

Stanhoe Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Stanhoe Parish Council will protect the health, safety, and welfare of the Clerk when working alone. Lone working is a normal part of the Clerk's duties, and the Council is committed to ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place.

2. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working refers to any situation in which the Clerk carries out duties without direct supervision or without another person present. This includes:

- Working from home
- Visiting council-owned land or assets
- Meeting contractors or members of the public alone
- Attending external meetings unaccompanied
- Carrying out inspections or site visits

3. Responsibilities

The Parish Council

- Ensure that risks associated with lone working are assessed and managed.
- Provide appropriate support, equipment, and procedures.
- Review this policy annually or after any incident.

The Clerk

- Take reasonable care of their own safety.
- Follow the procedures in this policy.
- Report hazards, incidents, or concerns to the Council promptly.
- Keep the Council informed of work locations when carrying out site visits.

4. Risk Assessment

The Council will maintain a written risk assessment covering:

- Home working
- Site visits and inspections

- Lone meetings with contractors or members of the public
- Travel to and from meetings
- Use of council equipment
- Manual handling (e.g., noticeboards, files, small equipment)

Risk assessments will be reviewed annually or when circumstances change.

5. Procedures for Safe Lone Working

5.1 Working From Home

- The Clerk should maintain a safe and ergonomic workspace.
- Electrical equipment provided by the Council must be kept in good condition.
- Confidential information must be stored securely.

5.2 Site Visits and Inspections

- The Clerk should inform a councillor (or designated contact) of the planned location and expected return time.
- A mobile phone must be carried and kept charged.
- Visits should be postponed in severe weather or unsafe conditions.
- The Clerk should avoid entering isolated or poorly lit areas if they feel unsafe.

5.3 Meetings With Contractors or the Public

- Where possible, meetings should take place in public locations or during daylight hours.
- If a meeting feels unsafe, the Clerk may end it immediately and report the concern.
- The Clerk should avoid sharing personal home address details unless necessary for official correspondence.

5.4 Travel

- The Clerk should ensure their vehicle is roadworthy and carry a mobile phone.
- Travel routes should be planned in advance when visiting unfamiliar locations.
- The Clerk should avoid unnecessary travel in hazardous conditions.

6. Communication and Check-In

- For planned site visits, the Clerk should notify a councillor of:
 - Location
 - Expected duration
 - Confirmation when the visit is completed
- If the Clerk fails to check in, the councillor should attempt contact and escalate if necessary.

7. Personal Safety Measures

The Council encourages the Clerk to:

- Trust their instincts and leave any situation that feels unsafe.
- Keep a mobile phone accessible at all times.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or valuable equipment.
- Maintain professional boundaries when dealing with the public.

8. Incident Reporting

Any accident, near miss, or concerning interaction must be reported to the Council as soon as possible. The Council will review incidents to identify improvements to procedures or risk controls.

9. Training and Support

The Council will provide training or guidance where appropriate, including:

- Personal safety awareness
- Managing difficult conversations
- Safe handling of equipment or materials
- Stress management and wellbeing support

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council or sooner if:

- There is a significant change in the Clerk's duties
- An incident highlights the need for revision
- New legislation or guidance is issued

Approved