

Wombwell Parish Lone 'Visitor' Policy

This guidance is for members of the congregation and 'key holders' (visitors) who, from time to time, enter parish premises alone.

Visitors are required to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst on Parish premises.

People who visit parish premises alone may encounter any (or more) of the following:

- Accidents or sudden illness when there is no one to summon help or administer first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence
- Fire
- Tasks which cannot be safely carried out by one person (heavy lifting or use of certain equipment)
- Lack of a safe way in or out of a building (the danger of being locked in)

Visitors are, therefore, expected to follow these guidelines at all times.

'Visiting' Alone

It is the 'visitor's' responsibility to ensure that they notify someone (a third party) when they intend to enter parish premises alone. They should also give an indication of when they are due to return so that the 'third party' can notify someone from the Parish or, alternatively, the emergency services' that they are overdue/missing.

In order to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place the following monitoring procedures will be maintained in order to ensure safety.

- Each premise within the Parish will keep a 'visitors' log detailing arrival and departure times
- Visitors are advised that they should not carry large amounts of money or valuables
- Visitors arriving in cars should ensure that they park in a well-lit and busy place
- If the visitor thinks they are being followed, they should attempt to alert others
- Visitors **MUST** leave their mobile telephone switched on during the entire visit.
- Visitors should lock the doors to the premises behind them and then remove the key (so that should they become ill, or if someone else with a key wishes to enter the building, they can do so)

Visitors will be expected to comply with the requirements of the following documents issued by the Diocese as appended to this Policy:

- Personal Safety Plan for Church People
- Security Advice for Churches

If someone follows you into the building and you don't know them (or even if you do!) - Be Alert for Signs of Danger

- A raised voice, rapid speech and babbling indicates rising tension.

- Changes in the tone and pitch as a conversation progresses may suggest anger, frustration or impending violent behaviour.
- Keep a safe distance. Everyone has a personal space, which we defend when we feel it is being invaded.
- Visitors must be alert and aware of body language that may indicate developing anger e.g. flushed face, fidgeting, pointing, folded arms
- If an awkward or potentially threatening situation arises, this should be reported to the Rector, Church Warden, or PCC member as soon as possible.

After a Visit

- Ensure that you inform the 'third party' that you have left the premises, your visit is complete and that you are safe
- If your visit lasts longer than expected, inform the nominated 'third party'
- If the deadline passes and the visitor has not contacted the 'third party', the nominated third party person should contact the Rector/Church Wardens or other key holders and ask for assistance. If such contact cannot be made, they should contact the police.

All Key holders will be required to sign that they will adhere to this policy

This policy was approved by the PCC on

Signed: _____

Rector

Signed: _____

Church Warden/PCC Secretary

Date: _____

As a Key holder, I agree to abide by the terms of this Policy

Signed: _____

Key holder

Date: _____

Personal Safety Plan for Church People

Personal Safety - Issues to Consider

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you know how you would react if faced with a situation where your personal safety was in danger?
- What about if this threatened your family or others you are responsible for?
- Have you thought about this in advance or would you simply rely on instinct?
- Do you have a personal safety plan? If not, why not? If you do, do others know what it includes and how they can help you?

Personal Safety Plans should:

- Include an assessment of the hazards and risks encountered
- Be sensitive to location / activity
- Be clear and easy to understand
- Outline safety actions / control measures
- Be made known to all who need to know the content
- Be regularly reviewed

Remember – it is OK to put the safety of yourself (and family) above the needs of others!

Remember – You should take suitable precautions to prevent an accusation of inappropriate behaviour with a child or vulnerable adult.

Some Suggested Control Measures/Actions

At Home/Office

- Complete a security assessment of the property (i.e. are boundaries, doors and windows adequately secure; is there security lighting/an intruder alarm / CCTV fitted, as appropriate). Financial support may be available from the diocese
- Check who is at the door before opening (i.e. use a spyhole or security chain)
- Ensure keys to the home and car and not obviously visible or easily accessible from the door / windows
- Consider whether you need to let uninvited callers in to the home (i.e. could you have seating outside, in clear view of the house, where you could sit and talk)
- Plan how you will deal with requests for food / money from unexpected visitors (i.e. place in a bag so that you can pass it to them with one hand, leaving the other free to close the door quickly, should you need to. Keep your foot or a doorstep planted firmly behind the open door to prevent it being forced open)
- Keep the office separate from the home, where possible
- Don't leave visitors alone in your home / office
- Read the situation / visitor – have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting i.e. "I've got another meeting now so need to leave; can we re-schedule for another time?"
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- Establish an emergency code / phrase with your family so that they know you are concerned (i.e. "I am expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?") and that they know what to do if you say it
- Try to plan meetings when others will be at home
- Do not let uninvited callers know that you are alone in the house
- Keep a record book for visitors who are unexpected

At Cathedrals/Church/Churchyard

- Try not to be in situations where you are alone at the church
- Ensure someone knows when to expect you home
- Ensure you have an escape route from the building
- Ensure your car keys are to hand and you are parked so that you can get away easily
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- Ensure that your mobile phone is easily accessible and in good working order
- If worried about a situation take whatever action you need to escape to safety
- Be aware of your surroundings and visitors unknown to you
- Read any information or instructions for working alone at the location
- Ensure suitable first aid facilities are available

Visiting Others (at their homes and elsewhere)

- Ensure your family and others know where you are when to expect you to return
- Ensure that your mobile phone is easily accessible and in good working order
- Ensure that you have emergency contact telephone numbers programmed in to your mobile phone (if possible, consider adding these as "speed dial" shortcuts)
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- If possible try to meet people in public locations, rather than a location that you are unfamiliar with
- Establish an emergency code / phrase with your family so that they know you are concerned (i.e. "I am expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?") and that they know what to do if you say it
- Read the situation / visitor – have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting i.e. "I've got another meeting now so need to leave; can we re-schedule for another time?"
- Arrange for a family member (or another person) to call you at regular intervals to check that you are safe (NB: ensure that this conversation does not further alarm an agitated person or worsen a situation, by using agreed coded messages)
- If worried about a situation take whatever action you need to escape to safety
- If meeting at someone's home, make a mental note of the layout and how to escape quickly if you need to. Be aware of how the door locks/unlocks.
- Allow the host to lead the way, so that doors cannot be locked behind you
- Sit as close to the door as possible

Remember - always report any suspicious incidents or persons to the Police, your Archdeacon and/or others that might need to know.

Security Advice for Churches

Always

Tell someone where you are and when to expect you back

Tell that person if you change your plans

Agree what to do if you do not appear when you are expected

Have some means of calling for help from the church eg phone, mobile, panic button

Look at potential problems in the your church, carry out a risk assessment

Ask for help if you need it when carrying out a risk assessment

Always put your Personal Safety and that of other Church workers first

- Look at your church as a criminal would. What could you easily steal? Is it easy to get it out of the church? Can you drive a vehicle right up to the church?
- Are there any obvious points of entry? Could you funnel any intruders towards an alarmed area?
- If you have a particularly valuable item, are they listed by any outside agencies, i.e. V&A, NADFAS, guide books
- Have you spoken to your neighbours and asked them to ring the police if anything suspicious happens? Reassure them you will not mind if it is a false alarm.
- Is there anything in your church that would be a significant loss to your church if it was stolen? If so, how are you protecting it?
- Have you carried out a general risk assessment in relation to both church workers and volunteers, and building security?
- Put security as a fixed item in your church's budget. Every church needs extra security and to increase it over a few years will ensure that when the time comes for you to suffer from crime you will have done everything practical to limit the offence.

Never

Give money to people, no matter how genuine there story is. Be practical in your help

Get into an argument over any subject when on your own in a church.

Disturb the scene of a crime if you find one.

Fail to report a crime to the police, no matter how trivial it may seem

Enter the church if you have any suspicion that there may be someone inside committing a crime. Call the police!

Get security advice from a security company you do not know.

