Review Date	13 May 2026 09/26-27f
Next Review	May 2027

Holmesfield Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

Introduction

Employees will be required to work by themselves in the Village Hall, when opening and locking for hirers, cleaning and carrying out general and administrative duties.

Typical risk factors include having an accident, drunken or threatening behaviour, or coming across attempted criminal activity, such as a burglary.

Holmesfield Parish Council

- To ensure that all employees are aware of this policy.
- To provide resources for putting the policy into practice.
- To ensure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly, putting procedures and safe systems into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.

Employees

- To take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- To co-operate by following risk assessments designed for safe working.
- To report all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others.
- To take part in any training designed to meet the requirements of this policy,
- To report any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

Risk Assessment

A Risk Assessment accompanies this poilcy– Appendix 1

Guide to dealing with abusive & threatening behaviour accompanies this poilcy- Appendix 2

Incident reporting

An incident can be defined as an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury, ill health or damage. All incidents must be reported to the designated point of contact eg the Parish Clerk. Employees should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe (even if this is not a tangible event/experience) are reported. This includes incidents of verbal abuse. Employees should dial 999 if they need emergency assistance.

LONE WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT – Appendix 1 to Policy for Lone Working

HAZARD	RISK	ACTION TO MINIMISE	NEW RISK
Unauthorised people entering the building	High	Keep doors locked whenever possible when you are in the building on your own	Low
People already in the building	High	Building to be checked before leaving to ensure no one locked in	Low
Fire doors not locked	Medium	Ensure all doors are checked before leaving the building	Low
Someone being threatening or abusive	High	Staff to receive advice on dealing with difficult situations – Appendix 2 to Policy for lone working	Medium
Locking up at night	High	Where possible ask members of the last group to wait for you to lock up,	Low /Medium
Accident or fall	High	Take care which tasks are done when building is closed Spread tasks through the day so there isn't a rush at the end of the day	Medium
Working in Meeting Room prior to Meeting	Medium	Keep front door locked until half hour to the meeting	Low

Dealing with abusive and threatening behaviour – Appendix 2 to Lone Working Policy

Stay Calm and Professional

The first step in managing a difficult situation is to remain calm. It's natural to feel upset or angry when faced with abuse, but responding in kind can escalate the situation. Take a deep breath and maintain a professional demeanour.

Listen Actively

Often, people become abusive out of frustration or because they feel unheard. Allow the person to express their concerns fully before you respond. Listening can sometimes defuse the situation, showing you are taking them seriously.

Set Boundaries

It's important to set boundaries clearly and assertively. If a person becomes abusive, calmly explain that you are willing to help, but only if the conversation remains

respectful. Phrases like, "I understand you're upset, but I need us to communicate respectfully to resolve this," can be effective.

Use De-escalation Techniques
De-escalation techniques are crucial in these scenarios. These can include:

- **Empathising**: Acknowledge the person's feelings without agreeing with their conduct. E.g., "I can see why that would be frustrating for you."
- **Offering Solutions**: Shift the focus from the problem to the solutions. Ask how they would like the issue resolved and suggest alternatives if appropriate.

Know When to Walk Away
There will be situations where resolution isn't possible. If a person continues to be abusive despite your best efforts, it may be necessary to end the interaction. This could mean dialling 999.

Follow Up
Let your designated point of contact eg the Parish Clerk know that there has been an incident