



LONE WORKING POLICY

As adopted at a meeting of Gravenhurst Parish Council on 18th September 2025

CONTENTS

DOCUMENT CONTROL	3
DOCUMENT AMENDMENT HISTORY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. SCOPE	4
3. DEFINITION	4
4. EXEMPTIONS.....	4
5. AIMS	5
6. RESPONSIBILITIES	5
7. RISK ASSESSMENT	6
8. VIOLENCE AT WORK	7
9. INCIDENT REPORTING	7
10. CONTACTING / INVOLVING THE POLICE.....	7
11. SUPPORT FOR STAFF	7
12. IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOLLOWING A VIOLENT INCIDENT	7
13. LONE WORKING FOR THE CLERK	8
14. FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR LONE WORKING.....	8
Appendix One - Lone Worker Checklist	9

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Gravenhurst Parish Council (GPC) recognises that its employee(s) are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of office hours. The purpose of this policy is to protect such staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working
- 1.2. The Council also recognises it has an obligation under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSW Act) and the Management of Health & Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1999, for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees
- 1.3. Working alone is not in itself against the law, and it will often be safe to do so. However, the law requires employers to consider carefully, and then deal with, any health and safety risks for people working alone.
- 1.4. Employee(s) have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves, and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of GPC employees and volunteers. It does not apply to Councillors.
- 2.2. Lone working includes:
 - 2.2.1. Those working at their main place of work where:
 - 2.2.1.1. Only one person is working on the premises.
 - 2.2.1.2. People work separately from each other, e.g. in different locations.
 - 2.2.1.3. People working outside normal office hours.
 - 2.2.2. Those working away from their fixed base where:
 - 2.2.2.1. One worker is visiting another agency's premises or meeting venue.
 - 2.2.2.2. One worker is making a home visit to an individual.
 - 2.2.2.3. One worker is working from their own home.

3. DEFINITION

- 3.1. The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as *"those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision"* either during or outside normal working hours. Examples include:
 - 3.1.1. Office workers who work alone in an office / premises,
 - 3.1.2. Home workers.
 - 3.1.3. A groundsman tending to green spaces.
 - 3.1.4. An employee meeting a member of the public at the allotments.

4. EXEMPTIONS

- 4.1. Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in the following situations:
 - 4.1.1. Any worker under the age of 18 years.
 - 4.1.2. Anyone working in confined spaces.
 - 4.1.3. Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.

5. AIMS

- 5.1. The aim of this policy is to:
 - 5.1.1. Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
 - 5.1.2. Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
 - 5.1.3. Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
 - 5.1.4. Ensure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone.
 - 5.1.5. Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.
 - 5.1.6. Take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1. The Council and the Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council are responsible for:
 - 6.1.1. Providing resources for putting this policy into practice and reviewing its' effectiveness regularly.
 - 6.1.2. Identifying all staff who undertake lone working.
 - 6.1.3. Informing staff of their responsibilities under the lone working policy and ensure it is part of staff members induction.
 - 6.1.4. Ensuring that staff are given appropriate instruction and training to reduce risks of lone working.
 - 6.1.5. Ensure that lone workers have no medical condition that may make them unsuitable for working alone. Where a medical condition is known, a risk assessment must be conducted to enable consideration to be given to routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional or specific risks
 - 6.1.6. Ensuring that risk assessments regarding the personal safety of staff, including those working alone, are undertaken to identify, evaluate, manage, eliminate or reduce the risks associated with lone working.
 - 6.1.7. Review lone working risk assessments on a regular basis, taking into consideration information provided by staff members regarding hazards relating to activities, environments and individuals.
 - 6.1.8. Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents linked to lone working.
 - 6.1.9. Providing a mobile phone, first aid equipment and other personal safety equipment, if and where this is felt to be desirable.
 - 6.1.10. Ensure communication systems are in place (e.g. mobile phones) to enable contact to be made with staff in the event of an incident.
 - 6.1.11. Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident.
- 6.2. Employees are responsible for:
 - 6.2.1. Taking reasonable care to look after their own health and safety and others affected by their work.
 - 6.2.2. Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working.

- 6.2.3. Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- 6.2.4. Not misuse tools and other equipment provided for their safety and health and in accordance with any relevant safety instructions and training they have been given.
- 6.2.5. Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses and other dangerous or potentially dangerous occurrences / concerns they might have in respect of working alone. This includes medical conditions which would make working alone unsuitable.
- 6.2.6. Always maintain good communication to minimise risk.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. Risk assessments will be carried out for and on behalf of all staff whose working practice makes them vulnerable.
- 7.2. A lone worker's checklist will be completed (see Appendix 1). This will be used as a tool to identify if the existing control measures are adequate or not, and what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working. Following the completion of the checklist a Risk Assessment will be completed for the Lone Working.
- 7.3. Risk assessments for lone workers will include:
 - 7.3.1. Is the person fit and suitable to work alone.
 - 7.3.2. The environment – location, security and access.
 - 7.3.3. The context – nature of the task and any special circumstances
 - 7.3.4. Risk of violence and/or aggression from others including animals.
 - 7.3.5. Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.
 - 7.3.6. Does the workplace present a specific risk to the lone worker (isolated area, terrain).
 - 7.3.7. Weather hazards.
 - 7.3.8. Is there machinery involved in the work that one person cannot operate safely?
 - 7.3.9. Are chemicals or hazardous substances being used that may pose a particular risk to the lone worker?
 - 7.3.10. Does the work involve lifting objects too large for one person?
 - 7.3.11. Sudden illness.
 - 7.3.12. Are there any reasons why the individual might be more vulnerable than others and be particularly at risk if they work alone (for example if they are a woman, young, pregnant, disabled or a trainee)?
 - 7.3.13. Channels of communication in an emergency. If the lone worker's first language is not English, are suitable arrangements in place to ensure clear communications, especially in an emergency?
- 7.4. Risk assessments for mobile lone workers will, additionally, include:
 - 7.4.1. Travelling between sites.
 - 7.4.2. Reporting and recording arrangements.
 - 7.4.3. Communication and traceability and personal safety/security.
- 7.5. Following completion of the Risk Assessment consideration will be given to any appropriate action that is required.

8. VIOLENCE AT WORK

- 8.1. There are five main pieces of Health & Safety legislation which are relevant to violence at work. These are:
 - 8.1.1. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSW Act)
 - 8.1.2. The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - 8.1.3. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)
 - 8.1.4. Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (s); - and
 - 8.1.5. The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 9b)
- 8.2. The Health & Safety Executive defines work-related violence as: *“any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”*.

9. INCIDENT REPORTING

- 9.1. An incident is defined as *“an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage”*.
- 9.2. To maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action.
- 9.3. Staff should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or “unsafe” (even if this was not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse.

10. CONTACTING / INVOLVING THE POLICE

- 10.1. GPC is committed to protecting its staff from violence and assault and will support criminal proceedings against those who carry out assault. All staff are encouraged to report violent incidents to the Police and will be supported by the Council throughout the process. Except in the cases of emergency, staff should inform the Clerk of any incident immediately. The Clerk will thereafter take responsibility for contacting the Police to report the details of the incident.

11. SUPPORT FOR STAFF

- 11.1. Employees working for the Council should know that their safety comes first. Staff should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. Staff should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Clerk will ensure that all lone workers’ training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

12. IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOLLOWING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

- 12.1. In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives any necessary medical treatment and/or advice. If an incident occurs out of hours, the Council’s Chair should be contacted. The Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to

legal or insurance aspects. The Clerk will also ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident.

13. LONE WORKING FOR THE CLERK

- 13.1. Where the items above relate directly to the Clerk as a staff member the appropriate controls will be exercised by the Personnel Committee or, in an emergency, the Chair of the Council.

14. FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR LONE WORKING

- 14.1. Lone workers must carry their Council issued mobile telephone (switched on) whilst undertaking lone working.
- 14.2. Lone workers in Council office premises must lock all external doors and ensure there is an adequate means of contact for those requiring access.
- 14.3. Lone workers (employees and volunteers) must take reasonable care not to put themselves at undue risk. If they feel that they would be at particular risk unless additional precautions are taken, then they should discuss this with the Clerk, or in the Case of The Clerk, The Chair of the Council.
- 14.4. Lone workers should plan any visit in advance (let someone know time of leaving, where they are going and estimated time of return, where appropriate).
- 14.5. Lone workers should try to avoid confrontation. If a situation does become heated, try to stay calm. If violence is threatened, or is commenced, then it is best to withdraw to a safe place and contact the Clerk, or in the Case of The Clerk, The Chair of the Council.
- 14.6. If a lone worker (employee or volunteer) suspects that a violent attack is imminent, it may be possible to use a mobile telephone to summon assistance, or phone 999. Heated arguments can suddenly escalate to the point at which violence is used and, in practice, there may be little time to call for help. You must make an immediate withdrawal from the location, at the earliest possible moment, to a safe place and contact the Clerk, or in the Case of The Clerk, The Chair of the Council.
- 14.7. Lone workers must ensure that you are properly trained and have the skills and knowledge to do your job safely and without risks to health when lone working. If you feel that you need extra training then discuss this with the Clerk, or in the Case of The Clerk, The Chair of GPC.
- 14.8. The Clerk must be available to parishioners, to discuss any matter previously notified to the Clerk in writing, which pertains to The Council, by appointment, at a designated address, or alternatively at another accessible premises designated by the Council. At least one Councillor must also be present.

Appendix One - Lone Worker Checklist

This checklist is an aide-memoir to assist in the production of a risk assessment and safe system of work. They are not exhaustive and should be developed and refined further for specific circumstances.

1. The Workplace and Work Risks				
Question	Rationale			
Can lone working be avoided? (YES/NO) <i>(If YES end checklist.)</i> <i>(If No, state rationale:)</i>				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Control Measures
Does the workplace present any specific risks to a person working alone? e.g. due to environment, location, contents, unfamiliarity, etc.?				
Is there safe access and egress? Both in the course of the normal work and in the event of an emergency?				
If there is temporary access, e.g. ladders, trestle etc. Can they be safely used and handled by a lone worker?				
Can any plant and equipment to be used during the lone working be safely handled and used by a lone person? Will any additional controls be needed to permit lone working with the equipment?				
Can any substances i.e. hazardous chemicals (e.g. Weedkiller) be safely handled and used by a lone person?				
Can any manual handling that may be carried out be safely done by a lone person?				

Is the working environment appropriate – heating, lighting, ventilation, etc.?				
Is there a risk of violence?				
Will you be in possession and responsible for valuable equipment?				
Are there adequate arrangements for travel to and from the working environment?				
Are adequate first-aid facilities available, or nearby?				
Is there a need to train the lone worker in first aid?				
In an emergency can help easily find and reach the lone worker?				
Will the person be familiar with the working environment and any necessary escape routes?				
Is there any high risk activities being performed in the immediate vicinity or the lone working environment?				
2. Communication and Supervision				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are there arrangements for regular contact between the lone worker and their supervisor?				
Will supervisors periodically visit the lone worker?				
Are automatic monitoring and warning devices appropriate, or intended for use (e.g. personal movement or inactivity alarms, panic alarms, etc.)?				

Does the lone worker have access to a suitable means of communication, or other means of summoning assistance, should this be required? (landline telephone or mobile phone)				
Security Contact details provided to the lone worker:				
3. The Lone Worker				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Does the lone worker have any medical condition that increases the risk of working alone?				
Does the lone worker have any medical condition such that any foreseeable emergencies may impose additional physical and mental burdens which are unacceptable?				
Is the lone worker sufficiently experienced/trained to perform the lone working activity?				
Is the lone worker provided with adequate information and a risk assessment for the tasks and the precautions to be taken?				
Has the lone worker been provided with suitable training to allow the premises, equipment, any materials, and protective equipment to be safely used?				
Has the lone worker been provided with suitable training to allow them to deal with any foreseeable emergencies?				
Is the lone worker more at risk due to their gender, age, disability, new to the role, expectant people or inexperience?				

4. Lone working off site				
Question	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Do you know where you are going and who you are going to meet?				
Is your meeting in a remote/isolated location?				
Do you have the emergency contact details for your supervisor (both during normal working hours and out of hours)?				
Are you aware of where the nearest emergency facilities (Hospitals GP, Health Centres are to the proposed location for your meeting or lone working location?				
5. Other Considerations				
Additional considerations which are specific to the lone working location should be recorded here along with the safety measure(s) deemed necessary to facilitate lone working: <i>(Please specify)</i> a) b) c) d)				