

Document Control

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Next review date: July 2028, or sooner if legislation, guidance, or operational requirements change.

Caistor St Edmund and Bixley Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

(Including Village Hall Arrangements)

1. Introduction

Caistor St Edmund and Bixley Parish Council recognises that councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers may occasionally be required to work alone in the course of their duties. The Parish Council has a duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of individuals undertaking lone working activities.

This policy sets out the arrangements for managing risks associated with lone working, including activities undertaken at Arminghall Village Hall.

2. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working refers to situations where individuals work by themselves without close or direct supervision, including:

- Working from home;
- Attending meetings alone;
- Opening, closing, or inspecting the Village Hall alone;
- Carrying out inspections or maintenance visits;
- Meeting contractors, hirers, or members of the public alone;
- Undertaking administrative duties outside normal working hours.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish Council employees;
- Parish councillors;
- Volunteers acting on behalf of the Parish Council;
- Contractors engaged by the Parish Council where applicable.

4. Potential Risks to Lone Workers

- Open access and unlocked doors – accessible to the public;
- Being taken ill whilst at work;

- Lack of training regarding Health & Safety procedures;
- Hazards in areas of activity;
- Working in remote areas, and areas with no signal;
- Parking in car parks which are poorly lit and going into buildings which are inadequately lit;
- Aggressive and abusive members of the public;
- Entering public buildings, when alone.

5. Responsibilities

The Parish Council will:

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of him/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work;
- Take reasonable steps to reduce risks associated with lone working;
- Undertake risk assessments where appropriate;
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for reporting concerns and incidents;
- Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with staff to identify and minimise risk(s);
- Review this policy periodically.

Individuals undertaking lone working will:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- Follow this policy and any relevant risk assessments;
- Report hazards, incidents, accidents, or concerns promptly;
- Always maintain a line of communication on a regular basis with members of the Council to identify and minimise risk(s);
- Avoid undertaking high-risk activities alone where possible.

6. General Lone Working Arrangements

Individuals undertaking lone working activities should, where reasonably practicable:

- Inform another person of their whereabouts and expected return time;
- Carry a mobile phone or have access to communication;
- Avoid unnecessary risks;
- Cease work and leave immediately if they feel unsafe;
- Ensure they are familiar with emergency procedures.

No individual should undertake tasks alone that involve a significant risk of injury, violence, or harm.

7. Home Working

Where Parish Council duties are undertaken from home:

- Appropriate workstation arrangements should be considered;
- Confidential information must be handled securely;
- Individuals should take regular breaks and maintain safe working practices.

8. Meetings with Members of the Public

Where meetings are arranged with members of the public or contractors:

- Meetings should, where possible, take place during normal hours;
- Employees working from home should not invite members of the public into their home unless the person is known and the meeting is pre-arranged;
- Consideration should be given to location and personal safety;
- Individuals should advise another person of meeting arrangements where appropriate.

9. Village Hall Lone Working Arrangements

The following additional arrangements apply to lone working activities undertaken at Arminghall Village Hall.

Opening and Closing the Hall

Individuals opening or securing the Village Hall alone should:

- Ensure they have access to a mobile phone;
- Be familiar with fire exits and emergency procedures;
- Secure doors and windows appropriately;
- Avoid confrontation with hall users or members of the public.

Working Outside Normal Hours

Particular care should be taken when attending the Village Hall outside daylight hours or during periods where no other persons are present.

Maintenance and Inspections

Individuals carrying out inspections or minor maintenance should not undertake hazardous tasks alone, including:

- Working at height;
- Electrical repairs;
- Manual handling of heavy items;
- Use of hazardous equipment or substances.

Appropriate contractors should be engaged where necessary.

Hirers and Public Use

Hirers using the Village Hall are expected to act responsibly and report any safety concerns to the Parish Council.

Accidents and Emergencies

Any accidents, incidents, safeguarding concerns, or near misses occurring at the Village Hall must be reported to the Parish Council as soon as possible.

Emergency contact details and first aid arrangements should be available within the building.

10. Violence, Aggression, or Unsafe Situations

The Parish Council will not tolerate abusive, threatening, or violent behaviour towards councillors, employees, contractors, or volunteers.

Any individual who feels unsafe should remove themselves from the situation immediately and report the matter to the Parish Council and, where necessary, the police.

11. Risk Assessments

Specific lone working risk assessments may be undertaken where activities or locations present increased risk.

Risk assessments will be reviewed periodically or following any incident.