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Fakenham Town Council

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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1. Policy Statement

Fakenham Town Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers and members of the public who may be affected by its activities. This Health and Safety Policy as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 defines the way we manage the health and safety hazards and risks associated with our business, premises and activities

All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that a safe working and community environment is created.

Members of the Council have the responsibility for implementing this Policy and must ensure health and safety considerations are always given priority in planning and day-to-day supervision of work.

It is a requirement of the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 for employers to consult with employees on matters relating to health and safety. These regulations complement the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, which place duties on employers to consult with safety representatives who have officially been appointed as such by the trade unions. Employees will be consulted by the Clerk on matters regarding their health and safety during general employee's meetings and day to day contact.

All Employees are expected to co-operate in carrying out this Policy throughout the Council activities and must ensure that their own work, so far as is reasonably practicable, is carried out without risk to themselves or others. All Employees and Contractors associated with any works carried out by the Council will be made aware of this Policy and the importance of commitment to its objectives.

The organisation and arrangements for implementing the Policy are set out in the Policy document. The Policy will be kept up to date in response to changes in legislation or best practice. To ensure this, the Policy and the way in which it has operated, will be reviewed annually or as the need arises.

2. Duties and Responsibilities of Councillors

Councillors have overall responsibility for ensuring that health and safety is effectively managed throughout the Council's activities. In fulfilling this responsibility, Councillors will:

- Promote a positive health and safety culture throughout.
- Ensure adequate resources are available to implement this policy.
- Monitor health and safety performance and compliance with legal requirements.
- Ensure suitable risk assessments and safe systems of work are in place.
- Ensure employees receive appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision.
- Ensure accidents, incidents and near misses are reported, investigated and appropriate corrective action taken.
- Ensure work equipment, premises and Council assets are maintained in a safe condition.
- Consider health and safety implications when making decisions and approving projects, activities and budgets.
- Review this policy at least annually and whenever significant changes occur.

3. Duties and Responsibilities of all Employees

All employees have a legal duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work.
Employees must:

- Comply with this Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures.
- Co-operate with the Council in meeting its legal health and safety obligations.
- Follow safe working practices, risk assessments and instructions provided.
- Use equipment, tools and personal protective equipment correctly and report any defects immediately.
- Report accidents, incidents, near misses, hazards and unsafe conditions as soon as reasonably practicable.

- Attend mandatory health and safety training.
- Not intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
- Seek advice or assistance if unsure how to carry out a task safely.

Failure to comply with health and safety requirements may result in disciplinary action.

4. Contractors

The Council recognises its duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that contractors undertaking work on its behalf operate safely and without risk to employees, councillors, volunteers, visitors or members of the public.

All contractors engaged by the Council must:

- Comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.
- Be competent to undertake the work for which they are engaged.
- Provide suitable risk assessments and method statements (RAMS) where required.
- Maintain appropriate Public Liability Insurance and, where applicable, Employers' Liability Insurance.
- Ensure that all equipment, machinery and tools brought onto Council premises are safe, properly maintained and suitable for use.
- Ensure employees are appropriately trained, supervised and competent.
- Report accidents, incidents, hazards and dangerous occurrences arising from their work.
- Comply with any site-specific health and safety arrangements communicated by the Council.
- Immediately stop work and notify the Council where a serious risk to health and safety is identified.

The Council reserves the right to stop work or terminate contracts where contractors fail to comply with health and safety requirements.

5. Volunteers

The Council recognises that volunteers may assist with Council activities. Volunteers will be provided with appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision and are expected to comply with this policy and any relevant risk assessments or safe working procedures.

6. Visitors

Fakenham Town Council owes a Duty of Care to Contractors, Suppliers and Visitors to the Council owned areas of the town. Councillors will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that safe access and egress is available and that areas are maintained in a safe condition.

7. Risk Assessments

Generic Risk Assessments will be carried out by the Clerk for all public areas and estate assets. These Assessments will be recorded, monitored and reviewed where necessary. Where technical expertise is required and/or there are serious/significant risks being assessed, qualified experts may be required to advise and undertake the assessment. Employees will also help to inform the assessments.

Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the Clerk / relevant committee

A Risk based approach will inform the frequency of inspections for the Town Council's open space areas and the measures to be implemented to mitigate against the hazard /risk.

The following format will be used for risk assessment:
• Identify the task to be conducted and hazards arising from it
• Identify who could be harmed by the task and how
• Evaluate risks, and decide if existing controls/precautions are adequate
• Record the findings; Any significant findings will be recorded and discussed with the employees involved.
• Where necessary in the light of the risk assessment, appropriate control measures will be implemented.

8. Training

Councillors are responsible for ensuring that appropriate Health & Safety training is provided for Employees. The Clerk is responsible for maintaining records of such training
Where specific jobs require special training, the Clerk will plan for this to be undertaken, which can be by a work colleague, attendance on a training course or similar. Ongoing Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by the Clerk who will also plan for Refresher training will be provided at intervals determined by legal requirements, risk assessment and operational need.

9. Accident Reporting

- There is a legal duty placed upon the Council to report and record all accidents at work. Details of all accidents involving employees or members of the public shall be recorded in an Accident book held in the council offices.
- Individual employees are responsible for reporting accidents and potential accidents/near misses that occur at work.
- In accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 certain specific injuries caused by accidents at work and resulting in absence from work more than Seven consecutive days not counting the day of the accident must be reported for appropriate action.
- Accidents should be reported to the Council as soon as practicable, so that appropriate action is taken.
- Systems and procedures will be modified as necessary at the earliest opportunity
- In addition, all other Health & Safety Documents which, form part of the Health & Safety Policy, Fire, Risk Assessments, COSHH etc will be maintained and these are available to all employees in conjunction with this Policy.

10. First Aid

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 (Last amended 2024). First aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved, and minor injuries prevented from beginning major ones. First aid equipment is readily accessible at each premises and is kept stocked, clean and ready for use, First Aid Boxes must be properly replenished after use.

11. Fire & Evacuation

Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (last amended 2013) Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. UK fire regulations require a fire risk assessment for all workplaces. An appropriate provision of fire exits signs, alarms and extinguishers as well as Fire evacuation procedures must be provided at each place of work / public office.

Fire alarms and extinguishers at the Council Offices are checked periodically.

All fire escape routes must be kept clear and well signposted. The responsibility for this lies with all employees but in particular: Fire exit doors must be always kept clear of obstruction. Fire prevention doors must be kept always closed.

12. Personal Protective Equipment

A Personal Protective Equipment Assessment is completed for each task to ensure that appropriate information, equipment, instruction and training is issued.
PPE is supplied to protect employees/councillors/volunteers free of charge and must be used correctly. PPE will be supplied to employees when and where necessary. This must suitably fit and be kept in good repair.
PPE will only be supplied to councillors/volunteers undertaking Council business. Under no circumstances must any PPE equipment be kept by individuals. PPE held by councillors/volunteers must be stored correctly, be checked and cleaned and signed in and out. PPE must comply with UK legislation, and any defects or loss must be reported to the Town Clerk.

13. Hazardous substances

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulations 2008 (CLP) Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002 COSHH.

- COSHH safety notices and Guidance Procedures are to be displayed on the applicable storage cupboards. Employees who use hazardous substances will be responsible for undertaking the COSHH assessments.
- Employees are responsible for notifying the Office of any hazardous substances for use in order that the Product Data Sheets can be obtained and Risk Assessments including appropriate control measures can be identified and implemented.
- The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that all of their relevant employees are informed about the COSHH assessments.
- Risk Assessments will be reviewed every 3 years or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.
- Safety Data Sheets from suppliers are to be maintained at the appropriate Offices
- All staff should be aware of procedures in the event of a spillage of hazardous substances and for ensuring that stocks of spill control equipment are maintained

14. Display screen equipment

Display Screen Equipment Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Health & Safety Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2002) Using a computer or other kinds of display screen equipment (visual display units) can give rise to back problems, repetitive strain injury or other musculoskeletal disorders. These health

problems may become serious if no action is taken. They can be caused by poor design of workstations (and associated equipment such as chairs), insufficient space, lack of training or not taking breaks from display screen work. Work with a screen does not cause eye damage, but many users experience temporary eye strain or stress. This can lead to reduced work efficiency or taking time off work. All relevant employees;

- Should be given the necessary training
- complete a display screen risk assessment
- implement any necessary control measures to eliminate or reduce the identified risks.

Where applicable, staff will be able to arrange eye tests at appropriate intervals, for which reimbursement of the cost can be claimed from Fakenham Town Council

15. Vehicles

All vehicles provided for work purposes must be of sound condition and suitable for the purpose for which it is provided. The Clerk will ensure that all transport is used by competent persons and that regular maintenance and inspections are carried out to ensure safe operation. All Employees must use the vehicle in the manner to which the handbook suggests.

All persons required to drive or operate any form of transport owned by or hired by the council to carry out its undertakings must be suitably competent and, as a minimum, hold a full UK driving license. Whichever form of license or certificate is held by a driver it must be produced when requested by the Clerk. It is the responsibility of any driver to inform the Clerk if they are convicted of any offence in relation to their driving license and penalties bestowed upon them. Failure to do this could result in the dismissal of that employee.

All drivers of vehicles must ensure that they report all defects to the Clerk. If the defect presents a significant hazard the Clerk must be informed immediately. Drivers of road going vehicles must ensure they check their vehicles in accordance with the vehicle handbook. All drivers are responsible for the safety of their own vehicles. They must ensure that they leave their vehicles / machines in a safe condition whereby unauthorised start-up is prevented. Each vehicle / machine must be parked in a sensible area where it does not present a hazard to other people. Keys must be removed, and the vehicle / machine locked.

All persons driving on behalf of the council must do so in accordance with the Road Traffic Act and Highway Code. At no time, during business or private use, will the Council accept responsibility for any offences committed. If an offence is committed, the employee will be responsible for any fines imposed and may be subject to disciplinary action, which may result in their dismissal.

All vehicles which can carry a passenger will be classed as enclosed workplace and will be subject to the smoking bans. A relevant sign will be placed in the vehicle where it can be seen. Anyone found to be smoking in such a vehicle will be dealt with under the company's disciplinary procedures.

Travelling on Town Council Business (including Councillors) If travelling alone or using your own vehicle, ensure that you are sufficiently fit and healthy to drive ensure that your vehicle

is maintained in a safe condition and fit for the road with sufficient fuel for your journey and take sufficient account of adverse weather conditions, avoid parking in poorly lit and isolated areas and ensure your motor insurance policy covers the activity you are undertaking.

16. Asbestos

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 / The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAWR) introduces an explicit duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises, to manage the risk of exposure to asbestos or asbestos containing material (ACM). The duty to manage requires those in control of premises to;

- Take reasonable steps to determine the location and condition of materials likely to contain asbestos.
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not.
- Make and keep an up-to-date record of the location and condition of the ACMs or presumed ACMs in the premises.
- Assess the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres from these materials. Employees must report any incidents whereby ACM become broken or damaged.
- Prepare a plan setting out how the risks from the materials are to be managed.
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action
- Review and monitor the plan periodically
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them.

17. Machinery

When using machinery of all types, i.e. drills, lawnmowers, tractors etc., all dangerous parts must be identified, and guards positioned when in working order. Unsafe equipment or machinery must not be used. Manufacturers or supplier instructions must be followed and maintenance programmes followed.

- Any defect in equipment or machinery must be rectified before use.
- If equipment provided by the Employer is damaged or faulty the Employee is responsible for the immediate return or report of such equipment to the Employer for repair or replacement.
- If the equipment is lost or damaged through negligence, there is an onus on the Employee to report such loss or damage immediately.
- Safety equipment and protective clothing will be provided where necessary and employees must ensure that this is used.

18. Electrical Equipment

PAT testing must be carried out at appropriate intervals. All employees should make suitable arrangements for ensuring that all plugs and cables are inspected and that loose connections or faults are rectified before the equipment is used. Aspects to look for should include damage to the plug, cable or equipment casing, use of tape to join wiring, overheating, and whether the item has been exposed to conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. a wet environment Any faults should be reported to the office so that the necessary repairs can be undertaken by a qualified electrician.

19. Manual Handling

Manual Handling Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Health & Safety Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2002) Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Where manual handling is necessary, risks will be assessed by considering factors such as the weight and nature of the load, the distance carried, frequency, posture, and the working environment. Steps will be taken to reduce risks, including the use of suitable equipment, safe working procedures, and, where appropriate, the provision of training. Employees are expected to follow safe practices, use equipment correctly, cooperate with management, and report any concerns related to manual handling.

20. Working at Heights

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 and Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 Power Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015. A fall from height has sudden and irreversible consequences and can only be prevented by ensuring that each task associated with working at height is carefully planned before deciding if the method of gaining access is appropriate. The overriding principle is to do all that is practicable to prevent anyone falling. Strict adherence to the principles and practices within the Work at Height Regulations 2005, and its Schedules, is the only acceptable solution.

21. Lone Working

A Lone Working Policy which is designed to raise awareness of the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to give guidance on how to manage such risks has been produced by the Town Council. Employees must follow the requirements of the Lone Working Policy and any associated risk assessments.

22. Stress and Mental Health at Work

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Health & Safety Executive defines stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health Stress at work can be tackled in the same way as any other risk to health – by identifying the hazards, assessing who is at risk and the level of risk, deciding how to manage the risk and putting the plans into action. To reduce stress in the organisation;

- Managers and the staff they are responsible for should keep in regular contact.
- Managers should ensure they hold regular team meetings and one to one meetings with individual members of staff, providing for an opportunity for all to raise any issues of concern and explore a way to resolve them.
- Ensure good communication between management and employees, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure employees are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that full time employees are not overworking.

- Monitor holidays to ensure that employees are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of employees who is experiencing stress outside work, e.g. bereavement or separation.
- Employees will raise issues of concern with the Clerk or Chairman.

The Council recognises the importance of mental health and wellbeing and is committed to supporting employees through appropriate management practices, training, occupational health support and reasonable workplace adjustments.

23. Noise

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 & Noise at Work Regulations 1989 High levels of noise at work can cause hearing loss. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of hearing damage to employees who work with noisy equipment is reduced to a minimum. If at any time the Clerk or an employee complains of high noise levels or the Clerk suspects the noise levels exceed those recommended, a noise assessment will be carried out by a competent person. Any areas or equipment suspected of producing high noise levels must be reported the Clerk. Noise assessments are to be used as a basis for formulating action plans for reducing the risk of hearing damage. Measures to take to control noise;
Eliminate the noise at source or where this is not reasonably practicable, reduce it to a minimum by using engineering methods e.g. quieter equipment.
Carry out organisational changes to obstruct the path of the noise e.g. by erecting noise enclosures around equipment or by using barriers / screens.
Limit the number of people exposed to the noise source or the amount of time that they are exposed.
The establishment of noise protection zones where applicable.
Where noise levels are at the lower exposure action value (LAV) of 80dB(A), and the noise levels cannot be eliminated or reduced any further then hearing protection must be supplied. At these levels the employee does not have to wear it. Where the noise levels are at the upper action value of 85dB(A) a risk assessment is to be carried out. If the noise cannot be eliminated or controlled sufficiently then hearing protection zones are to be established and hearing protection supplied. Employees must wear hearing protection at this point. When hearing protection is provided, the Clerk will ensure that it is suitable and effective. They will also ensure that it is compatible with other PPE that has to be worn.

24. Violence at work

To avoid violence and aggression from members of the public or contractors, all staff should avoid getting into a confrontational situation. Always remain polite, but back off from situations that are potentially dangerous. Conflict training provided. Any incidents should be reported to the Clerk who may call the Police, if it is considered necessary.

25. Play Equipment

All play equipment is subject to a detailed Annual safety inspection by independent specialists and at least 2 operational inspections per annum. These detailed inspections should be supplemented with more frequent inspections by the Council's own staff, a visual

inspection is carried out on a weekly basis to check for any obvious vandalism, wear and tear, broken glass, dog fouling, etc. A more detailed inspection is carried out monthly. All inspections should be formally recorded. Any equipment found to be unsafe should be immobilised and taken out of use. In some cases, it may be sufficient to cordon off the area, in others it may be necessary to remove the item completely to ensure the safety of users. DIY repairs should not be carried out unless they are endorsed by the original manufacturer or installer. All repairs shall be carried out by a competent person

26. Vibration

Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005, Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. Vibration from work with powered handheld tools, equipment or processes can damage the hands and arms of users causing 'hand-arm vibration syndrome'. This is a painful, irreversible condition which includes 'vibration white finger' and the effects can be impaired blood circulation, damage to the nerves and muscles, and loss of ability to grip properly. Back damage can be caused by vibration from a vehicle or machine passing through the seat into the driver's body through the buttocks – known as whole body vibration. Whole body vibration can also be caused by standing on the platform of a vehicle or machine, so vibration passes into the operator through their feet. Work equipment should be used to the manufacturer's guidelines only by trained staff with appropriate PPE. Staff are advised to report any faults immediately

27. Legislation

The following legislation may affect Employees, Councillors, Visitors and Contractors:

Health & Safety Legislation:

THE HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974
THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999
WORKPLACE (HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE) REGULATIONS 1992
PROVISION AND USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS 1998 (PUWER)
HEALTH & SAFETY (DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT) REGULATIONS 1992 (as amended 2002)
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AT WORK REGULATIONS 1992 (as amended 2022)
REPORTING OF INJURIES, DISEASES AND DANGEROUS OCCURRENCES REGULATIONS 2013 (R.I.D.D.O.R)
ELECTRICITY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1989
CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH REGULATIONS 2002 (COSHH)
HEALTH & SAFETY (FIRST AID) REGULATIONS 1981 (as amended)
REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005
HEALTH & SAFETY (CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYEES) REGULATIONS 1996
OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAY PREMISES ACT 1963
EQUALITY ACT 2010
CONTROL OF VIBRATION AT WORK REGULATIONS 2005
OCCUPIERS LIABILITY ACTS 1957 And 1984

This is not a definitive list, other legislation may be relevant.

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