

Church - fire risk assessment

+ Church Hall

Our fire risk assessment

Churches are required to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In Scotland fire safety duties are contained in part 3 of The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended and The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Ecclesiastical have developed this fire risk assessment based on our own expertise. This assessment can only be used by churches whose normal activities are limited to what might be expected in a church building such as services and occasional public events such as concerts.

Churches with a wider range of activities such as night shelters, lettings and nurseries should consider appointing an independent consultant to help them carry out the Fire Risk Assessment.

How to use this Fire Risk Assessment

The assessment has the following sections which you will need to read and then complete:

Part 1 – Information about Our Church

Part 1 of the assessment is about collecting together all the information you need about your church so that you can perform the Fire Risk Assessment. It is broken down into various sections which are summarised below.

A Our Church Details

Basic information about our church location and the person responsible for the Fire Risk Assessment. (John Stokes & Sheila Chase)

B Parochial Church Council Declaration

A declaration about the awareness and understanding of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) or other church management committee of the requirements of the Order to be signed by the appropriate person.

C General Information about our Church

Description of the church building and how it is used.

D Potential Fire Hazards at our Church

Details of fire hazards, sources of ignition and their elimination or control.

E Our Fire Protection Arrangements

Details of the current arrangements we have in place for fire protection.

F Our Fire Detection, Warning and Extinguisher Equipment

Details of the equipment we have in place and its testing and maintenance.

G Our Fire Safety Management

Information about our plans should a fire occur.

Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

Part 2 of the assessment is about the fire risks at our church and how we will go about fulfilling our obligations under the order.

Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety at Our Church

Part 3 of the assessment details the measures we have taken to offset the risk of fire at our church.

Continued overleaf

Part 4 – Our Action Plan to Reduce Fire Risk at Our Church

Part 4 details any gaps in our fire protection arrangements and outlines what we are going to do to address them.

Appendix 1

Examples to help you complete Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment.

Appendix 2

Examples to help you complete Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety at Our Church

Appendix 3 Fire Action Notice

A specimen notice that needs to be placed near all exit doors and in separate areas such as vestries which you will need to complete for your church.

Part 1 – Information about Our Church

A Our Church Details

Name of church:

St Alkmunds

Address:

Church Street
Whitchurch
Shropshire
SY13 1LB

Responsible person:

John Stokes & Sheila Chase

The Parochial Church Council of:

St Alkmund's, Whitchurch

In the diocese of:

Lichfield

Date:

February 2025

Suggested review date:

February 2026

(This assessment should be reviewed at least annually unless there is a change that materially affects the fire risk such as a change in the method of heating or use of the building, when it should be reviewed immediately.)

B Parochial Church Council Declaration

As a church, we understand that we are required to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (in Scotland fire safety duties are contained in part 3 of The Fire Scotland Act 2005, as amended and The Fire Safety Scotland Regulations 2006) even if we have no employees.

We note that we are required to take such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of employees, if we have any, and to take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances to ensure that the premises are safe for all other visitors to the church including volunteers, members of the congregation, and contractors. Our Fire Risk Assessment and arrangements are therefore directed, to the safety of people rather than the protection of the building itself.

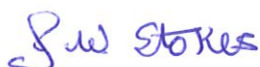
We understand that we must appoint a responsible person and other competent persons to give effect to such arrangements as are appropriate, having regard to the size of our undertaking and the nature of our activities, for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures. In the case of a church, we understand that the responsible person is the person who has control of the premises and we deem this to be the 'Body Corporate' namely the Parochial Church Council. We have also appointed the Parochial Church Council as the Competent Persons under the legislation.

Although the legislation only requires the responsible person to record the arrangements if five or more persons are employed, we have decided to do so anyway in order to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the safety of everyone who uses our church and to ensure that everyone is aware of our fire safety arrangements.

We understand that the legislation is not prescriptive and that we are only required to undertake preventive measures 'where necessary'.

In carrying out our Fire Risk Assessment we have followed the Government guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (for Scotland - Scottish Government's Police and Community Safety Directorate, HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland, the Scottish Building Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive) and have noted from this document that the action we take should be common sense and in the main, not expensive. We have also noted Appendix C of the guidance for Fire safety risk assessment: small and medium places of assembly which refers to listed and historic buildings and note that we will need to endeavour to strike a balance between ensuring sufficient fire safety measures are in place for the safety of people, yet avoid extensive alterations and helping to maintain the character of the building.

PCC member(s) responsible should sign here:



Print name(s):

JOHN W STOKES

SHEILA A CHASE

Role(s):

CHURCH WARDEN

CHURCH WARDEN

You can see the full documentation referred to above at the links below:

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made

Government Guidance including a fire risk assessment form is available from:

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/aboutguides/and for Scotland
www.firesafetyfirst.co.uk/freedownloadpublications.html

A document that may also be of assistance is the Fire Safety Risk Assessment Small and Medium Places of Assembly: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-small-and-medium-places-of-assembly

For Scotland a document that may be of assistance is Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Places of Entertainment and Assembly: www.firesafetyfirst.co.uk/freedownloadpublications.html

C General Information about our Church

THE BUILDING:

Number of floors:

4 plus tower

Floor area (approximate overall size in square metres):

Nave = 700 square meters

(You will need to measure the building to calculate things like the number of fire extinguishers required and travel distances. See also 'Plan' below.)

Building description:

Grade 1 Listed
Sandstone exterior and interior
Main entrance and exit - south porch

Internal porch doors can be closed

(Describe what the building comprises noting if there is one main undivided area and then separate parts which can be closed off from the main area which could prevent the spread of a fire, e.g. The main undivided area of the church comprises a lofty nave and chancel with north and south aisles and organ chamber. There are north and south porches and a vestry all of which can be closed off from the main part of the church by substantial oak doors. There is a tower at the west end of the church which is completely separated from the rest of the church and can only be accessed from an external door.)

Basic construction details:

Sandstone with brick and/ or fill sandwiched between external and internal; very large windows; Floor -Sandstone suspended on a timber and brick frame over a tree foot void/ Lead roof over slate roof with void inbetween.

(For example, The church is built of stone/brick with a slate/tile roof on a timber frame. The floor is of solid construction covered with tiles.)

Use of the church:

There is the here are Four services each Sunday;
Parish Administrator in Office 5 days per week
Regular funerals (one per week on average)
Choir practices weekly
School use
Cleaner in once per week with volunteer cleaners and flower arrangers in at least once per week

Lunchtime Recitals

Note the use of the building and how often it is occupied, e.g. The church is used for services twice on a Sunday but otherwise the use is very limited. There is the occasional concert.

You should draw a plan of the church which can be used during the risk assessment process and then as a part of your fire safety arrangements documentation. This should be roughly to scale and should identify by name the main parts of the church and note all doors both internal, which separate different parts of the church, and external, which provide means of escape.

The plan can be used to note the location of fire extinguishers and other relevant information.

You can use a tape measure or rule to measure the building but an easy way is to pace along the outside walls and note down the distances. A good pace is about 1 metre.

There is a blank page at the back of this document for you to draw a plan of your church.

PEOPLE AT RISK:

Occupants:

Approximate average number attending a normal service:

60

Approximate maximum number attending special services and events such as weddings and at Christmas:

700

Approximate number of employees and/or volunteers in the church at any one time:

6

OCCUPANTS AT SPECIAL RISK FROM FIRE:

Give details of any persons with disabilities who attend the church who would need help in evacuating the building:

6 - in wheelchairs or with walking frames or sticks/crutches

Many with slow mobility

Give details of any children who attend the church and whether they occupy a different part of the building during services such as a Sunday School in the vestry:

A few children - vestry or office at times

Give details of the number of persons who occupy remote parts of the building and when:

Bell ringers rehearse on Thursday evenings and ringing on Sunday morning and at weddings
Parish Administrator, PCC Treasurer & Verger in the office
Church Wardens

(For example, do bell ringers practice when there is no-one else in the church. Does the organist practice alone or does someone undertake maintenance in an enclosed boiler room?)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Previous fire losses:

Detail any fires or related incidents that anyone can remember even if it did not result in an insurance claim:

None

Other relevant information:

Note any other information which could have a bearing on the risk of fire such as the nature of any nearby or adjoining premises or evidence of arson:

N/A

D Potential Fire Hazards at our Church

Where the answer is NO then some action may be required in order to ensure that your fire safety arrangements are satisfactory. This needs to be noted in the Action Plan at the end of the assessment. If the situation does not apply, enter N/A.

Electrical

Is the fixed electrical system inspected and tested by a competent person at least every five years?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, state the name of the competent person and the date of the last inspection

Princes 2020 / Renewal June 2025

Are all portable electrical appliances including those belonging to outside bodies annually tested? (PAT testing)

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, state the name of the tester and the date of the last test

MC Pat Testing July 2024

Are any electrical items that fail the testing removed immediately from the church?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Is the use of trailing leads and multi-point adaptors restricted as far as possible and subject to control?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Heating

If portable electric heaters including electric fan heaters, and radiant 'bar' type fires are used are they included in the PAT testing programme and are they kept away from combustible materials?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

(Remember to check areas that you would not normally visit such as the ringing chamber or clergy vestry.)

If portable LPG (liquid petroleum gas) heaters are used are they fixed away from combustible materials and are the arrangements for the storage and replacement of spare cylinders satisfactory?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

If heating appliances burning coal or other solid fuel, e.g. wood pellets, are used, are arrangements in place to ensure fire cannot spread accidentally?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Are gas boilers subject to an annual maintenance contract with an approved Gas Safe registered contractor?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

SMR Gas Maintenance Ltd November 2024

Are oil-fired boilers subject to an annual maintenance contract with an approved OFTEC contractor?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

Are oil tanks suitably bunded or double skinned and fitted with a safety cut-off valve?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Do you ensure that all heating appliances are kept clear of combustible materials?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Arson

Have you considered the risk of arson and malicious attacks?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Is the storage of combustible materials and flammables such as petrol for mowers kept to a minimum and in a secure place where the risk to people is minimised?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Have you removed or kept secure anything which could be used by an arsonist such as matches and candles?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Cooking

If you have a kitchen or servery in the church are measures in place to prevent fire as a result of cooking?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

If kitchen equipment includes filters or ductwork are they cleaned regularly?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

If YES, state how often

Are suitable fire extinguishers and a fire blanket located in the cooking area?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Lightning

If the church has a lightning conductor is it inspected by a competent, specialist Lightning Engineer at recommended intervals?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

TVR 1st March 2024

Combustible Materials

Has combustible material been removed from the church as far as possible?

Yes ☒ No ☐

(Examples of combustible material which can accumulate are hay and straw used in Christmas cribs, articles collected for jumble sales but never sold, waste paper collected for recycling and old Christmas trees.)

Are all exits and escape routes kept clear of combustible materials?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Contractors and Building Works

Are outside contractors subject to control when working in the church and are they required to use a 'hot work' permit system when necessary?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If volunteers undertake maintenance work in the church are suitable precautions taken such as the use of a 'hot work' permit system and the provision of suitable fire extinguishers close to the location of the work?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Are both contractors and volunteers aware of safety arrangements including provision of fire extinguishers and escape routes during building works?

Yes ☒ No ☐

E Our Fire Protection Arrangements

Means of Escape

Are there a suitable number of exits from the building?

Yes ☒ No ☐

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(As a guide, it should be possible to evacuate the building in less than 2.5 minutes although this time may be extended for low-risk buildings such as churches. Guidance also indicates that one exit is sufficient for up to 60 persons but if the building can accommodate more than 60 persons there should be more than one exit. It will not normally be possible to increase the number or width of doors in a church, but remember that doors not normally in use such as external doors to vestries may be used.)

Do the exit doors open in the direction of escape?

Yes ☐ No ☒

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(It is likely that all of the doors in the church are inward opening and impossible to change as they are an integral part of the historic fabric.)

Can exit doors be opened easily?

Yes ☒ No ☐

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Is the travel distance acceptable where there is only a single escape route?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Is the travel distance acceptable where there are alternative means of escape?

Yes ☒ No ☐

(The travel distance is the furthest a person would have to travel from a point within the church in order to reach an exit door. For areas with seating in rows, such as is found in the majority of churches, guidance suggests the following travel distances:

Where there is only a single escape route, the maximum distance is 15 metres for a normal fire risk area and 18 metres for a lower fire risk area;

Where there is more than one escape route, the maximum distance is 32 metres for a normal fire risk area and 45 metres for a lower fire risk area.

In the case of vestries that have their own external door, travel distances will normally fall within these guidelines.

The main body of the church may be regarded as a lower fire risk area and in most cases the travel distances should be within the guidelines.

However, you do need to measure travel distances in order to answer this question. Where they exceed the guidelines it will need to be addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.)

Are escape routes suitably protected from fire and kept clear of obstructions at all times?

Yes ☒ No ☐

(In practice, unlike many other buildings, traditional churches have very few corridors so the 'escape route' is effectively the whole of the building. The porch is the most likely area to pose a risk of obstruction during an evacuation and must be kept clear of obstructions and combustibles such as free-standing noticeboards and displays.)

Are the means of escape suitable for persons with disabilities?

Yes ☒ No ☐

(Compliance with Equality legislation probably means that access to the church and therefore also egress is suitable for wheelchair users. If not, it will need to be addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.)

Is an Emergency Escape Lighting System installed?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If NO, detail your means of providing light in the event of a main lighting failure, e.g. hand lamps, torches etc

though there are fire exit lights at the top of the staircases in the North and South porches

If YES, is it subject to regular testing?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

If YES, state the intervals of testing and the date of the last full annual maintenance inspection

Are Fire Exit signs displayed?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If NO, describe here the arrangements in place to direct people to exits

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Are Fire Safety Signs and Notices displayed?

Yes ☒ No ☐

*(Signs need to be displayed indicating the location of fire extinguishers and the types of fire for which they are suitable.
Fire Action Notices need to be displayed indicating what to do in the event of a fire.)*

F Our Fire Detection, Warning and Extinguisher Equipment

Is there a manually operated fire alarm such as a rotary gong or bell which is operated in the event of a fire?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

How often is it tested?

Is there an electric, manually operated fire alarm with 'break glass' or push glass panels to operate the alarm?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, is it subject to a maintenance contract?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last maintenance visit

ADT February 2025

Is there an automatic fire detection system and alarm which incorporates smoke detectors to activate the alarm in the event of a fire?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, is it subject to a maintenance contract?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last maintenance visit

ADT February 2025

If none of the above are provided, then describe here the arrangements for giving warning of a fire

N/A

Are suitable and sufficient portable fire extinguishers in place?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, are they subject to an annual maintenance contract?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection visit

Central Fire November 2024

(Guidance indicates that there should be one 9-litre water extinguisher for around each 200 square metres of floor space with a minimum of two per floor. Note - a 6-litre hydro-spray or AFFF (Aqueous Film-Forming-Foam) extinguisher will have the same fire extinguishing capacity as 9 litres of water and is only two-thirds the weight making it them much easier to lift and use.

In addition, 2 Kg Carbon Dioxide extinguishers should be provided to deal with fires involving electrical equipment. One certainly needs to be provided near the organ and one near the main electrical intake.

If there is a kitchen or servery, a 6-litre Wet Chemical or AFFF extinguisher should be provided together with a fire blanket to smother any clothing which may catch fire.

Note that Dry Powder extinguishers are not suitable for use in historic buildings as they can cause irreparable damage to the building and contents.)

G Our Fire Safety Management

General Arrangements

Is there a suitable Emergency Plan for the building?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(You are required to have an Emergency Plan and, for most churches, Fire Action Notices together with written procedures to be followed by Stewards for larger services and events will satisfy this requirement.)

Can the Fire Service be summoned easily?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(You should have either a landline or ensure that there is someone with a mobile telephone in the church when it is occupied. In rural areas it may be necessary to check whether a signal is available, as often a signal cannot be obtained inside the building.)

Are persons nominated to assist in case of fire?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Is there a procedure to give persons with disabilities appropriate assistance in evacuating the building?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Training and Evacuation Drills

Are regular periodic evacuation drills carried out?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(Even if your normal congregation is small you should carry out a practice to ensure that everyone can leave the building safely in the required time of less than 2.5 minutes. This can easily be done at the end of a normal service and should be undertaken say annually.

An evacuation drill also needs to be carried out for those times when the church is full, say at weddings or at Christmas. On these occasions there may be people there who are not familiar with the building. You can simulate these situations by asking for the cooperation of the local school for example and use pupils to represent the maximum number who may be in the church. Having undertaken this exercise it does not necessarily need to be repeated every year.)

Is there fire safety training for persons nominated to assist in case of fire?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Record Keeping

Are records kept for tests of the emergency lighting system in a log book or similar document?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Are records kept for tests of the fire alarm system in a log book or similar document?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are records kept of evacuation drills in a log book or similar document?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are records kept of fire safety training in a log book or similar document?

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

Once you have gathered all the information in Part 1 you can then complete the actual Fire Risk Assessment below.

Our Fire Risk Assessment

Having completed our fact finding we now feel confident that we are fully aware of the fire hazards present in our church and the risks to people using the building. We have noted the precautions that we already have in place and where we have noted any deficiencies these will be rectified as soon as practicable. These matters are set out in **Part 4 Our Action Plan. Part 3 Our Arrangements for Fire Safety on our Church** sets out how we will deal with fulfilling our obligations.

Our assessment of the fire risk has been based on the following factors (see Appendix 1 for some example descriptions):

Occupation – How your building is used by people.

Large numbers of people present only when trained volunteer staff are also present

Church service, baptisms, weddings, funerals, concerts, reading groups, schools attending for special services

Fire Detection – Information about any fire detection systems you have in place.

Fire alarms, smoke alarms

Escape – In the event of an emergency, how people will exit your church.

Evacuation - 3 exit points

The main body of the church is one large open area with no corridors and therefore little risk of congestion, in the event of a fire during services evacuation instructions will be given lessening this risk further. The Principle means of exit are clearly visible and the main exit open.

Other areas: ie Office, Vestry, Upper Vestry, Ringing Chamber are only occupied by a small number of people who know the building well, any visitors in these areas are always accompanied by Church staff, Clergy or volunteer.

Evacuation The nave has a very high ceiling providing a large area where smoke can be contained thus increasing the potential time to allow for evacuation.

Fire Load – How easily the structure of your building could ignite and flames could spread in a fire.

The Fire load of the main body of the church is low risk and comprises the fixtures and fittings including wooden pews and a small amount of fabric hanging banners, Altar Dressings and Pew cushions and hassocks.

Likelihood – In your experience what is the possibility of a fire at your church taking into account the history of the building and existing precautions.

We have considered the possibility of a fire actually happening based on our experience at our church and find that the risk is low risk - no incidents recorded.

However this risk increases to moderate during 2 services on Christmas Eve when the congregation have votive candles in drip shields that are lit only for the duration of the Carol - Away in a manger. On this occasion there are six extra sidespeople facing the congregation who 'man' a fire bucket filled with cold water and armed with a damp cloth to extinguish any clothing or hair fires or any candles being used inappropriately.

Overall Fire Risk Assessment

Based on the factors set out in the Fire Risk Assessment above, the overall Fire Risk Assessment is as follows:

1. Potential consequences of fire:

Please tick one:



Slight harm: Outbreak of fire is unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant.



Moderate harm: Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.



Extreme harm: Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.

2. Likelihood of fire:

Please tick one:



Low: Unusually low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.



Medium: Normal fire hazards (e.g. potential ignition sources) for this type of occupancy, with fire hazards generally subject to appropriate controls (other than minor shortcomings).



High: Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards, such as to result in significant increase in the likelihood of fire.

Table

Based on the answers above you can now map the amount of risk in the table below.

Potential consequences of fire	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Likelihood of fire			
Low	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Medium	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
High	Moderate risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

The overall assessment of the fire risk at our church and the risk to persons, based on the table above and the answers in 1 and 2, is:

Having considered all the above and based on details completed in this report we have determined that our fire risk is 'Tolerable'

Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety in our Church

This section details the arrangements for fire safety in our church. For some examples of content for this section please see Appendix 2.

Our Arrangements for Fire Safety Management

Emergency Lighting

There is an emergency/fire exit light above each of the Gallery Exits

Torches for emergency use are kept in:

- The Bell Ringing Chamber
- The Vestry
- The Office

During Large Services Sidespeople/welcomers have Torches and wear hi vis waistcoats

Manual Fire Alarm

N/A

Automatic Fire Detection System

We have a professionally installed and maintained (by ADT) Fire Detection System

Exit Doors

We have decided that under normal circumstances, when the number of people in church is moderately low, we do not need to change the direction in which which doors open (our main door is open whenever the church is open and the internal doors that lead to it open in the correct, outward direction and is clearly marked 'EXIT').

Most occupants are familiar with the location and way in which the door open.

Sidespeople will be on hand to assist those persons with limited mobility.

Major Services and Events

We do put extra precautions in place during large services and events when there will be a larger number of people present and a number of people less familiar with the building. These include:

- 1 The Churchwardens or Worship Assistants will ensure that all the fire exits are open and the way is clear and that all the signage is in place, in accordance with the Health and Safety Regulations 1996
- 2 The Stewards will each be allocated a specific area of the church and will help/direct people, form their allocated area, to the exit and on to the assembly point. Each steward will be allocated a torch and hi-vis jacket/waistcoat worn.
- 3 People with disabilities and those who use wheelchairs or walking aids will be directed to leave through the main door which has ramp access/egress these people will be helped where necessary by an allocated steward.
- 4 An announcement will be made, at the beginning of the Service/Event, by the Person leading that service/event outlining the evacuation procedure
- 5 The Assembly Point is outside the Rectory

Stewards and Training

A list is kept of all those who help man the church and who have had some fire training so that they can be used efficiently both during normal services and during special services/events.

These people have been instructed in/how to:

- 1 Raise the Alarm, using break Glass to activate the fire alarm or by shouting 'Fire! Fire!
- 2 Location of Fire Extinguishers & Buckets
- 3 Location of Torches
- 4 How to evacuate the church
- 5 How to help with the evacuation of those with mobility issues
- 6 The location of the Assembly Point

Record Keeping

Dates (and certificates where appropriate) of Fire Extinguisher inspections and maintenance, Boiler safety checks and maintenance visits, Fixed Electrical system inspections and tests, Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), Lightning Conductor inspection and tests, and evacuation drills are all recorded in the Church Log Book.

Bell Ringers (where applicable)

Due to the various differing risk factors applicable to Tower areas, this section should be completed following discussions with the Tower Captain. The agreed controls should be inserted in this section.

Following discussions with the Tower Captain the following has been decided:

In the event of a Fire, where safe to do so the ringers will exit the ringing chamber via one of 3 routes:

- 1 if it is safe to do so - leave the ringing chamber via the stone tower staircase into the North porch and out of the building via the North Porch fire exit
- 2 if the North porch is compromised - leave via the stone tower staircase as far as and into the upper vestry then down the South Gallery staircase into the south porch exiting through the main exit NB If the lower part of the stone tower stair case is compromised but the North Porch is safe then the route to the upper vestry could be followed and the North Gallery staircase could be used, exiting via the North porch fire exit.
- 3 if it is not safe to use the stone tower staircase at all - leave the ringing chamber via the wooden steps to the roof door - exit onto the roof and to the south-west corner (This is the place the Fire Fighters can access the roof with their equipment) If the south-west corner is compromised the go to the point furthest from the fire, and await rescue.

Part 4 – Our Action Plan to Reduce Fire Risk at Our Church

Action Plan

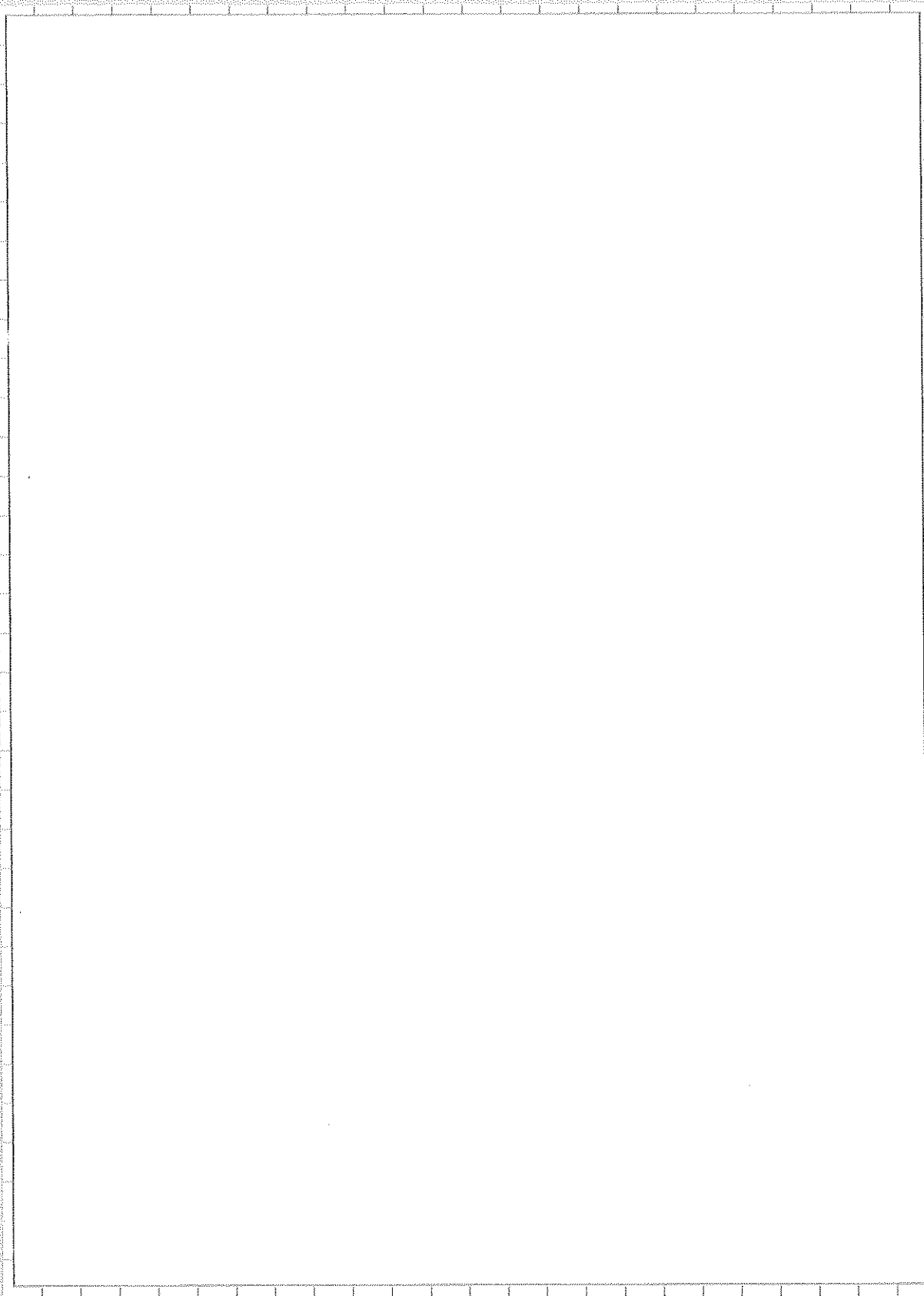
Schedule of actions to be taken as a result of our fact-finding exercise in order to maintain our risk as low and to meet our Fire Safety Management Plan.

Our church guidance notes can be found at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters

Action to be taken	Target completion date	Person responsible

Plan of the church

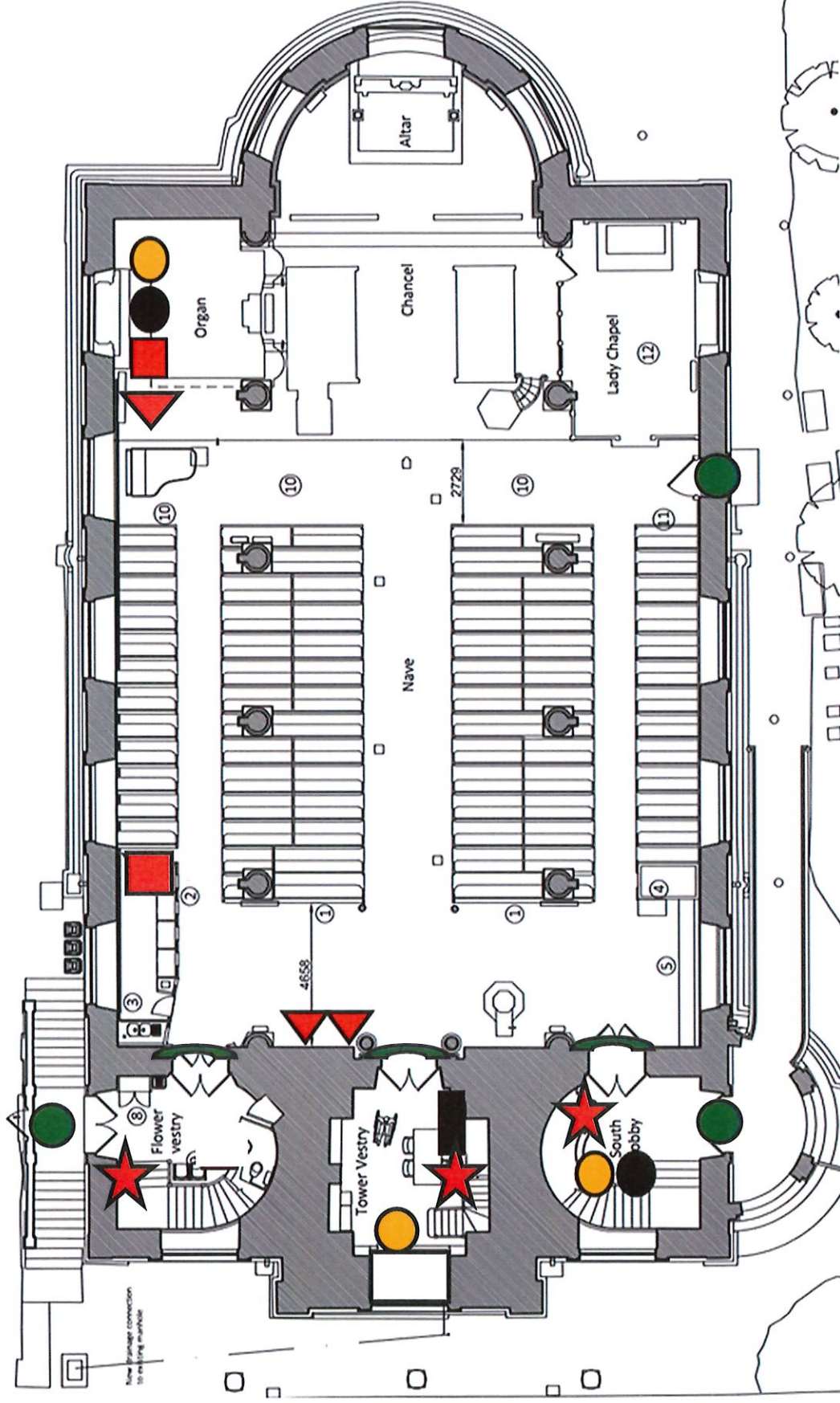
Please use this page to draw a plan of your church that identifies your evacuation arrangements.










Additional Notes

Fire Safety plan

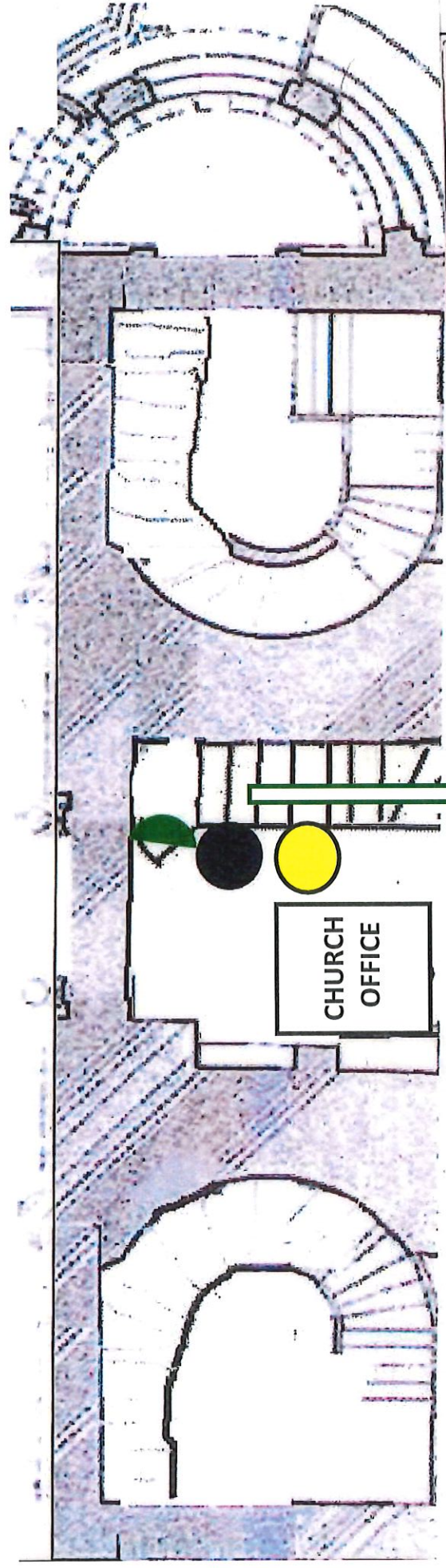
St Alkmund's Church—Ground Floor



KEY			Fire Extinguisher CO ₂
	Fire Blanket		Fire Extinguisher—Foam
	Alarm Panel		Break Glass Panel
	Fire Exit		Fire Bucket—Sand
	Fire Exit		Doors en-route to Fire Exit

Fire Safety plan

St Alkmund's Church—First Floor—Church Office

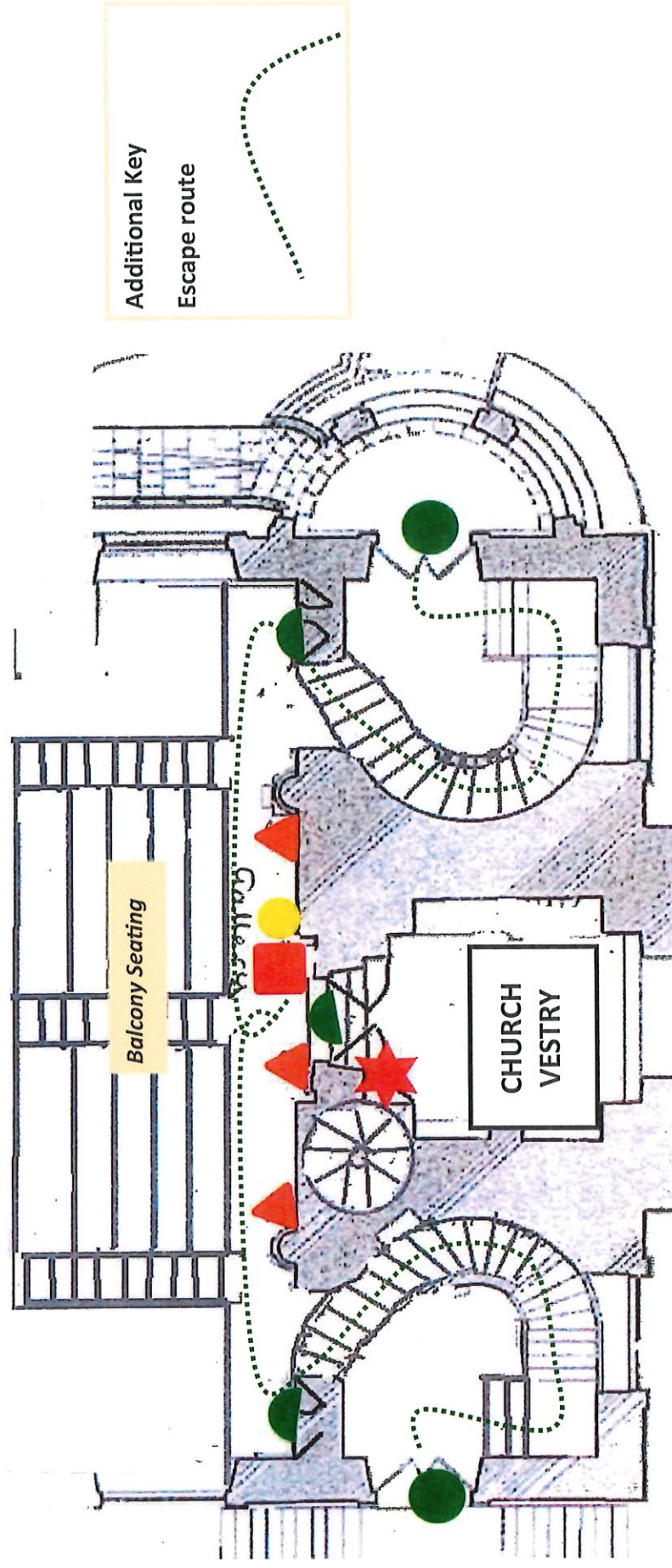


Stairs lead down to Vestry

NB No other exit

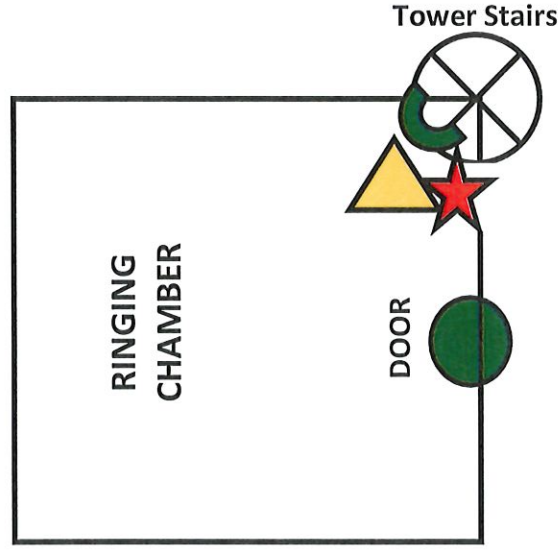
Fire Safety plan

St Alkmund's Church—Second Floor— Choir vestry & Balcony



Fire Safety plan

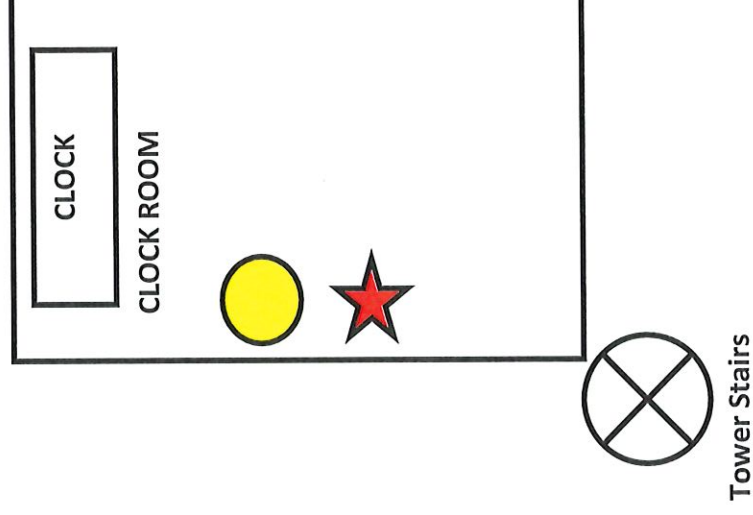
St Alkmund's Church—Third Floor— Ringing Chamber



NB The Tower Stairs Exit into the Choir Vestry & North Porch
If these routes are unavailable the exit on to Nave Roof necessitates Fire Rescue

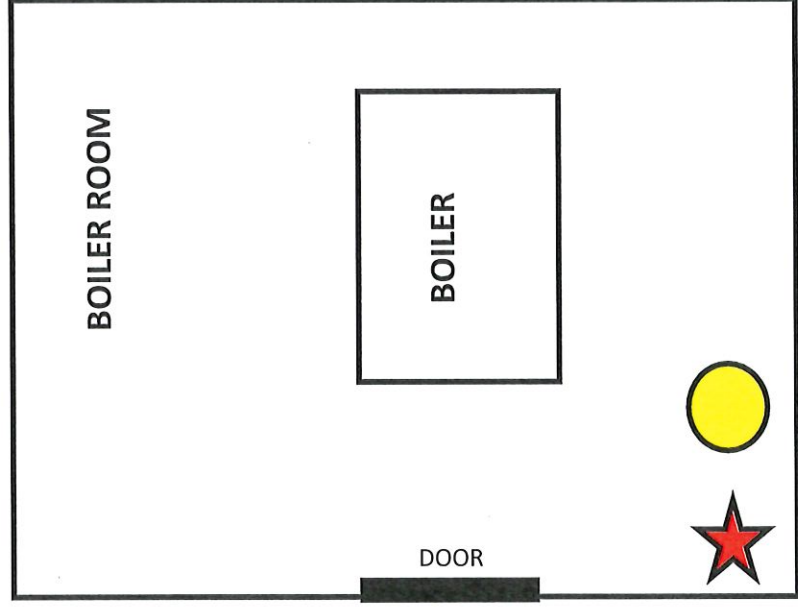
Fire Safety plan

St Alkmund's Church—Clock Room



Fire Safety plan

St Alkmund's Church—Boiler Room



Fire Safety plan

Bargates Church Hall



Event Room



Kitchen

Store



Back Hall



Meeting Room

Fire Extinguishers

Smoke Alarm

Co2 Fire Extinguisher

Fire Blanket



Foam Fire Extinguisher

Control Panel

Alarm—Break Glass

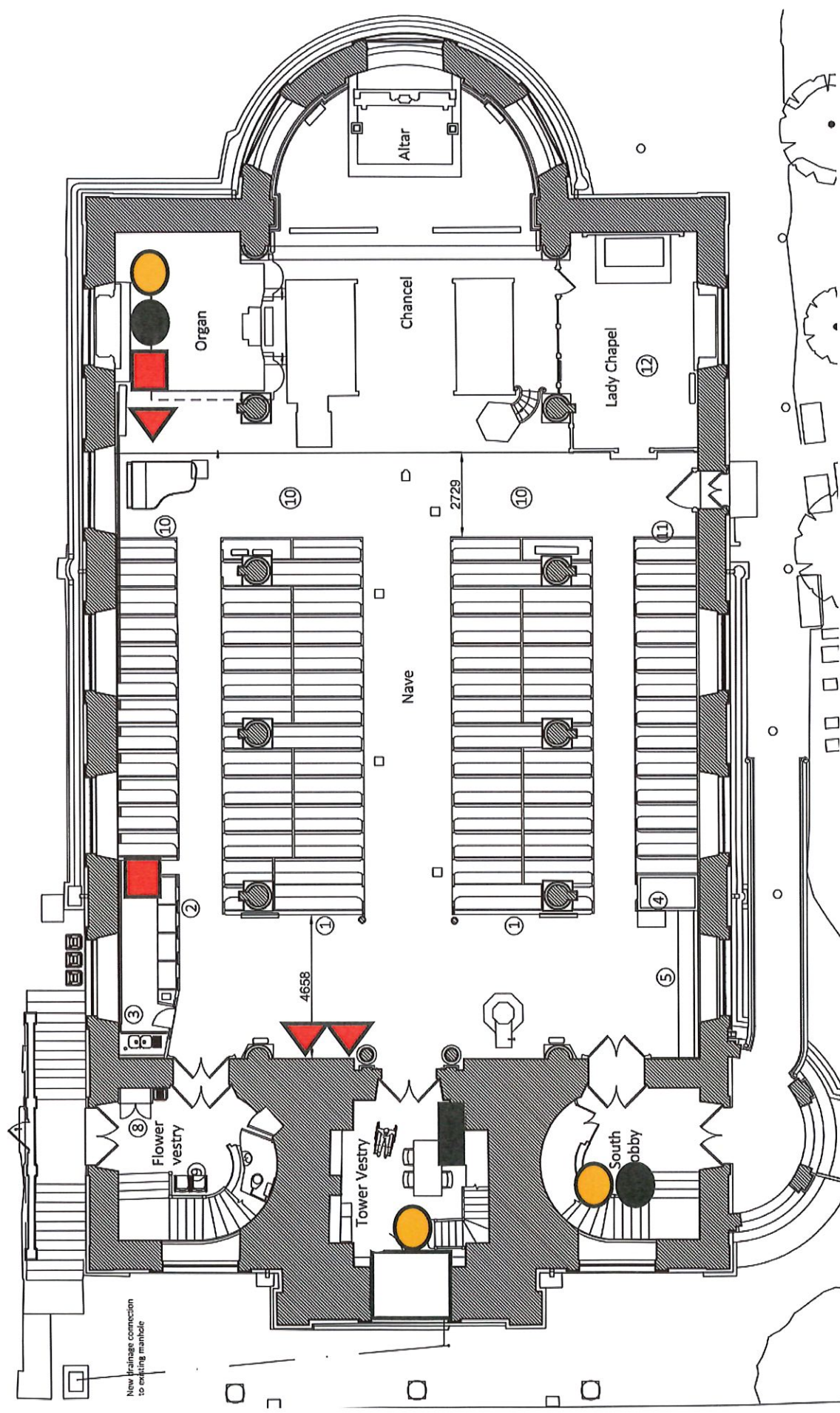
Water Fire Extinguisher

Keys to Fire Exit






Entrance Hall



FIRE EXTINGUISHER POINTS Ground Floor



KEY

-  Fire Bucket—Sand
-  Fire Blanket
-  CO2 Fire Extinguisher
-  Foam Fire Extinguisher
-  Alarm Panel

TRAINED FIRE WARDENS
(as of February 2025)

Kveta Karami

Wendy Darter

Elizabeth Walsh

Malcom Monie

Pauline Stokes

John Stokes

Linda Martin

Alison Dunne

Hazel Roberts

Sheila Chase

Celia Churchill

Appendix 1

Example descriptions for Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

When writing your Fire Risk Assessment you may find the following example wordings of assistance in describing the circumstance at your church.

Occupation

1. 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.
2. Our normal congregation is relatively small and know the building well, and could easily evacuate the building in the event of fire.
3. 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.
4. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises and there are no hazardous activities.

Fire Detection

1. 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

1. The main body of the church is one large open area with no corridors or risk of congestion and the doors providing the principal means of escape to the open are clearly visible.
2. Areas such as vestries which are separated from the main body of the church are only occupied by a small number of people who know the building well.
3. 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. There are virtually no combustible linings that would aid the risk of fire spread.

Appendix 2

Example descriptions for Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety in our Church

When writing your fire safety arrangements the following examples may assist you to describe the circumstances at your church.

Likelihood

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

Emergency Lighting

We do not consider there is a need for a permanent emergency lighting system. Rechargeable torches are always available for use by stewards to assist in the evacuation of the church.

Manual Fire Alarm

In view of the nature of the building and its use as detailed above 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 persons to a place of safety.

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.

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. Where a door is not visible from the main body of the church such as an external door from a vestry the appropriate sign will be displayed showing the route to the door.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Every steward will be given a torch. These will be kept recharged and ready for use.
7. At the start of the service or event an announcement will be made setting out the arrangements for evacuation.
8. A senior person will be nominated to make the announcement to evacuate if required and to follow the directions of the stewards.
9. Prior to the announcement each steward will ensure that doors are open and held back.
10. 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. Stewards

For normal services churchwardens 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
- Location and use of rechargeable torches
- 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 they should be located

Record Keeping

A Log Book will be maintained noting the following:

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

Appendix 3

Fire Action Notice

The Fire Action Notice represents our Emergency Plan. Copies should be located near all exit doors and in all separate areas such as vestries.

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
- Call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999

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 Rectory

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

Next steps

Once you have completed this checklist and taken any steps needed to mitigate any risks please make sure that a copy is kept in an accessible location. Please remember you should regularly review your Fire Risk Assessment. We recommend that you include fire safety as a regular item in the agenda for your PCC meetings

Need to contact us?

For further information call us on **0345 777 3322** (Monday to Friday 8am-6pm excluding bank holidays) we may monitor or record calls to improve our service.

You can email us at churches@ecclesiastical.com Or visit www.ecclesiastical.com/church

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