

# Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church (BSBC)

## Fire Safety Policy

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the way in which the Church intends to manage its premises in line with good fire safety practice to protect all those using the buildings. It is also to ensure that the Church complies with the legal obligations of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

### 2. Responsibility

The Leadership Team elected by the Church Meeting has overall responsibility for all Church policies and their implementation. It has delegated the Church Centre Manager (Tim Kingston Hepner) as The Responsible Person for the premises including Fire Safety. As the Responsible Person, he must:

- (a) carry out or arrange for a fire risk assessment of the premises;
- (b) ensure that the Church implements and maintains appropriate and adequate fire safety measures to minimise the risk to life from fire.

The Church Centre Manager is also the Church's Fire Safety Officer. In that role he is the Competent Person responsible for the implementation of this Fire Safety Policy.

### 3. General Fire Safety

In May 2013 the Church commissioned an external Fire Safety Risk Assessment by Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service. During that assessment occupancy restrictions were given as follows:

Ground floor, including worship area, meeting rooms 1 & 2, kitchen, prayer room, creche, resources room and Minister's office – maximum of 350 persons

First floor, including balcony, 3 offices, hall, kitchen and youth room – maximum of 120 persons.

The Church premises have been equipped with a number of general features to improve fire safety:

- Adequate, well maintained fire safety equipment (extinguishers and emergency sirens);
- Appropriate signage including marked fire exits;
- Smoke detectors located in the following rooms:

Gathering Area	Upstairs fire escape/refuge
Female toilets (downstairs)	Youth Room cupboard
Cleaner's cupboard	Sports' Hall cupboard
Utilities access cupboard (room G4)	Youth/International Office
Main kitchen	Youth Room
Worship Area	Server/AV Room
Senior Minister's Office	Sports Hall
Resources Room	Kitchenette (upstairs)
Children's Room	Main Office
Prayer Room	Second Office (F7)

Checks on this equipment and systems which contribute to fire safety will be carried out by appropriate professionals (currently JCA, Anglia Fire and UK Safety Management) in accordance with the required schedules.

- Fixed electrical systems should be checked every five years;
- Portable Appliance Tests (PAT) will be conducted as recommended;
- Gas safety checks will be conducted annually;
- The central heating boiler will be serviced annually;
- The air conditioning gas powered condensers will be serviced every 50,000 hours
- The air conditioning internal units will be serviced quarterly

The Church will also have in place 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 an annual review of the Church's Fire Risk Assessment.

#### **4. Fire Risk Assessment**

The Church will carry out an annual review of Fire Risk Assessment, taking account of any 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 procedures should be followed throughout the Church premises:

- The "no smoking" rule should be strictly enforced and notices displayed appropriately;
- Internal waste bins should be emptied regularly to external bins housed in the grounds away from the buildings.
- The external bins should be presented at the site gate for emptying in line the the local authority schedule;
- 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;
- Flammable materials should be kept well away from any ignition sources;
- Any flammable cleaning materials should be stored in a locked store;
- 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 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 hob 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). The lock-up routine for the premises should include an inspection of the Kitchen to ensure, among other checks, that the gas oven 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 clothing, hair, foliage and decorations);
- That, 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. Any use of hand-held candles by children 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, in the Church Office) should be given training and guidance 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 reason for not using the lift;
- 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 a weekday and biennially on Sundays.

## **10. Shut-off Valves**

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

- Gas
  - The gas mains shut off is located in the plant room (externally accessible)
  - There is an isolation shut off in the kitchen behind the hob and an emergency shut off in the kitchen on the wall by the windows (“break glass”).
- Electricity
  - There are distribution boards –
    - In the plant room for electrical supply to the ground floor (not kitchen)
    - In the kitchen by the door for circuits in the kitchen
    - In the sports’ hall cupboard for electrical supply to the upper floor.
  - The main shut off for the electrical supply to the building is in the plant room.

**This policy was adopted by the Trustees on 4th May 2020 and will be reviewed every three years.**