

---

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Health and Safety Report
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	Monday 13 April 2026
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Compliance and Environment Officer

---

The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on Health and Safety across the services and facilities provided by the Council.

### **Background**

It is the policy of Witney Town Council to comply with our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (as amended), the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) and other supporting legislation concerning Health and Safety. At all times we endeavour to provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment for our employees, and to protect the health and safety of all visitors; including contractors, temporary workers, and members of the public, who might be affected by our operations.

### **Current Situation**

In accordance with the approved Witney Town Council Health and Safety Policy Statement, Members are reminded that they have a collective responsibility for the Health & Safety of the organisation.

Departmental managers remain accountable for compliance within their areas of responsibility which is overseen by the Compliance and Environment officer.

The key objectives are to ensure that the Council operates in a lawful manner in respect of health and safety compliance with its service delivery and functions, identifying and advising management and Council of possible risks and finding solutions to mitigate such risks.

The Council's health and safety consultants, GH Safety Ltd (part of Opus Safety Ltd) provide additional specialist support to the Council.

### **Retained Service Review**

The retained service agreement with Opus Safety Ltd ends on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2026. Opus Safety act as the Council's Health and Safety Advisors and the Council's appointed Health and Safety Competent Person. Over the years, officers have worked closely with the consultant who has provided support and undertaken audits on Council activities and properties. Officers will obtain quotes from suitable businesses that can provide the support service to ensure value for money and in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

## Compliance Table

Compliance Inspection, Testing and Servicing Status	Corn Exchange	Town Hall	Admin Office	Burwell Hall	Windrush Ind. Est. Temp Works Depot	Stanley Court Temp Works Depot
Fire Risk Assessment	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Fire Alarm Testing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	N/A
Fire Extinguishers	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Steel fire exit staircase	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emergency Lighting	Completed	Completed	Due	Completed	N/A	Completed
Security	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	N/A	N/A
Lift	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gas Safety	Completed	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A	N/A
Electrical Periodic	Completed	Completed	Due April 2026	Completed	Landlord	Landlord
PAT Testing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Legionella Risk Assessment	Review	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	Landlord
Asbestos	Completed	Completed	Completed	Review	Completed	Report provided with Lease.
Air Handling Unit	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Air conditioning	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A	N/A

The Windrush Industrial Estate Temporary Works Depot has now been vacated by the Operations Team in line with the lease agreement for the building.

The new Operations Depot at West Witney Sports Ground will be added to the compliance schedule upon full occupation by the Operations Team.

### Tower Hill Cemetery Chapel (Consecrated)

Following the recent review of the Fire Risk Assessment for the Tower Hill Cemetery Chapel, it was identified that no formal booking form currently exists for the hire of this facility. A previous recommendation within the assessment highlighted the need to restrict occupancy within the chapel to a maximum of 60 people.

A draft booking form has now been prepared for consideration (Appendix 1). This has been adapted from the Public Halls Booking Form and amended to reflect the specific operational and safety requirements of the chapel.

The chapel is hired throughout the year for a range of purposes, including funeral and memorial services, heritage guided tours, exhibitions, and carol concerts organised by local churches and funeral directors. While not all hirings incur a charge, a completed booking form will be required for every occasion to ensure that hirers fully understand the hire agreement, conditions of use, and their responsibilities.

The schedule of charges for the facility is reviewed annually and takes effect from 1 April.

## Health and Safety Policy Statement

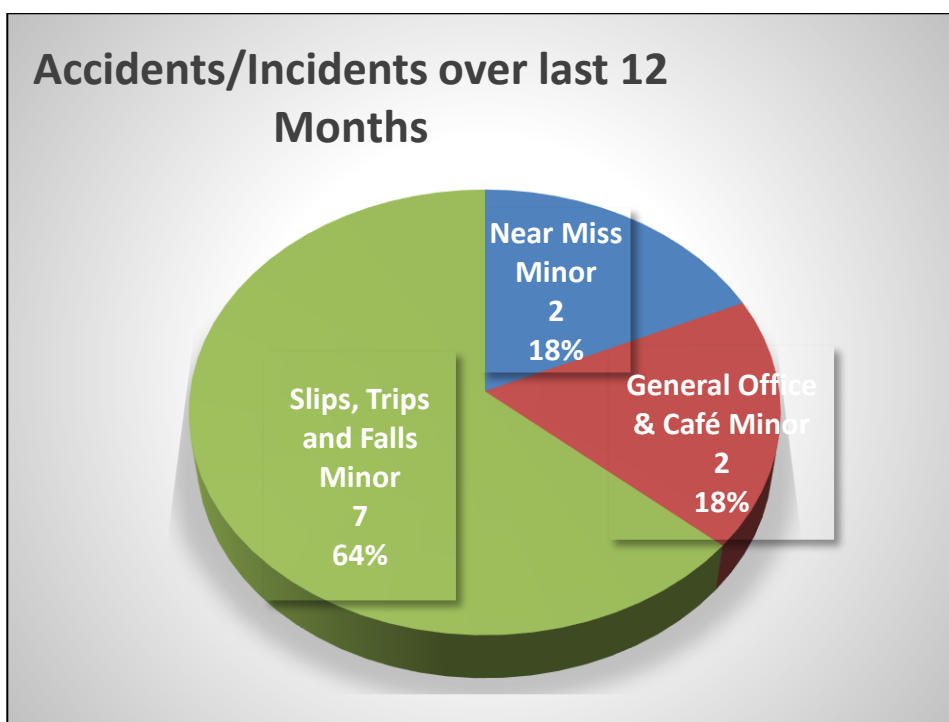
The Witney Town Council Health & Safety Policy Statement 2023 was formally adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4 December 2023 and subsequently reviewed and updated in July 2024. A further review has now been completed following the retirement of the named Opus Safety - Health & Safety Consultant (Competent Person), along with several changes to officer roles within the organisation and an updated list of First Aiders and first aid locations. These are the only material amendments made to the document.

The updated Health & Safety Policy Statement is attached for consideration (Appendix 2). Members are reminded that they hold collective responsibility for the Health & Safety of the organisation, as set out in Part 1 of the document on page 10. By approving the amended Policy Statement, Members are formally accepting these responsibilities.

## Health and Safety incidents

- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)
  - No reportable incidents since the last meeting.
- Accidents/Incident
  - No reported accidents/incidents since the last meeting.
- Near Miss
  - There has been one reported near miss since the last meeting.

A member of the public and a child were briefly trapped in the Corn Exchange lift due to a mechanical malfunction. They were safely released by staff within 10 minutes, and no injuries were reported. The incident has been logged as a lift entrapment with a low/no-harm outcome. The lift engineer has identified the component required to restore full functionality, and the lift will remain out of service until this repair is completed. All hirers have been informed. An update on the repair status will be provided by the Venue & Events Officer at the next Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee meeting.



## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Ensuring equality in health and safety measures so that all individuals, regardless of their background, job role, or personal circumstances, have equal access to a safe and healthy environment.
- b) Biodiversity plays a crucial role in health and safety measures, influencing public health, workplace safety, and overall environmental well-being.
- c) Crime and disorder pose risks to health and safety in workplaces, public spaces, and healthcare settings. Issues such as violence, theft, and vandalism can compromise safety measures.
- d) The Environment & Climate Emergency is a critical issue that directly impacts health and safety measures in workplaces and communities. It is important to integrate environmental and climate considerations into the council's health and safety policies to protect workers, reduce environmental hazards, and build resilience against climate-related risks.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

All accidents and incidents are properly documented and investigated with measures put in place in order to prevent reoccurrences.

A formal booking process ensures compliance with fire safety and health & safety requirements, protecting all users. This supports the Council's commitment to providing safe, well-managed facilities and demonstrates strong governance and duty of care.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

There are the broader benefits that the Council generates for employees and the public embedding a safer, healthier, and more productive workforce.

The chapel provides a dignified, accessible, and affordable space for funeral and memorial services. By making it available to the community through a clear hiring process, the Council supports residents during times of bereavement and helps strengthen personal and community resilience.

By promoting responsible and structured use of the chapel, the Council contributes to the preservation and appreciation of a valued historic and cultural asset. This reinforces a sense of place and shared identity within the community.

## **Financial implications**

The Council makes budgetary provision in order to carry out its obligations in relation to its statutory compliance checks using external contractors to certify the work accordingly.

Tower Hill Cemetery Chapel provides a small income that supports the ongoing maintenance and management of the facility.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Adopt the draft form Tower Hill Cemetery Chapel Booking Form.
2. Approve the amended Health and Safety Policy Statement as presented. In doing so, acknowledging and reconfirming Members responsibilities for Health & Safety in the organisation.