



## Woodstock Town Council Lone Working Policy

### 1. Introduction

Woodstock Town Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, councillors, and volunteers who may work alone during the course of their duties. This policy sets out the procedures and measures in place to manage the risks associated with lone working within the context of Town Council activities.

### 2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all staff, councillors, and volunteers of the Woodstock Town Council who may be required to work alone during the course of their duties, whether on Town Council premises, off-site, or in the community. Lone working may include:

- Clerk or staff working alone in the office at the Town Hall.
- Staff or councillors opening or closing buildings (e.g. village halls, pavilions).
- Groundskeepers or maintenance staff working in parks, cemeteries, or public spaces.
- Staff attending site meetings, inspections, or home visits.
- Councillors or staff attending evening meetings or representing the Council alone.

### 3. Legal Duties

Woodstock Town Council has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, councillors and volunteers while at work. There is no general legal prohibition on lone working, but the Council must assess and manage any additional risks faced by lone workers.

### 4. Definition of Lone Working

A lone worker is defined as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision and where no immediate assistance from colleagues is readily available. This includes situations where staff work outside normal office hours or in isolated locations.

### 5. Risk Assessment

Risk assessments before lone working will be carried out (when needed) to identify potential hazards, evaluate risks, and establish appropriate control measures.

Risk assessments will consider:

- The nature of the work to be undertaken.
- The location and environment.
- Personal safety and the risk of violence or aggression.
- Medical fitness of the lone worker.
- Travel and driving risks.
- Communication and emergency procedures.

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly or when there are significant changes in working practices or locations.

### 6. Control Measures

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Woodstock Town Council has implemented the following control measures to manage the risks associated with lone working:

- **Buddy System:** Where practicable, staff and councillors should avoid working alone.
- **Communication:** Lone workers must carry a mobile phone and ensure it is fully charged and has sufficient signal strength before starting work.
- **Planned Contact:** Lone workers must inform a nominated contact of:
  - Their planned location(s).
  - Estimated start and finish times.
  - Confirmation when they have safely completed work.
- **Emergency Contacts:** An ICE (In Case of Emergency) number must be stored on mobile phones.
- **Personal Safety Alarms:** May be issued where there is a risk of personal attack or isolated work.
- **Training:** Staff and councillors will receive training on lone working procedures, personal safety, and conflict de-escalation where appropriate.
- **Equipment:** Ensure appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided for the work being undertaken.

## 7. Responsibilities

Woodstock Town Council:

- Provide adequate resources to implement this policy.
- Conduct and regularly review lone worker risk assessments.
- Provide suitable training, equipment, and support to lone workers.
- Monitor and review lone working arrangements.

Managers (e.g. Clerk, Responsible Officers):

- Ensure lone workers understand and follow procedures.
- Maintain contact logs.
- Respond promptly to concerns raised by lone workers.
- Review incidents and near-misses to improve safety measures.

Employees, Councillors, and Volunteers:

- Follow the lone working procedures and risk assessments.
- Never take unnecessary risks.
- Inform their manager or nominated person of their whereabouts.
- Report incidents, accidents, or near-misses immediately.
- Use provided equipment correctly, including mobile phones and alarms.
- Inform the Council of any health conditions that may impact their ability to work alone safely.

## 8. Incident Procedures

In the event of an incident while lone working:

- Prioritise personal safety and move to a safe location.
- Contact emergency services if necessary.
- Notify the nominated contact as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Complete an incident report to enable proper investigation and review.

## 9. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if circumstances change or in light of any incidents or near-misses.

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