

Fire Risk Awareness

Risk Awareness is to be read in conjunction with the Fire Safety Policy. The PCC takes its responsibilities for fire safety very seriously and looks to ensure a proportionate approach is adopted in terms of assessing and minimising fire risks within our buildings.

The following summarises the position in respect of Fire Safety within St Peter's Church and the Church Centre at Ardingly.

Both buildings have gas central heating, and the boilers are regularly serviced to minimise any risks associated with the use of these. The boilers of both sites were serviced during 2022.

Otherwise, the risk of fire is minimal as the only open flames are from candles (which are only used under supervision, except for a votive which is used in the main church). The risk of fire from the votive use has been assessed and deemed minimal, with mitigating controls including the following:

- Candles are “tea-light” style, with a two hour burn time
- They are placed in a purpose built votive
- The votive is situated in an area where, if it were to be knocked over, etc, the likelihood of any flame causing a fire would be minimal.

The main risk of fire from candle use is our annual Christingle, where children are allowed to hold lighted candles in the body of the church during the service. Again, a risk assessment of this use has been undertaken and measures put in place to minimise the risk of fire or harm.

- Candles are generally used under close parental supervision
- They are lit for the shortest time possible
- Members of the church are placed at strategic points during the service to observe and take action in the event of a problem being observed
- Fire extinguishers are located around the church to allow immediate action to be taken if necessary

The Church Centre also has a gas cooker and there are adequate fire precautions taken for this use (fire blanket and extinguisher within close proximity as recommended by an external body).

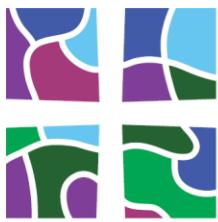
Fire escapes

The church is a Grade 1 listed building, so exit from the building is limited. However, during services, at least two exit doors are always open, allowing emergency exit from the building if required. These are situated at opposite ends of the church, thus minimizing the risk of anyone being trapped and unable to leave the building.

The Church Centre is better equipped with fire exits and also includes a fire alarm. This and emergency lighting is regularly tested and inspected (the last external inspection has recently been undertaken).

Both hall and church are considered to have sufficient exits available for the number of people who would normally be in attendance for any events.

Both buildings only have a single level (apart from the bell tower in the church, which has minimal numbers using it at any one time) and so no special considerations are required in terms of exit from the building from upper levels.



Electrical Equipment

Whilst there is no statutory requirement to undertake electrical appliance testing, this is routinely done every few years. A complete test of all electrical equipment within the church and Centre was undertaken in 2022.

The main electrical circuit in the church was tested in November 2021 and this currently follows a 5-year cycle of testing with next testing due in November 2026.

Other Considerations

Neither the Church, nor the Centre uses any form of oil fired or LPG appliances.

Given the location of these buildings, the risk of Arson is considered to be minimal, but this cannot be discounted altogether. Both properties are adequately insured in case such an event were to occur.

The church does not have a lightning conductor in place and this has been considered by the PCC to be a disproportionate expense. The location of the building and the limited height of the tower suggests that whilst a strike is not impossible, one has not occurred in the last 600+ years and so is considered to be a minimal risk (which is insured and accepted by the insurers).

A fire risk, etc assessment was undertaken a few years ago by our insurer and nothing significant has happened to change the scope of this, it is felt prudent to undertake a formal review periodically utilizing the tools available from our insurer.

This risk awareness was reviewed in January 2023

Location information for emergency services

St. Peter's Church
Church Lane
Ardingly
RH17 6UR

St. Peter's Church Centre
Street Lane
Ardingly
RH17 6UN

What3words location
Vocal-small-searcher