



Policy - Managing Structural, Electrical & Major Works across the Parish Churches & Parish Centre

Key factors and Operational Constraints

- **Statutory Compliance:**
No physical alterations or structural repairs may begin without a formal faculty and or review by our conservation-accredited architect.
- **Historic Fabric Protection:**
Safeguard the historic fabric, woodwork, and assets of the church from fire and structural damage. Reversible, traditional materials (e.g., lime mortar) must be used. Standard modern materials (e.g., portland cement) can cause irreversible damage to historic stone and are prohibited.
- **Skill Matching:**
The designated project coordinator must assess each volunteer's capability, physical fitness, and experience. Volunteers are strictly banned from attempting tasks that require professional certification.
- **Insurance Validation:**
The church's insurer must explicitly confirm cover for the specific tasks before any work starts. Specialist or high-hazard works are generally excluded from standard volunteer cover.
- **Protect Life:**
Ensure the physical safety of contractors, church staff, congregation members, and visitors.
- **Maintain Compliance:**
Comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act, Working at Height Regulations, and Ecclesiastical Insurance mandates

Volunteers

Volunteers must never undertake unauthorised or high-risk structural repairs at the church. While routine, low-risk maintenance like clearing low-level gutters is acceptable, physical structural work on historic fabric requires specialised expertise, strict statutory permissions (such as a faculty or Listed Building Consent), and professional contractors.

The points below establish the strict conditions, key factors, and risk management procedures required to manage volunteers working across the parish



This policy ensures the safety of volunteers, the protection of our listed historic building, and compliance with statutory and insurance frameworks.

Contractors

The parish must ensure that all high-risk work undertaken by contractors on its premises is completed safely, legally, and in accordance with ecclesiastical insurance guidelines.

This policy applies to all external contractors, steeplejacks, and maintenance personnel undertaking work at height or operations requiring a Hot Work Permit.

Contractor Competency & Pre-Approval

Before any high-risk work begins on site, the Parish Safety and Compliance Officer, Clerk of works or designated Churchwarden must verify that the contractor has provided:

- A valid certificate of public liability Insurance
- A task-specific risk assessment and method statement (RAMS).
- Proof of professional competency and trade accreditation (e.g., IRATA for rope access, GAS SAFE, or specialised ecclesiastical conservation credentials).

Work at Height (see Separate Working at Heights Policy)

"Work at height" includes any task where a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury (e.g., roof repairs, high-level window cleaning, tower maintenance, or lightbulb replacement on high ceilings).

- **Hierarchy of Control:** Contractors must avoid working at height where tasks can be safely done from the ground.
- **Equipment Standards:** Scaffolding, cherry pickers (MEWPs), and ladders must be sound, regularly inspected, and visually checked before use.
- **Exclusion Zones:** Contractors must erect clear barriers and warning signs at ground level to protect the public from falling objects.
- **Weather Conditions:** High-level external work, particularly on towers or roofs, must cease immediately during high winds, heavy rain, or lightning.

Hot Work Permit Policy

"Hot work" involves any activity creating heat, sparks, or open flames (e.g., welding, grinding, brazing, or using blowtorches for lead roofing repairs). **No hot work may be performed without an authorised, written Hot Work Permit.**

- **Permit Issuance:** A written permit must be formalised and signed by both the Churchwarden (or designated Church Officer) and the Contractor before work starts.



- **Area Preparation:** The contractor must clear all combustible materials (such as timber, dust, or textiles) within a 10-metre radius of the work area, or protect them with fire-rated blankets.
- **Fire Suppression:** The contractor must have fully serviced, appropriate fire extinguishers immediately to hand in the work zone.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** The contractor must check the area continuously during the task for any signs of smoke or smouldering.
- **Mandatory Fire Watch:** A strict, continuous fire watch must be maintained by the contractor for **at least one hour after all hot work ceases** to guarantee no latent ignition exists.
- **Sign-Off:** The Church Officer will inspect the area after the fire watch finishes before officially signing off and closing the permit.

Signing in on site

To ensure the safety of our visitors, congregation, and historic building, all contractors undertaking Structural/ Electrical & Major Works must sign in and out and provided and complete the associated documentation relating to their visit and agree to the following terms before starting work:

- **Sign-In/Out:** You must log your entry and exit times in the contractors signing in book
- **Identification:** Please wear company ID if applicable.
- **Health & Safety:** Report any hazards, accidents, or near-misses immediately to the Churchwarden or designated Church Officer.
- **Historic Fabric:** Do not fix, drill, or alter any part of the building without prior written approval.
- **Fire Safety:** Familiarise yourself with the nearest fire exits and assembly points.
- **Asbestos:** Check the Church Asbestos Register before undertaking any drilling or cutting.
- **Safeguarding:** You must respect our safeguarding policy and avoid unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- **Housekeeping:** Keep work areas tidy and remove all commercial waste when you leave.