St Andrew's your church Growing & Serving

St Andrew's Church, Oxshott - PCC Policy Document

Fire Safety Policy
and Emergency Action Plan

Custodian	Version Number	Date Approved by Standing Cttee	Issue Date	Review Date
Churchwardens	3	Nov 26	November 2026	2029

Introduction

The Fire Safety Order Reform of 2005 requires that St Andrew's Church has a Fire Safety Policy and a Fire and Emergency Action Plan in the event of a fire. Although the likelihood of a serious fire occurring is considered low, under the requirements of the Order, the PCC is required to assess both the hazards and associated risk levels and also to have an appropriate Fire & Emergency Action Plan. The PCC's primary aim is to ensure the safety of people, not property, so we have not concerned ourselves with protecting the building when it is unoccupied.

An independent fire risk assessment was carried out in March 2018 and a copy is held on file in the Parish Office

Our normal congregations are reasonably sized and the majority know the building well, and could easily evacuate in the event of fire. There are occasions when the church is full, weddings, funerals, Christmas services, and on these occasions trained fire wardens should be in place to provide assistance. The attached escape route diagram is posted in key positions in the church. Apart from illustrating the location of the fire-alarm call points, fire blankets, and fire extinguishers, the diagram also shows the escape routes in the event of a fire (or other emergency). Leaders of any group using the church facilities should follow the procedures outlined below.

Fire Safety Precautions

To avoid hazards in the building, leaders are advised to:

- Keep all hallways, passageways and exits clear of obstructions and combustible refuse at all times.
- Ensure all fire doors are closed.
- Ensure that all electrically powered equipment is shut off when not in use.
- Refrain from using unsafe electrical appliances, frayed extension cords, or overloaded sockets.
- Not use an appliance if you are unsure of its safety and you do not know how to use it.
- Ensure smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises
- Ensure the boiler room should never be used to store rubbish or other combustible material. Other items should be stored at least one metre clear of the boiler.
- Never use paraffin and oil fired heaters or others designed specifically for use in industrial, agricultural or commercial buildings in church, even as a temporary measure.
- Maintain a register of any children present.
- Show workmen or contractors the location of fire extinguishers and tell them where responsible officials or telephones can be found.

Fire Detection

We have an integrated automatic fire detection system and we are confident that when the building is occupied a fire would be detected almost immediately by the setting off a heat or smoke alarm or by persons either smelling or seeing smoke and raising the alarm by shouting “Fire” in accordance with our Fire Action Notice or activating any of the fire alarm call points located near exit doors. Whilst candles are used in the main body of the church they are clearly visible, kept away from combustible materials and there is little risk of a fire starting or developing undetected.

Emergency Call List

In case of fire, call and/or coordinate with:

Emergency Services 999

Jill Perrett (Churchwarden) 07768 852 805

Rebecca Mayhew (Churchwarden) 07818 426 482

Leaders’ duties

The churchwarden and/or senior welcomer on duty or if none present the Minister or other person in charge of an event being held on the Church premises, should ensure that:

a) All external exit doors are unlocked and that the Fire Exits are unlocked.

b) That there are no unnecessary obstructions in the aisles, corridors or vestibule area.

c) Fire exit signs are visible above all exit doors deemed to be fire exit doors.

d) Where a door is not visible from the main body of the church, such as the external door at the rear of the main corridor, appropriate signs will be displayed showing the route to the door.

Fire Wardens

A list will be maintained and kept with the Fire Safety Records file (see below) of all those who are nominated to undertake fire warden duties.

This will comprise: churchwardens and assistant wardens, former churchwardens, Ministers and /or persons in charge of events and welcomers. For normal church services the Minister in charge, churchwardens, assistant wardens and welcomers will undertake day-to-day fire warden’s duties. For major services and events, where 150 or more attendees are expected, additional fire wardens will be nominated from the list of trained wardens.

At major services and events fire wardens will be allocated with at least one for each exit and they will be responsible for a specific part of the church. The fire wardens will be required to lead persons from their allocated area to the designated assembly point on the South side lawn. At the start of the service or event the Minister or person responsible for the event will make an announcement setting out the arrangements for evacuation. A senior person will be nominated to make the announcement to evacuate if required. Persons with disabilities who may require assistance to evacuate, such as wheelchair users, should be located in a part of the church closest to a door with appropriate access and egress. A fire warden will be allotted to them to assist with their evacuation.

All those with fire warden responsibilities will receive training in their duties at least annually. Training will include the following:

- How to raise the alarm and contact the fire service.
- Location and use of fire extinguishers.
- Location and use of rechargeable torch
- How to evacuate the church.
- How to help with the evacuation of people with disabilities.
- The location of the Assembly Point.
- The signage that is required for major services and events.
- A knowledge of the Fire Action Notices and where they are located.

Record Keeping

A file will be maintained and kept in the Parish Office incorporating the Fire Safety Policy, Fire Emergency Action Plan, any Fire Risk Assessments and noting the following:

- Dates of fire extinguisher inspection and maintenance visits.
- Dates of boiler maintenance visits
- Dates of electrical system inspections and tests
- Dates of portable appliance testing (PAT)
- Dates of lightning conductor system inspections and tests
- Dates of evacuation drills.
- The results of any fire risk assessments and details of actions taken
- Dates of annual training of fire wardens

Distribution of the Fire Plan

The Fire Plan will be distributed as follows:

1. A copy of the Plan will be kept in the Parish Office.
2. A copy of the Plan will be posted on the church website www.standrewsoxshott.org.uk

Organisation and responsibilities

1. The PCC is responsible for agreeing the policy, and monitoring its overall effectiveness.
2. The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementation of the policy.

Policy agreement

This policy was adopted by the Standing Committee at its meeting on 10 November 2026.

(signed) warden

(The original signed document is retained as part of the formal PCC minutes.)

Policy monitoring

1. The PCC is responsible for monitoring the overall effectiveness of this policy.
2. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently if required in line with any legislative or regulatory changes. The Churchwardens and the PCC will carry out the review.

PCC of St Andrew's Church, Oxshott
Charity Registration Number 1128379

Procedure in the event of a fire

If you discover or suspect there is a fire

1. Leave the area, closing all doors behind you. Do not lock them.
2. Raise the alarm by shouting “Fire, fire” and if possible activate a fire alarm.
3. Evacuate using the nearest exit.
4. Call 999 for assistance. Give the name and address of the Church. Give your name and telephone call-back number.

If you hear the fire alarm

1. Leave the building immediately, using the closest exit.
2. Be aware that the closest exit may be blocked so know the location of secondary exits from your location.
3. **Children will be escorted out to the safety point by the childrens’ leaders. Parents/guardians in church to evacuate and meet children at safety point on the South Lawn**

Evacuate everyone in the church or with whom you are working at that moment and close all doors behind you. DO NOT LOCK DOORS. The main body of the church is a large open area and if the congregation is directed properly there should be no risk of congestion. There are three principal means of escape from the church area, through the rear doors and out through the vestibule; exit via the South door directly to the outside or through the choir vestry into the main corridor and out of the rear door. Emergency lighting should light up the exit routes within the main church. There are emergency exit doors in the church hall leading directly outside. Areas such as the Parish Office or vestries are usually only occupied by a small number of people who know the building well.

Note: Special care should be taken during children’s meetings to remain calm and control the safe evacuation of the children in an orderly manner preventing panic.

Ensure that all occupants have been evacuated from all areas, toilets, stores and meeting rooms. Report that all areas that you are responsible for are clear. Notify the emergency services if any person(s) is unaccounted for. Assemble at the safe assembly point on the South side lawn.

Fire Extinguishment, Control or Confinement

LARGE FIRES

Do not attempt to extinguish large fires

Sound the alarm – call the Fire Department – notify 999

Follow the Emergency Procedures

SMALL FIRES

Sound alarm – call the Fire Department – notify 999

Consider extinguishing the fire only if you are trained and properly equipped, and if, in your judgment, you can do so safely.

Before fighting a fire make sure you have an escape route.

If fire cannot be extinguished by using a portable fire extinguisher, or if smoke presents a hazard, leave the area immediately. Close the door behind you to confine and contain the fire.

Emergency Exit Procedure

Upon hearing the alarm:

1. Before opening the door, feel door bottom to top and door handle with back of hand for heat.
2. If not hot, brace yourself against the door and open slightly. If you feel air pressure or hot draft, close the door immediately.

3. If you find no fire or smoke in corridor, close door behind you as you exit and leave by nearest exit.
4. If you encounter smoke in corridor, consider taking another exit that may be clear.

If circumstances prevent you from leaving the area:

1. Close but do not lock the door for possible entry of fire fighters.
2. Call 999 by telephone giving your address and which room you are in.
3. Wave a sheet of paper or another large object in the window to signal fire fighters.
4. Seal all cracks where smoke can get in.
5. Crouch low to the floor if smoke enters room and move to the most protected area.
6. Wait to be rescued. Remain calm. Do not panic.
7. Listen for instructions or information, which may be given.

Persons with Disabilities

Consideration must be given to the evacuation of any persons with a known disability, such as impaired vision, profound deafness or a physical disability requiring their use of wheelchairs or any other mobility aid. **In order to accomplish a prompt and orderly evacuation, wheelchair users should remain in the building until the evacuation has been completed.** If a disabled person uses a motorised chair, consideration should be given to their being carried from the building, leaving the motorised buggy to be recovered later.