Health and Safety Policy

Adopted by Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham & Ellough Joint Parish Council — 20th May 2026



This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or Council activities change.

Next review: April 2027

Introduction

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers, residents and members of the public who may be affected by its activities. This policy sets out the Council's responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to provide safe working conditions, safe systems of work, and appropriate information, instruction and training.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council

As the employer and duty holder, the Council will:

- Ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation.
- Provide and maintain safe premises, equipment and working conditions.
- Conduct regular risk assessments and implement control measures.
- Ensure contractors and volunteers operate safely and are appropriately insured.
- Review this policy annually or sooner if required.

Councillors

Councillors must:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety when carrying out Council duties.
- Follow Council procedures and report hazards or incidents promptly.
- Ensure decisions consider health and safety implications.

The Clerk

As an employee working primarily from home, the Clerk must:

- Maintain a safe working environment in accordance with the Council's Home Working Policy.
- Report hazards, incidents or concerns promptly.
- Participate in risk assessments relating to their home working arrangements.

Contractors and Volunteers

The Council will ensure that:

- Contractors and volunteers have appropriate public liability insurance.
- Contractors comply with all relevant health and safety requirements, including safe handling and storage of any hazardous substances used in their work.
- Volunteers receive appropriate guidance and supervision.
- Specialist health and safety advice is sought for projects involving significant risk or public impact.

Roads, Footpaths and Public Spaces

The Council will:

- Monitor and report hazards on highways, footpaths and public rights of way to the relevant authority.
- Work with partners to ensure public areas are maintained in a safe condition.
- Keep records of reports and actions taken.

Sotterley Chapel

The Council owns Sotterley Chapel, which stands within the cemetery grounds. Responsibility for the maintenance, repair, and operation of the chapel building rests with the Sotterley Chapel Preservation Trust, which also raises the funds needed for that work. The Council's role is limited to the cemetery itself — burials, memorials, and grounds maintenance. Where a joint activity between the Council and the Trust takes place, health and safety responsibilities will be agreed in advance.

Sotterley Cemetery

The Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring the cemetery grounds, including the area surrounding the chapel, are maintained safely.
- Managing risks associated with memorials, grounds maintenance and public access.
- Ensuring events run by the Council or its representatives are risk-assessed and safely managed.

Risk Assessment

The Council will:

- Carry out risk assessments for all its activities and review them annually.
- Keep records of assessments, incidents and actions taken.
- Require event organisers using Council land to complete risk assessments and provide them on request.

Incident Reporting

The Council will:

- Record all accidents, near misses and hazardous occurrences.
- Take immediate action to prevent recurrence.
- Report incidents to the relevant enforcing authority where required by law.
- Review incident trends as part of annual policy review.

Training and Information

The Council will ensure that:

- Employees and councillors receive appropriate health and safety information.
- The Clerk receives appropriate training and information relevant to their role and working arrangements.
- Contractors and volunteers are provided with necessary instructions for safe working.

Lone Working

Given the nature of parish council operations, lone working is common. The Council will:

- Assess risks associated with lone working, such as site visits and cemetery inspections.
- Provide guidance to minimise risks, including communication procedures.
- Ensure employees do not undertake high-risk tasks alone.