

MADINGLEY PARISH CHURCH

FIRE RISK POLICY AND ASSESSMENT 2024-5

Occupation

Our primary aim under the legislation is to ensure the safety of people, not the property, so we have not concerned ourselves with protecting the building when it is unoccupied.

Our normal congregation is relatively small and know the building well, and could easily evacuate the building in the event of fire.

There are occasions when the church is full, but these occur on only a few occasions during the year when we have trained stewards in place to provide assistance.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises and there are no hazardous activities.

Fire Detection

We do not have an automatic fire detection system but in view of the nature of the building we are confident that when the building is occupied (and we are only concerned with safety of people and not the protection of the building) a fire would be detected almost immediately by persons either smelling or seeing smoke and raising the alarm by shouting "Fire" in accordance with our Fire Action Notice.

Escape

The main body of the church is one large open area with no corridors or risk of congestion and the door providing the principal means of escape to the open is clearly visible.

The lavatory is the only space separated from the main body of the church. The steward would ensure that anyone using this facility would be alerted in the case of fire.

Due to the lofty nature of the main body of the church there is a large open area where smoke can be contained thus increasing the potential time to allow for evacuation.

Fire Load

The fire load in the main body of the church is low and comprises in the main fixtures and fittings constructed from hardwoods which are difficult to ignite or sustain combustion.

Whilst candles are used in the main body of the church they are clearly visible, kept away from combustible materials and there is little risk of a fire either starting or developing undetected.

There are virtually no combustible linings that would aid the risk of fire spread.

Overall Fire Risk Assessment

Based on the factors set out in this assessment, the overall Fire Risk Assessment is that there is a Low/Tolerable Risk.

Church of St Mary Magdalene, Madingley- FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

OUR ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT

We have considered the possibility of a fire actually happening based on our experience at our church.

Emergency Lighting: four permanent non-maintained LED emergency lighting fittings are fixed in the church as shown on the location map. Stewards will bring torches to assist in the evacuation of the church during the hours of darkness.

Manual Fire Alarm: In view of the nature of the building and its use as detailed in the Assessment we consider that there is no need to provide any form of manual fire alarm system. In the event of a fire, a warning will be given by shouting “Fire” and stewards will guide people to a place of safety.

Fire Extinguishers: there are three water fire extinguishers located inside the North Door, to the left of the South Door and on the south wall of the Chancel next to the Communion Rail. These extinguishers are used for fighting fires involving flammable solids such as paper, wood, and textiles (‘Class A’ fires). In addition, there is a CO₂ extinguisher located to the north of the Servedy which should be used for electrical fires and flammable liquids (‘Class B’ fires).

Automatic Fire Detection System: We consider that our arrangements are sufficient to provide for the safety of persons in the church when it is occupied and that there is not a need to provide any form of fire detection overnight when the building is unoccupied. We have therefore decided that there is no need to install any form of automatic fire detection system.

Exit Doors: We have decided that under normal circumstances, when numbers in the church are small, we do not need to make any changes to the direction in which doors open and that there is no need for permanent fire exit signs as occupants are familiar with the location and way in which the doors open. Stewards will assist persons with limited mobility as necessary and are trained accordingly. The North Door will be the fire exit when the building capacity is under 50. The South Door will be used as an additional fire exit if numbers exceed 50.

Major Services and Events: We do consider, however, that signage and other measures are required for major services and events when the church might be occupied by persons other than our normal congregation. In these circumstances the following will be put in place:

1. All external exit doors will be unlocked.
2. All external exit doors will be deemed to be fire exit doors and will have the appropriate fire exit sign placed above them in accordance with The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
3. Stewards will be allocated with at least one for each exit and will be responsible for a specific part of the church. The stewards will be required to lead persons from their allocated area to the designated assembly point.
4. Persons with disabilities who require assistance to evacuate such as wheelchair users will be located in a part of the church closest to a door with the appropriate access and egress. A steward will be allotted to them to assist with their evacuation.
5. Every steward must bring a torch if the event is to be held during the hours of darkness.
6. At the start of the service or event an announcement will be made setting out the arrangements for evacuation.

Church of St Mary Magdalene, Madingley- FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

7. A senior person will be nominated to make the announcement to evacuate if required and to follow the directions of the stewards.
8. Prior to the announcement each steward will ensure that doors are open and held back.
9. A safe place away from the building will be designated as an assembly point.

Stewards and Training

A list will be maintained of all those who are nominated to undertake fire warden duties. This will comprise:

1. Churchwardens.
2. Sidespersons.
3. Vergers.
4. Stewards

For normal services churchwardens, vergers and sidespersons will undertake day-to-day fire warden duties. For major services and events additional fire wardens will be nominated from the list of stewards. All those with fire warden responsibilities will receive training in their duties at least annually. Training will include the following:

- How to raise the alarm and contact the fire service
- Location and use of fire extinguishers
- How to evacuate the church
- How to help with the evacuation of persons with disabilities
- The location of the Assembly Point
- The signage that is required for major services and events, where it is kept and how it is fixed in place
- A knowledge of the Fire Action Notice and where it should be located.

Record Keeping

A Log Book will be maintained noting the following:

- Dates of fire extinguisher inspection and maintenance visits
- Dates of fixed electrical system inspections and tests and PAT testing.
- Dates of portable appliance testing (PAT)
- Dates of lightning conductor system inspections and tests
- Dates of evacuation drills

The Fire Action Notice represents our Emergency Plan. Copies will be located near the exit door.

The 'Responsible' person will:

Raise the alarm by shouting "Fire! Fire!"

Evacuate the premises

Tackle the fire, if safe to do so, without taking any risks

Call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999

On hearing shouts of "Fire, Fire"

Leave the premises by the quickest route

Church of St Mary Magdalene, Madingley- FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Ensure that any disabled persons are helped to safety

Report to the assembly point at the Church Lane gate.

Ensure that no one stops to collect personal belongings or re-enters the church until authorised to do so.

Appendix:

- A. 'Fire Safety in our Church' – guidance for church wardens, vergers, sidespersons and stewards.
- B. Log Book.
- C. Fire Action Notice.
- D. Action Plan.
- E. Sketch of church showing location of fire exit(s), fire extinguishers, location of emergency lighting and evacuation assembly point.

Church of St Mary Magdalene, Madingley- FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

A. 'Fire Safety in our Church' – guidance for church wardens, vergers, sidespersons and stewards.

For weekly services churchwardens, vergers or sidespersons will undertake fire warden duties. The 'responsible person' will normally be the sidesperson. For major services and events additional fire wardens will be nominated. All those with fire warden responsibilities will receive training in their duties at least annually.

1. **How to raise the alarm and contact the fire service**

Shouting "Fire! Fire!" and initiate evacuation of the premises. Ensure that you have brought a mobile phone with you to church and where you can obtain the best signal in order for you to ring 999.

2. **Location and use of fire extinguishers**

Please see sketch below. If you have not received training in the use of fire extinguishers please advise the person responsible for Fire Safety at the church.

3. **How to evacuate the church**

People should be instructed to leave the church promptly via the North Door. Ensure that you have seated those with disabilities nearest to the exit and nominate someone to assist them to evacuate if necessary. The wheelchair ramp is stored behind the organ. If it has been used to assist a wheelchair user to access the building, ensure that it is easily to hand in the event of an emergency evacuation. Ensure that anyone using the lavatory at the time of the evacuation is warned and, if necessary, assisted to evacuate. If there are more than 50 people in the church, two fire exits should be made available so the South Door should be unlocked and labelled as a fire exit. At such major events, both fire exits should be labelled.

4. **The location of the Assembly Point** is at the Church Lane gate. The 'responsible person' should count the number of people occupying the building at the beginning of the service so that a head count can take place in the event of an evacuation.

5. **Annual training** will include information about the signage that is required for major services and events, where it is kept and how it is fixed in place as well as knowledge of the Fire Action Notice and where these should be located.

6. **Fire wardens should ensure that all candles are locked away after every service (in the vestry cupboard or in locked cupboard under sink)**

B. The **Log Book** will be stored in the top drawer of the Servedy. It will contain the following information:

Date of electrical inspection
Date of lightning conductor inspection
Testing of emergency lighting units
Records of evacuation drills
Records of fire safety training.

C. Fire Action Notice

FIRE ACTION NOTICE

In case of fire

Raise the alarm by shouting “Fire, Fire!”

Evacuate the premises

Tackle the fire, if safe to do so, without taking any risks.

On hearing shouts of “Fire! Fire!”

Leave the premises by the quickest route

Ensure that any disabled persons are helped to safety

Report to the assembly point at the Church Lane Gate.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not re-enter church until authorised to do so.

D. Action Plan

All the following points listed in 2021 have been achieved apart from item 6 which will be undertaken once Covid precautions have been ended.

1. PCC to adopt Fire Risk Assessment.
2. Purchase fire exit notice for big events.
3. Purchase and fix four emergency lighting fittings.
4. Ensure signage displayed and fire warden information sheets distributed
5. Organise annual training of fire wardens.
6. Organise annual evacuation practise.

Church of St Mary Magdalene, Madingley- FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

- E. Sketch of the church with location of fire extinguishers, emergency light fittings, fire exits and assembly point shown

