contractors (Management of and Obligations to)

In your constant battle to maintain the Parish, various contractors are often employed. This assessment seeks to identify those areas where they are active regularly, and to assist you in delivering all the required advice and supervision that they are legally entitled to. Alongside this, it will also help to produce procedures that ensure your legal protection, should issues arise during, or from the delivery of, any contract or service.

<p>General advice</p> <p>It is evident that you employ several contractors at various times throughout the year and possibly in emergencies. (The major contracts involving the Dioceses are subject to more stringent regulations, and they will ensure that you are compliant with these).</p> <p>Precision would like to suggest the following:</p> <p>That you discuss Health and Safety with the contractor before they begin work identifying risks and who is responsible for any control measures deemed necessary.</p> <p>Where the risks are considered to be significant and/or you wish to record that important safety information has been passed on we suggest the use of a Permit To Work that details both the scope and area of their contract, and also signs that area over to them and their Health and Safety system for the work they are carrying out.</p> <p>This is particularly important in regards to any areas involving working on live electricity or working at height and any areas with known or suspected asbestos.</p>	
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13. Young Persons at Work

Local authorities and the HSE have rigid guidelines regarding the responsibilities that organisations and employers have regarding the employment of young persons in the workplace. This assessment aims to highlight the areas in which young people are active

within the Parish, with a view to establishing documented procedures and policies that comply with current legislative requirements.

General advice - All areas

The Diocese safeguarding documents need to be considered alongside Health and Safety concerns.

14. Work Equipment (Safe Operation of)

Some Parishes have items of equipment with which they maintain their grounds or Parish buildings. These items, such as towers, ladders, motor mowers and floor polishers have hazards inherent in their usage; they therefore require regular inspection to ascertain their serviceability and policies to ensure that they are used safely.

This assessment aims to identify all such equipment and to produce all the guidelines and steps to adequately maintain and safely use them.

Ladders MUST be subject to policies whereby persons are not permitted to use them without the permission of the Parish Priest or his representative.

Secure ladders so they cannot be used without permission. This may be robust policies or the locking and securing with the combination/ key and ensure those given permission is physically and mentally competent in their use, with sufficient experience and/or training to use them safely.

Pre-use checks of ladders should include the presence of the rubber feet.

This includes the ladder in the Parish Meeting Room where a visitor of volunteer may be able to use them without permission.



They should inspect the ladder prior to use for its suitability and condition.

Dispose of any that are not fit for purpose.

Ladders should not be used if there is a reasonable alternative.

It is important to understand that there are different classes ladders and that the right class ladders are used to ensure they are suitable for the job. Insurers may not pay out if the wrong ladder is used. For example; Class 2 (EN131) ladders are suitable for maximum static vertical load up to 150kg.

Seriously consider how access to the high-level lighting or areas can be done with minimum risk. A specific to task assessment should be made for

<p>this task which considers the use of a working platform (Mobile Tower or Cherry picker), and the use of competent persons to use and supervise the activity.</p>	
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Any items requiring special knowledge should be listed and Operating instructions obtained or written. **Consider** recording the persons who you deem to be competent in the use of each equipment which is of significant hazard. (floor scrubbers, chain saws etc.)

15. Moving towards compliance and getting the best out of our service

We are sure that you are interested in how our service is going to assist you in both achieving and maintaining compliance, whilst not placing too great a demand upon your time, that we are sure is limited.

Every Parish is different; however, all struggle with ever-changing legislation and the complexities surrounding buildings that are used for a variety of purposes. The assessments we have carried out are like a photo snapshot of your Parish and your efforts towards compliance. The Manual that they will be contained within is a constantly evolving document that, in itself, provides the HSE with documentary evidence of “good practice”.

We aim to assist you in developing a “plan of action” that is documented and details a timeline towards compliance. This document is critical, but it is a misconception that all deficiencies have to be rectified in a short time span. The HSE are fully aware of the difficulties you are encountering, not only in coping with the volume of new legislation, but also in adapting old structures to conform with new requirements.

It is within our remit not just to advise you, but to act as your advocate in any situation regarding Health and Safety that may arise. We will, with your permission, attend and assist you should an accident / incident occur. We would also represent you in your dealings with local authorities over compliance, or if a reportable situation occurs. If we are not fully conversant with your plans or issues concerning the Parish, whether it is to redevelop the buildings or initiate a community out-reach project, we will not be in a position to deliver our full services.

We look forward to a safe working environment for all within your Parish, and to working with you at our next and future visits, where you can be assured of our full attention in assisting you to produce and maintain a safe environment.