



# St Hugh of Lincoln Church

## Health and Safety

### Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church

Extract from the Diocesan Parish Administration Manual

Section 13 – Health & Safety Policy : [www.nwconsultancy.co.uk/dabnet.htm](http://www.nwconsultancy.co.uk/dabnet.htm)

“What we are aiming for in the Diocese, is to provide and maintain an environment which allows people to be involved in God’s work and celebrate their beliefs without being harmed.”

The Parish Health & Safety Risk Assessment has identified a need to have an Emergency Evacuation Plan for the Church identifying the methodology to be adopted and the key personnel involved.

### Risks

An evacuation of the Church may need to be implemented in the event of:-

- A fire in the building
- A power failure
- A serious health incident / death during a service
- Failure of part of the building structure / finishes (ceiling tiles/lights etc)
- Other events which cause major disruption to the service or put the health & safety of the celebrant and/or congregation at risk

### Overview

- Details of the plan will be circulated to all those who have an active role in the plan
- The celebrant / Mass Co-ordinator will announce the evacuation
- The Lead Marshal will ensure the appropriate emergency service(s) have been summoned. (999 Call)
- The Marshals will leave the church with their evacuation packs to monitor and supervise the evacuation – they may ask for help in key areas from other able bodied and aware adults, (i.e. Welcomers, other recipients of the Evacuation Plan)
- If necessary, (09.30 Mass), the celebrant will advise the Children’s Liturgy group in the Hall that the church has been evacuated, advising them to adopt their evacuation plan, and he will then proceed to the Presbytery
- One marshal will assist the congregation to cross the road, acting as the ‘Road Marshal’
- Another marshal should position themselves at the church exit nearest the altar to monitor exit progress from both side doors and visually check the body of the church for remaining personnel once the last person leaves – the ‘Door Marshal’

## Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church – continued

- The ‘Lead Marshal’ will establish a Command Post in the Church forecourt, next to Victoria Road, giving supplementary instructions using the megaphone
- At the 09.30 Sunday Mass, any children in the Hall will be evacuated in small groups, to the hammer-head in Lauriston Close where they will be held until collected by parents/guardians Elderly / dependent parishioners who have to wait for lifts to be taken to safety in the Presbytery
- Once the last of the congregation has left the church, the ‘Lead Marshal’ will arrange to check that the church is clear including, if possible, the Sacristies and the toilet
- All marshals will act under the Lead Marshal’s instructions to prevent people re-entering the church properties, clear the cars parked in front of the church, when safe to do so, and remain on hand to offer help and advice to the emergency services

### Evacuation Packs

An Evacuation Pack for the Lead Marshal, (potentially the Mass Co-ordinator), and 3 for other Marshals, (potentially Welcomers or nominated assistants), will be held in the Sacristy. These should be collected on arrival at church, together with a 2 way radio set, and the Mass Co-ordinator must ensure that all packs have been allocated before the service begins. Each pack will contain a High Visibility waistcoat, a torch, flash cards detailing the responsibilities for that person, a 2 way radio and, for the Mass Co-ordinator, sample announcements and a checklist.

For maximum benefit, it would be helpful if each Marshal/pack holder could position themselves near one of the exit doors for the service so that each door can be opened quickly enabling the marshals to be in position as early as possible.

### Distribution

Copies of this document have been distributed to the personnel listed below. When this document is updated, revised copies must be circulated to all those on the distribution list.

Full Plan: Parish Priest, Members of the PFC, Members of the PPC, Mark McGlinchey, Mick Bullen, Mass Co-ordinators, Sacristans, Parish Health & Safety Manual, Children’s Liturgy Organiser

Evacuation Details: Welcomers, Special Ministers, Children’s Liturgy helpers, other nominated helpers (*names to be added as nominated by Mass Co-ordinators*)

Congregation Summary: All parishioners, parish web site

Flash Cards: Laminated copy in the appropriate ‘Evacuation Bag’ plus one spare copy in the Sacristy

Church Notices: Encapsulated maps and summary near each exit



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### **Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church**

#### **Assumptions**

It is assumed that in the preparation stage for any service, the Welcomers, Mass Co-ordinator or Sacristans have undertaken a visual inspection of the church to identify potential hazards and have checked the exit doors to ensure that they are unobstructed and free to open. (See Welcomers H&S Checklist)

It is assumed that the Lead Marshall will locate a member of the congregation who has a mobile phone and get them to summon the Emergency Services.

It is assumed that the Mass Co-ordinator has allocated Marshal duties to capable nominees for each weekend mass and that they have collected evacuation packs as they enter the church – he/she may be one of the Marshals. At the 09.30 mass, the Children’s Liturgy Leader must also collect a pack

#### **Personnel Involved**

Celebrant (1), Mass Co-ordinator (1), Welcomers (2), Sacristans (1-2), Congregation, (up to 200 with a wide age span from babies through to centenarians and potentially persons with mobility, hearing and other impairments)

#### **Raising the Alarm and Declaring an Evacuation**

The church can be effectively monitored by the Celebrant looking out, into the body of the church from the Sanctuary and by the Mass Co-ordinator facing the Altar. Whilst an ‘alarm’ would normally be raised by either the Celebrant or the Mass Co-ordinator, any other member of the congregation may signal an alarm. In view of the open but compact area of the church, this would be done by voice – there are no automatic alarm systems in the church.

- During a service, the celebrant, as the senior official in the church, has the final responsibility for suspending the service and declaring that the church is to be evacuated
- Immediately before or after a service, an evacuation could be triggered by either the Mass Co-ordinator or the duty Sacristan
- Where possible, the person announcing the evacuation should use the church PA system so that the message is transmitted using the hearing aid loop

## Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church – continued

### The Celebrant

The Celebrant will trigger the evacuation with an announcement which should be short, addressed clearly and be relevant to the cause of the evacuation.

- i.e. Because of *{the smoke coming from the organ}*, we will evacuate the church. Please walk calmly to your **nearest** exit helping anyone near you who may need assistance. There are 2 doors at the back and one at the front here, (*pointing to the doors*). Listen for further instructions as you leave. The service is cancelled – please make your way home as quickly as is safely possible
- The Celebrant will then leave the church by the nearest safe exit
- If the children are still in the Hall at the 09.30 Sunday Mass, the Celebrant will go to the Hall to advise the catechists that the church has been evacuated, giving details of the reason and safe escape routes, asking them to adopt their escape plan; (see Children’s Liturgy Escape Plan later in this document)
- The Celebrant will then leave the Hall and return to the Presbytery taking elderly and dependent parishioners who are awaiting lifts into the dining area for warmth, safety and care
- Check the condition of these parishioners in the Presbytery, identifying any in need of First Aid or special care
- If First Aid is required, send a message to the Lead Marshal that assistance is required - First Aid kits are kept in the office, the Sacristy and the Hall



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#### **Sacristan's Duties**

The sacristan's duties include :

- Collecting the Sacristy first aid kit at the start of the service and keeping it with them throughout
- When an evacuation is announced, exit the church via the double doors WITH the first aid kit
- From the bottom of the steps, monitor the evacuation of people leaving through the double doors, encouraging people to stay calm and walk carefully
- When the last people have left the church, report to the Lead Marshal with the first aid kit and church master key to allow access to the Sacristies
- Remain with the Lead Marshal to offer any further assistance required

## Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church – continued

### The Lead Marshal

The Lead Marshal may be the Mass Co-ordinator but they can ask another informed person to accept this responsibility if they are not comfortable with the duty.

During Mass, the Lead Marshal should sit at the rear of the church so that they can exit the church quickly in the event of an evacuation. If it is not safe to exit through the rear doors, the Lead Marshal should leave the church from the nearest exit as quickly as possible to take command of the evacuation.

In the event of an evacuation, the Lead Marshal's duties are as follows:

- If the exit is safe to use, leave the church through the main exit, opening both flaps of both doors – otherwise use the nearest safe exit
- Locate a member of the congregation who has a mobile phone and ask them to summon the appropriate Emergency Services with a 999 call. Use the megaphone to find someone with a phone – ensure the megaphone volume is set to maximum
- Establish a 'Command Post' in the forecourt near the fence by Victoria Road where both side exits and the main exit can be kept in view
- Switch on 2 Way Radio and put on the Hi-Visibility Waistcoat
- Use the megaphone in the evacuation pack to make appropriate announcements
- A torch is included for use if needed
- Assess the risk to the Hall, Presbytery and neighbouring properties sending runners to raise the alarm in these properties if necessary
- Take reports from other marshals and instigate appropriate action
- Ensure cars parked on the forecourt aren't moved until the forecourt is clear of pedestrians, then direct their evacuation as speedily and safely as possible with the help of the other marshals
- If the cars on the forecourt are parked in a position which is exposed to danger, ensure that their drivers do not put themselves at risk trying to move them – cars can be repaired faster than people
- Once the church is evacuated, assess the risks and ONLY if safe and accessible, visually check that the body of the church, sacristies and toilet are clear
- Encourage parishioners to leave the premises and go home. Prevent any 'sightseers' from entering the grounds or obstructing access
- Move Marshals, runners and other helpers to the pavement between the 2 forecourt gateways to await the arrival of the emergency services
- If necessary, allocate one or more Marshals to assist cars leaving the car park – encourage drivers to turn left from the car park leaving the Knaphill end of Victoria Road clear for the emergency services
- On arrival of the Emergency Services, report known facts to the senior person and await their further instructions



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- Keep watch for people driving to the church to collect parishioners and advise them that their charges are safe in the Presbytery, asking them to keep clear of the church entrances
- Take the first opportunity after the buildings are cleared to meet the Parish Priest / Celebrant to agree additional actions required
  - Securing the buildings
  - Security of the hosts and communion vessels
  - Security of any money
  - Actions dictated by the nature of the emergency
- If the situation is likely to be protracted, agree a plan to ensure the Parish Priest / Celebrant has appropriate support
- When dismissed by the Emergency Services, or when appropriate according to the emergency, collect the Evacuation Packs and then disperse the Marshals and other helpers with thanks for their assistance
- Return the Evacuation Packs to the church, (if safe), or lodge them in the Presbytery

These bullet points provide a framework for action. The actual response from the Lead Marshal will be dictated by the events leading up to the evacuation and the cause and nature of the incident. *Common sense **must** prevail with the Marshal keeping his/her own safety at the forefront of all action which is taken.*

## Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church – continued

### The Door Marshal

During Mass, the Door Marshal should sit near the front, side door of the church so that they can exit the church quickly in the event of an evacuation. The door is opened with a firm press on the green latch pad using the palm of the hand. If it is not safe to exit through the front side door, the Door Marshal should leave the church from the nearest exit as quickly as possible, monitoring the evacuation and offering assistance where necessary.

In the event of an evacuation, the Door Marshal's duties are as follows:

- If the exit is safe to use, leave the church through the front side exit, otherwise use the nearest safe exit
- Take a position between the two side doors and monitor people's progress through this door and these exits. If any exit is not available for use, advise the Lead Marshal and take position at the next usable exit. Position yourself so that you do not obstruct the flow of people away from the church
- Switch on your 2 Way Radio and put on the Hi-Visibility Waistcoat
- Immediately alert the Lead Marshal of any incidents which require additional assistance
- Encourage people to move briskly but not to rush
- Encourage people to keep moving towards the far side of Victoria Road
- Encourage people not to push
- Encourage able people to assist those who appear frail or distressed
- At the 09.30 mass, do NOT allow parents to go to the Hall to collect their children. They have their own evacuation plan and will be re-united on the far side of Victoria Road
- Do NOT allow anyone to re-enter the church
- Watch for people tripping and/or trip hazards, i.e. parents with push chairs etc. Arrange support and assistance for those who need it
- Once the exit flow stops, and only if it is safe to do so, look into the body of the church from the door, (do NOT enter the church), and check that everyone has left
- Report to the Lead Marshal, alerting them if anyone is left in the church and appears to need assistance or confirming that the body of the church is empty
- Remain with the Lead Marshal to provide any other assistance required and follow their instructions



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#### The Road Marshal

During Mass, the Road Marshal should sit near the rear, side door of the church so that they can exit the church quickly in the event of an evacuation. If it is not safe to exit through the rear side door, the Road Marshal should leave the church from the nearest exit as quickly as possible, monitoring people crossing the road and offering or summoning assistance where necessary.

In the event of an evacuation, the Road Marshal's duties are as follows:

- If the exit is safe to use, leave the church through the rear side exit, otherwise use the nearest safe exit. The rear side exit is opened by pushing the grey bar towards the door. Once the door opens, turn right and open the lobby exit door in the same way
- Take a position in the forecourt entrance from Victoria Road and monitor people's progress crossing the road. Position yourself so that you do not obstruct the flow of people away from the church
- Turn on and monitor the 2 Way Radio, responding to any calls as appropriate. Use the radio, keep the Lead Marshal up to date with any issues you experience
- Put on the Hi-Visibility jacket
- Encourage the congregation to make their way home and not to stand by the road. Ask a member of the congregation to stand in the car park entrance to stop vehicles leaving until all pedestrians have crossed the road
- Alert the Lead Marshal of any incidents which need additional assistance
- Encourage people to move briskly but not to rush to the far side of Victoria Road and to give way to on-coming traffic
- It is NOT the duty of the Road Marshal to step into the road to stop the traffic
- Encourage people not to push and to assist those who appear frail or distressed. Watch for people tripping and/or trip hazards, i.e. parents with push chairs etc. Arrange support and assistance for those who need it
- Do NOT allow anyone to re-enter the church grounds
- Remain at your position near the gateway into the forecourt, preventing cars from pulling in and assisting the Lead Marshal with the evacuation of cars from the forecourt
- Advise people arriving to collect parishioners from mass that they are in the Presbytery, asking them to park in Lauriston Close and walk back to collect their passengers
- Once the grounds are clear of cars and pedestrians, wait for further instructions from the Lead Marshal and follow their instructions

## Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church – continued

### The Children's Liturgy Marshal

This position is only activated whilst the children are in the Hall for their Liturgy or other special services where minors leave the main church building. The Children's Liturgy Marshal should collect their evacuation pack from the Sacristy and place it in the Hall during their preparations before mass starts. Please return the pack to the Sacristy when the children return to the church.

In the event of an evacuation from the church, the Celebrant, (or his nominee), will tell you what is happening and advise you on the safest escape route. The Marshall should turn on the radio and put on the Hi-Visibility waistcoat at this stage.

There are four (4) doors available for you to use to exit the Hall and two (2) routes to get to the reunion point on the far side of Victoria Road.

In the small Hall, there is a normal door near the kitchen, (exit 1), and a fire exit with a push bar latch, (exit 2).

In the large Hall, there is a double door near the toilets fitted with a push bar latch, (exit 3), and a double door near the stage with a push bar, (exit 4).

Whilst the primary escape route is the path between the Hall and the Church which can be accessed from any of the doors, the preferred exit with young people is the Lauriston Close route.

The Lauriston Close route requires you to leave from either exit 1 or 2 in the small Hall and walk around the back of the Hall. There is an opening in the hedge which allows access into Lauriston Close. Walk straight ahead into the Close and collect the children in a group at the far end of the 'hammer-head', furthest from the Hall. The children should be kept in a cluster at this point until collected by their parents.

- Using this meeting point removes the need for Catechists to shepherd a group of children across a busy road and is the primary change in Version 3 of the Evacuation Plan.

In the event of an evacuation from the church, the Marshal's duties are as follows:-

- Keep calm and avoid creating any panic which will distress the children
- If there is a smoke hazard, assign a helper to close all the doors
- Call the children to order and explain to them that everyone is leaving the church so you will be taking them in groups to their parents who will collect them
- You should plan to exit to Lauriston Close unless this is exposed to danger, so tell the children that you are going to be leaving the Hall by a different route and ask them to listen carefully and do what they are told
- Pair up helpers and assign a group of children to each pair. Ensure that each pair of helpers knows how many children they have in their group
- Number each group and ask the Group 1 helpers to take their children to the rendezvous point at the far end of the 'hammer-head' in Lauriston Close. Report the despatch of each group to the Lead Marshall



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- Closely despatch groups in turn until the Hall is empty – check toilets and the body of both Halls and then tell the Lead Marshal by radio that the Hall is clear
- The Marshal should act as ‘Tail End Sweeper’, ensuring that steady but prompt progress is made in moving the children away from the Hall to reunite them with their parents – Remember that parents anxiety levels will be running high and each second will seem like an hour to them until they are reunited with their children
- Hold the children securely in the hammer-head until their parents arrive to collect them. With the Catechists, act to prevent any children from wandering off on their own or accidentally leaving with other parents!
- If there are any slips, trips, falls or other incidents in the evacuation, advise the Lead Marshall by radio and ask for additional help if required
- Once all the children have been returned to catechists, report this to the Lead Marshall and return to the Church along Victoria Road to offer further help and assistance as required. If you have to leave the church, please relinquish your evacuation pack to the Lead Marshall for use by others
- If the Liturgy Marshal or the catechists have any safety concerns about evacuating by the route to Lauriston Close, they should check the safety of the pathway between the Church and Hall. If this is also considered to be dangerous, consider ‘Internal Evacuation’ to the point in the Hall which is furthest from the point of danger. Report to the Lead Marshal using the radio and await specialist assistance

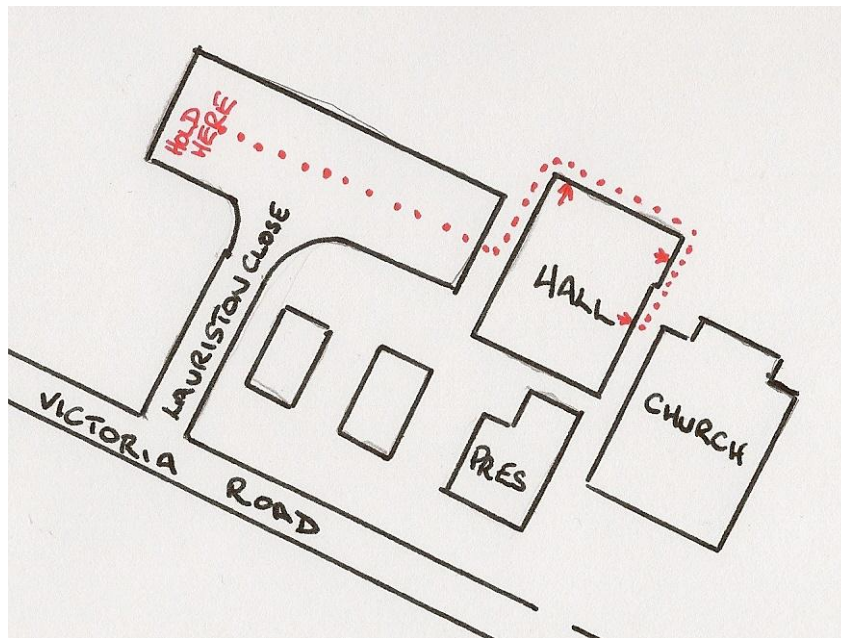
## Emergency Evacuation Plan – Church – continued

### Hall Evacuation

If there is an incident in the Hall which requires its evacuation whilst the Children's Liturgy Group is in session, the Marshal should evacuate the Hall according to the above instructions, taking the children to the far end of the hammer-head in Lauriston Close.

The Children's Liturgy Marshal should nominate one of the adult helpers to go to the church to advise the Celebrant that there has been an incident in the Hall, provide a brief description and say that the Hall has been evacuated and the children are moving into Lauriston Close for their safety.

The Celebrant will then decide what action and announcements he needs to make.





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#### **Trial Evacuations**

The plan will be tested from time to time – normally on an annual basis, to check that it remains viable and that all reasonable eventualities are catered for.

The objective is to keep the evacuation plan simple but flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances, relying on the leadership of the Lead Marshal combined with the common sense co-operation of parishioners to ensure that any evacuation is achieved in a safe manner.

After each Trial Evacuation, the plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted based on the feedback from Marshals, Parish Officers and parishioners.

#### Change Log

Rev 2 : Minor changes to some responsibilities based on experiences during the initial trial Evacuation

Rev 3 : Change Log added. Children's Liturgy Evacuation plan updated making the far end of the hammer-head in Lauriston Close the Hall assembly point where parents collect their children : sketch map added to show the location. Minor changes to the Lead Marshal's responsibilities. These changes are underlined and marked with a side-bar to accentuate them.