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LONE WORKING POLICY
OF
ALBRIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Document Control

Information:

Title:	Lone Working Policy		
Document Purpose:	<p>The purpose of this policy is design to alert staff and councillors to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situations and to describe procedures, which minimise suck risks.</p> <p>Lone working refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the community, in their own home, or may be the only staff member present in the office or Library. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance.</p> <p>The Parish Council will take every practicable step to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its employees whenever they are required to work alone and without direct support or supervision.</p>		
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 Lone working refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the community, in their own home, or may be the only staff member present in the office or Library. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance.
- 1.01 This Policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks.
- 1.02 The Parish Council will take every practicable step to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its employees whenever they are required to work alone and without direct support or supervision.
- 1.03 The Council recognises that there may be increased risk to staff that are required to work alone.
- 1.04 The Council will ensure that all employees are aware of this policy and provide the resources for putting the policy into practice.

2. LEGISLATION

- 2.01 Employers have a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of their employees etc, including, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment, safe access and egress, safe systems of work and provision of suitable information, instruction, training and supervision.
- 2.02 There is nothing specific in general legislation that prohibits a person from working alone. Section 19 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires the employer to undertake a risk assessment, and so this shall determine whether an employee may work alone. Therefore, in general, an employer must assess whether an employee is at significantly higher risk when working alone.
- 2.03 Employers must be aware of any specific legislation on lone working, which may be applicable to the Council, e.g. Health and Welfare of an individual, electrical equipment, lawn mowers.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.01 The Parish Clerk should:

- Identify all staff who undertake lone working.
- Inform staff of their responsibilities under the lone working policy.
- Make the policy readily available to all staff members on induction and ensuring local procedures are in place.
- Ensure that risk assessments regarding the personal safety of staff (including those working alone), are undertaken by competent persons.
- Ensure that lone workers have no medical condition that may make them unsuitable for working alone, or where there is a medical condition ensure that they are currently fit and healthy to work alone.
- Assist in the development and implementation of safe systems of work to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff.
- Review lone working risk assessments on a regular basis, taking into consideration information provided by staff members regarding hazards relating to activities, environments, and individuals.
- Ensure that staff members have access to appropriate training opportunities regarding challenging behaviour.
- Take all reasonable steps to minimise risks identified and report any substantial risks to the HR Committee.

3.02 Staff members, including the Parish Clerk should:

- Take reasonable care to look after their own safety and wellbeing.
- Co-operate with their employer's health and safety procedures.
- Use tools and other equipment properly, in accordance with any relevant safety instructions and training they have been given.
- Not misuse equipment provided i.e. electronics, mower equipment
- Report all accidents, injuries, near misses, and other dangerous occurrences.

4. MANDATORY PROCEDURES AND PERSONAL SAFETY

- 4.01 Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with the exits and alarms.
- 4.02 There must be access to a telephone and first aid equipment for staff working alone.
- 4.03 In situations where staff may be working with people in relative isolation, there should be an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency.
- 4.04 Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
- 4.05 Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances.
- 4.06 Before working alone, an assessment of the risks involved should be made in conjunction with the Parish Clerk.

- 4.07 Staff must inform their Line Manager when they will be working alone (if out of their normal working hours or off site), giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member covers on a lone working day (i.e. Saturday) or expects to go home following completion of their work.
- 4.08 If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put in operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate. I.e. text message or phone call.
- 4.09 Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

5. WORKING FROM HOME

- 5.01 An employer has the same responsibility for the health and safety of employees who work from home as for any other employees. This covers the provision of supervision, education and training and the implementation of sufficient control measures to protect the homeworker. The employer should accept liability for accident or injury of a homeworker as for any other employee.
- 5.02 There should be regular contact with their Line Manager or other designated person (i.e. Councillor or Chairman) if working at home for extended periods.
- 5.03 Staff working from their own homes should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that their address and telephone number remain confidential.

6. IDENTIFYING RISKS AND TRAINING

- 6.01 Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions fully. The Town Clerk will set limits on what can and cannot be done when working alone.
- 6.02 Any staff member who has concerns about the continuance of a lone activity being carried out should feel confident that they have the Parish Clerk's support. Where such incidents arise, they must be reported to the Parish Clerk as soon as possible. Employees should discuss with the Parish Clerk if they feel any issues need to be addressed following a lone working activity. The risk assessment may need to be modified and used as part of the planning process for subsequent activities.
- 6.03 The Council shall provide any training necessary in order to carry out the duties for lone working. This includes dealing with circumstances that are new, unusual, or beyond the scope of training e.g. how to handle aggression.
- 6.04 The lone worker understands the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out.
- 6.05 The lone worker should be able to identify and handle health and safety issues.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.01 The general principles of risk assessment must be followed for lone working. The Parish Clerk should carry out assessments. The staff member undertaking the lone working duty should be involved in the risk assessment process. The risks to lone workers should be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.
- 7.02 In drawing up and recording an assessment of risk, the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:
- The environment – location, security, access.
 - The context – nature of the task, any special circumstances.
 - The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
 - History – any previous incidents in similar situations any other special circumstances.
- 7.03 All available information should be considered and checked or updated as necessary.
- 7.04 Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.

8. PERSONAL SAFETY

- 8.01 Recognising potential dangers before they occur and taking positive steps to reduce risk is vital aspect for those lone working. Employees are responsible to assess situations before they arise and where possible notify the Parish Clerk.

Below are examples of strategies that may reduce the risks:

Be aware of the environment:

- Make sure that the APC electric vehicle and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use and ensure that faults are reported /dealt with. Do not use any equipment, which has a potential fault.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings and areas that you work outdoors.

Be aware of yourself:

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it restrict your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.
- Keep an alarm on you, if possible, that could attract the attention of others to help or assist you.
- Keep all belongings and valuables out of sight or in a locked cupboard or drawer.

Be aware of other people:

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be wary of any triggers that you may be aware of or anything that may escalate the situation i.e. raised voices, discussing religious or personal beliefs, sudden movement.
- Do not crowd people – allow them space for your safety and their own.
- Make a realistic estimate of the time you will need to do something, and do not make promises which can't be kept - either on your own or someone else's behalf. i.e. "I will cut the grass at 2.00pm on Monday" or "A Councillor will get in touch with you on Friday at 9:00am"
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them and show them you are listening by not doing something else.
- If immediate threat or aggression could progress or worsen, lock yourself in the nearest room and dial 999 and wait for emergency services.
- Be aware of other people near tools and equipment that you may be using and could be used as a weapon.

Assessment of risk:

- Staff should have access to all available and relevant information in order to make a judgement of any potential risk.

The following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- The environment – location, security, access.
- The context – nature of the task, special circumstances, likely outcomes.
- The individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk.
- History – any previous incidents in similar situations.

9. BUILDINGS

- It is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk to assess the risks presented by the building itself – access, layout, furnishings, lighting, and temperature control – and to take appropriate action.
- Alarm systems must be accessible and tested regularly.
- All staff must be familiar with the alarm and be given clear instructions on how to respond to them.
- Where appropriate, keeps doors locked and work to an appointment only basis.

10. REPORTING INCIDENTS

Any incidents or perceived risks encountered while lone working should be recorded, reviewed, and acted upon. The report should include:

- A brief note of what happened, when, and who was involved (if known)
- For any work-related aggression (verbal or physical) including threatening behaviour, all the details of the incident and of the perpetrator (if known) or CCTV, which could then be used if the police take any formal prosecution action. This might be particularly important for more serious incidents of work-related violence.

- Details of any circumstances you think might have contributed to the incident, e.g. the context of the interaction, perceptions about the condition of the perpetrator, or any environmental circumstances.
- This information would then support the Council to review its risk assessment process if any additional measures are needed.
- If you feel unsafe, unwell, or become injured, call the emergency services for immediate assistance.
- If possible, notify the Parish Clerk or another colleague of any incidents. The Parish Clerk or colleague informed will be responsible for assisting and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the lone worker until the risk has been dealt with.
- Notify the Parish clerk if your plans change because you feel unwell or if you have a domestic emergency when working alone.

Note

- “Employers” refers to Councillors and the Council as a corporate body employing staff.
- “Line Manager” refers to the Parish Clerk.