

Newbury Baptist Church

(CIO No: 1192404)

Fire Safety Policy and Procedures

Dated: September 2024

Review by Trustees: Every three years

1. Introduction

This policy sets out how Newbury Baptist Church (NBC) manages its premises in line with good fire safety practice to protect all those using the buildings. It is also to ensure that NBC complies with the legal obligations of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2. Responsibility

The Deacons / Charity Trustees are elected by the Church Meeting and have overall responsibility for all Church policies and their implementation. One of the Deacons / Charity Trustees will have designated responsibility for the premises, and they will be the "Responsible Person" for Fire Safety. The deacon responsible is Tim Dent. As the Responsible Person, they must carry out or arrange for a risk assessment of the premises; and ensure that the Church implements and maintains appropriate and adequate fire safety measures to minimise the risk to life from fire.

3. General Fire Safety

In April 2022, NBC commissioned an external Fire Safety Risk Assessment. The issues identified have been addressed and the recommendations actioned. NBC's premises have been equipped with a number of general features to improve fire safety, such as:

- Emergency lighting along routes to fire exits;
- Adequate, well maintained fire extinguishers are checked weekly;
- Appropriate signage including marked fire exits;
- Smoke detectors in the main kitchen and kitchenettes; The Fire Safety Officer will oversee the inspection and maintenance of these systems and equipment in accordance with the required schedules.
- Checks on other equipment and systems which contribute to fire safety will also be carried out in accordance with the required schedules:
 - Fixed electrical systems will be checked every five years;
 - Portable Appliance Tests (PAT) will be conducted annually;
 - Gas safety checks will be conducted annually;
 - The central heating boilers will be serviced annually under contract. The Church will also conduct specific processes and encourage a number of practices to minimise the risks of a fire starting and to minimise the risk to individuals in the unlikely event of a fire. These will be informed by a triennial review of the Church's Fire Risk Assessment (see below).

4. Fire Risk Assessment

The Church will hold an annual review of its Fire Risk Assessment, taking account of new legislative requirements and drawing, as necessary, upon external advice. The annual review should look at all aspects of fire safety and should identify any actions required to improve fire safety, including any appropriate changes in this Fire Safety Policy.

5. Good Housekeeping

The following “good housekeeping” procedures should be followed throughout the Church premises:

- The “no smoking” rule should be strictly enforced;
- Internal waste bins should be emptied regularly to an external bin housed in the car park away from the buildings. The external bin should be emptied weekly;
- Recycling bins should be cleared regularly and before they are full;
- All escape routes and fire exits should be kept clear and rooms should be kept tidy;
- Radiators are kept clear of clothing, paper and other matter;
- Flammable materials should be kept well away from any gas and electric fires;
- Any flammable cleaning materials should be stored in a locked store; and
- Furniture and furnishings will only be bought (or accepted as donations) if they conform to appropriate fire safety standards.

6. Kitchen

Kitchens present particular risks, especially as sources of potential ignition. In the case of the Church premises, particular care should be taken over the use of the microwave oven and the gas oven, gas grill and gas hob in the main Kitchen:

- The Kitchen should never be left unattended when items are cooking;
- Metal items should not be placed in the microwave and it should be turned off if the kitchen is vacated;
- Saucepans on the gas grill should be turned so their handles do not stick out or over another gas ring. When any of the gas oven, gas grill or gas hob are used:
- The ventilation hood should be turned on;
- Those using the Kitchen should avoid wearing loose clothing (or take special care to keep their clothing away from flames);
- The gas appliance should be double checked at the end of any use to ensure that the flames are properly extinguished and the gas has been turned off;
- The gas appliances should be cleaned after use (particularly to avoid the build up of fat and waste food which could start a fire).
- An information note about use of these gas appliances should be provided to all kitchen users which will include the requirement to notify the Church Office if any of them are used.

- The lock-up routine for the premises should include an inspection of the Kitchen to ensure, among other checks, that the gas oven, gas grill and gas hob have been properly turned off.

7. Candles

On the rare occasions when candles are used during services or other activities, care should be taken to ensure that:

- If possible, the candles used are fixed in one position and that they are good quality slow burning candles placed in a heat resistant container on a stable surface away from flammable materials (like curtains, clothing, hair, foliage and decorations);
- If fixed candles are not appropriate and hand held candles are to be used, then they are purpose-made candles with slide-on card drip trays; and
- The use of handheld candles by children (e.g. Christingle) must be closely supervised by responsible adults.

8. Training and Guidance

Employees and volunteers who carry out regular functions on the church premises (for example as Stewards, on Reception or in the Church Office) should be given training and guidance on induction and at least annually to support the Church in the implementation of this Fire Safety Policy. This should include:

- Identification of the fire detection & alarm systems operating in the building;
- The action to be taken on discovery of a fire or hearing the alarm;
- The evacuation procedure, including procedure for directing members of the public, and other occupants – paying particular attention to those who are physically disabled and those with impaired sight & hearing – to the exits and off the premises;
- The arrangements for calling the emergency services (including the fire brigade);
- The location, purpose and use of fire fighting equipment;
- The location of shut-off valves (see below);
- The detail, and location, of escape routes, especially those not in regular use, as well as the importance of keeping access to escape routes clear;
- The importance of keeping fire doors closed in order to prevent the spread of fire, heat and smoke;
- The importance of general fire precautions and good housekeeping.

The leaders of all groups using the premises should also be given information on actions to be taken in the event of a fire and/or an emergency evacuation.

9. Fire Drills

Fire Drills should be conducted annually on both Sundays and on weekdays. The assembly point is at the entrance to Mills and Bann Car Park in the forecourt.

10. Shut-off Valves

The emergency services may need to know where to find the main shut off valves which are as follows:

- The gas shut-off valves are located in the in passageway behind the organ;
- The water shut-off valves are located in the old minister's office/ Store Cupboard in the corner by the shelving;
- The main electrical switch boxes are located with the meters in the passageway to the church hall by the fire door on the right hand side.

Fire Evacuation Plan Template For Simple Premises

Emergency Evacuation Plan for: Newbury Baptist Church

Premises address: St Mary's Hill, Cheap Street, Newbury, Berkshire. RG14 5DD

Plan date: 22/07/24

Review date: 22/07/25

Sound of the alarm

The fire alarm will be by operating one of the fire call points located by the exit doors.

Raising the alarm

In the event of a fire beginning:

If a fire is discovered the alarm will be raised by operating one of the fire call points located by the exit doors. This will normally be the responsibility of the Fire Warden, but in their absence a door steward.

Action that should be taken on hearing the alarm

The following actions will be taken upon the fire alarm being sounded:

- **The Fire Warden** (the "Warden") will take charge and lead in the evacuation of the building or in their absence the deputy appointed that day;
- The Warden (or deputy) should Dial 999 and request attendance by the Fire Service giving their name, the name of building, the building address (as detailed above), contact number and details of the fire as far as it is known;
- **Designated Door Stewards** will commence evacuation of the building – ensuring this is done in a calm and orderly manner, providing assistance to those needing additional help in evacuating (e.g. wheelchair users and those with difficulty in walking);
- The Warden and Stewards shall sweep the building to ensure that all areas are clear (including the kitchen, prayer room, minister's office and toilets) if safe to do so and ensure all doors are closed on the way out;
- If safe to do so, the electrical mains and gas supplies should be switched off before leaving the building. The location of these are detailed below (See Location of Key Safety Hazards);
- The Warden shall ensure that nobody re-enters the building until it is confirmed that it is safe to do so by the Fire Service;
- Those evacuating the building shall proceed to the designated Assembly Point in the car park and the Warden shall check that all known to have been within the building are accounted for;
- The Warden shall liaise with the Fire Service upon their arrival.

Escape routes

The escape routes from the building are those shown on the floor plan that accompanies this Plan namely:

1. Two fire exits at the front of the Church.
2. Two fire exits to the rear of the Church.
3. Three exits from the Church Hall

Fire Assembly Point

The Assembly Point is: Car park entrance to Mills and Bann Car park.

Fighting fires - Extinguisher use

- Fire extinguishers will only be used where staff have received training and feel confident in their use
- Where it is deemed safe to do so i.e. there is a clear means of escape, fire is small
- **Please note that any fire larger than a waste paper bin for example, should not be tackled**

Personal safety always takes priority and, if in any doubt, staff should not attempt to extinguish a fire

Location of Key Safety Hazards or other fire related equipment

- Gas supply shut off: Passageway behind the organ
- Mains fuse box: Entrance to the Church Hall from the Main Church Building
- Mains water inlet: Old Ministers Office/Storeroom, far corner under window

Number of staff needed to carry out the Plan

- To implement the evacuation plan two trained staff should always be on duty. They will normally be the Warden and a Steward
- They are responsible for the implementation of this plan during Sunday services (which includes cover half an hour before the start time and half an hour after the finish) and during church meetings and other whole church events. Responsibility on other occasions when the church is used is set out in the variations section below.

Equipment needed to effect the Plan

- Mobile phone.
- Fire Warden Kit located in the Church Office.

Variations to Plan

- In the case of lettings of the premise or bookings by church members for other meetings, music practice, etc the organiser/leader of the meeting will be made aware that they are responsible for the safe evacuation of the building and will assume the role of Fire Warden in the event of a fire. They should be asked to familiarise themselves with this Plan and the floor plan and be made aware of the position of the fire exits and the Assembly Point.
- The Minister and Church Administrator and any other staff working on a day -to-day basis within the building should familiarise themselves with the Plan and have regard to the relevant sections in the event of a fire.
- Contractors visiting the building to carry out repairs or maintenance should be required to sign in and sign out of a visitor's book which will be kept in the church office. The Church Administrator or the person giving the contractor access to the building will be responsible for ensuring the book is signed and that the evacuation

of the building in line with this Plan is followed in the event of a fire breaking out during the contractor's presence.

Back up arrangements

Alternative arrangements will be made to cover staff absences/ leave etc to ensure there are always a sufficient number of trained staff available on site.

Responsibilities

For ensuring plan is up to date:	NBC Trustees/Deacons
For ensuring adequate staff are on duty to carry out the evacuation plan	The Fire Warden, Tim Dent
For training staff on the evacuation plan and in their roles and responsibilities	The Fire Warden and NBC Trustees/Deacons