

SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

FIRE SAFETY POLICY



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Prepared by:	Executive Officer
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1. Introduction

The need to manage fire risk and ensure the safety of employees whilst at work and the safety of other relevant persons in the premises or in the vicinity of the premises is a requirement under both fire and safety legislation. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety from fire of all relevant persons on, in or in the vicinity of the premises by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures. This policy will be used to ensure the provision of suitable and sufficient general fire precautions, assessment of risk and management of necessary fire safety arrangements.

2. General Policy

In managing the Beeson House site, and in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), our general policy on Fire Safety is:

- To provide means of safe evacuation of people from the premises in the event of fire.
- To safeguard occupants of the building.
- To provide or limit any outbreak of fire.
- To provide sufficient, suitable, and specific fire-fighting equipment.
- To install and maintain suitable systems for fire detection, fire alarm, call panels, emergency lighting etc.

The employer of any other employees, or any other person working on the premises, will be provided with the same information as the responsible person's employees.

3. Fire Risk Assessment

Council commissioned an independent fire risk assessment from Fire Risk UK in October 2021 and the next is due in October 2024. Please refer to this separate risk assessment.

Overall, the site carries a Low to Medium Risk, to reflect the high standard of fire precautions installed (particularly automatic fire detection and emergency lighting), a high standard of housekeeping and a relatively short travel distance forming the escape routes.

The risk assessment for the site will be reviewed at least annually. Any significant findings acted upon.

Employees will be provided with comprehensible and relevant information regarding the risks identified from the risk assessment and any other notification of risk by other employees, the preventative and protective measures, the fire emergency plan, and the identities of persons nominated to carry out the duties of the responsible person.

Overall and final responsibility for fire safety rests with the Parish Council. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Executive Officers, Council staff and the Tenants of the building.

Any employee, tenant or visitor to the building must:

- Co-operate with Southwater Parish Council on fire safety matters.
- Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard fire safety.
- Take reasonable care whilst on site to prevent fire.
- Report all fire safety concerns directly to the Council.
- Ensure they understand the fire evacuation process and plan when entering the building.

4. Fire Emergency Plan and Evacuation

Please refer to the separate Fire Emergency Plan and evacuation document for Beeson House. All employees, visitors, tenants, Councillors must familiarise themselves with this document and their obligations in relation to protection of themselves, the premises, and their visitors.

A suitable and sufficient fire emergency plan will be prepared, regularly reviewed, and practised by the regular carrying out of fire drills.

All staff will be trained to satisfactorily carry out the fire emergency plan, regular fire drills and any other necessary actions to comply with the FSO.

Firefighting equipment, fire call points and emergency exits are clearly signposted. The fire panel is situated in the main entrance and first aid assistance is available in the Parish Council offices, however, tenants must make their own first aid provisions available to their employees and visitors.

All building users should regularly practice fire evacuation, at least annually. Users of the building agree to a duty to cooperate in fire drills and any evacuation procedures.

Tenants i.e., the employer of any other employees, or any other person working on the premises, will be provided with the same information as the responsible person's employees.

5. Training

The Parish Council has an office on site situated on the ground floor and a Parish Chamber for Council meetings situated on the first floor. The Council will ensure that all members of staff are trained in Fire Safety and could act as a Fire Marshal to evacuate that area of the building if they are on site during the event of a fire and/or emergency. The most senior person on site for the Council would assume the responsibility of evacuating the Council's areas and only if safe to do so would check all zones are cleared.

The Council requires all tenants have a nominated Fire Marshall trained in Fire Safety to ensure safe evacuation of the building and their areas in the event of an emergency.

The Council will ensure all its office staff are trained in the use of evacuation chairs.

Tenants have a responsibility to ensure their staff are trained in the use of evacuation chairs if they have regular visitors or employees who are mobility impaired and using the first floor.

6. Testing

All necessary systems required as part of the general fire precautions (or other general systems or appliances required to be satisfactorily maintained to prevent the likelihood of fire) will be tested and maintained in accordance with the relevant code of practice.

Building users and tenants should check all exit routes are clear and remain clear when using Beeson House and their area(s).

- The fire alarm system is tested and recorded weekly.
- Beeson House has an automatic fire detection and alarm system, which is monitored externally 24/7 and will call out the fire services in the event of a fire. It is tested weekly and serviced six monthly and annually.
- The emergency lighting system is tested monthly and serviced six monthly and annually.
- Portable firefighting equipment is visually checked weekly and serviced annually.
- Electrical installations are tested every five years in accordance with BS 7671.
- Portable Appliance Testing is carried out for smaller electrical items every two years.

7. Provision for Vulnerable and Mobility Impaired Users

Beeson House is a two-storey building with disabled/pushchair access to all entrances/exits both front and rear via ramps. All rooms are accessible by wheelchair/pushchair. Tenants and users of the building should however be mindful of any mobility impaired (non-mobile) guests and ensure that their appointed fire marshal provides these guests with additional assistance in the event of an emergency. There are two specified assembly points located at the top of each set of stairs in the building.

Where employees and regular visitors to a building require a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs) they will be provided with an individual plan by the Council (or the respective tenant responsible). The Council (or respective tenant) must have a valid PEEP for any mobility impaired regular visitors or employees. The plan must be tailored to their individual needs and will need to provide detailed information on their movements during an emergency evacuation and escape. *For example, it might include a regular visitor who uses a wheelchair and makes visits to a Tenant on the first floor and thus requires assistance being evacuated in an evacuation chair provided at the top of both stairwells. The Tenant is to ensure it has staff onsite that are trained in the use of the evacuation chair.*

It is possible that lone workers will be present on site e.g., Council office, tenants, or contractors. All staff to receive training in Fire Safety and evacuation routes. All Council arranged contractors to sign in with the Parish Office upon arrival.

8. Information for Fire-Fighters

Vehicle access for the fire service is available via Fairbank Road to the rear of Beeson House and/or through the Lintot Square car park. The fire alarm panel is located in the main entrance foyer and the logbook is located immediately inside the front door of the Parish Office. A floor plan with marked zones is displayed in the main entrance foyer adjacent to the fire alarm panel.

9. Risk of Ignition

CCTV and alarm systems have been fitted to reduce the risk of arson. Wheelie bin stores have been located away from the building in a wooden locked compound. External areas must be kept clear of combustible materials.

Electrical appliances are PAT tested every two years and are in good condition. If personal devices are used, the charging cables should be in an undamaged condition with no exposed wiring. The Council carries out Electrical Installation Certification every 5-years.

No permission will be granted for the storage of flammable or hazardous materials (such as BBQ fluids) on site by tenants. Should the Parish wish to store any such products these must be kept and stored externally. e.g. paint must be kept in the external store/container.

A strict no smoking policy is in place throughout the building.

No curtains are on site.

10. Safeguards in Place

A single stage automatic fire detection and alarm system is installed along with various manual call points throughout the building. Systems are tested weekly and serviced six monthly and annually.

Emergency lighting is provided throughout and tested monthly. Systems are serviced six monthly and annually.

Fire resisting self-closing doors to the police office and Warden's office.

Portable firefighting equipment including extinguishers are provided in accordance with BS5306. Serviced annually.

Fire action notices, equipment labels and fire door notices erected. Electrical hazard notice erected to plant room.

Travel distances for escape routes are satisfactory. Visual access via door vision panels are acceptable throughout the premises.

Disabled access provided to front and rear of the building including two specified assembly points on the 1st floor.