Treverbyn Parish Council

Lone Working Policy

1. Purpose

Treverbyn Parish Council recognises its responsibility to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment for its employees.

The Council acknowledges that employees may occasionally or routinely work alone and that lone working can present additional risks.

The purpose of this policy is to establish proportionate and practical arrangements to safeguard employees who work alone, while recognising the size, staffing structure and operational requirements of the Parish Council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Council's two directly employed members of staff:

- The full-time Parish Clerk.
- The part-time Administrator.

Both employees may be required to work alone within the Council's office and meeting room complex or undertake duties away from the premises.

The Council also engages external contractors. Contractors are responsible for their own employees and safe working arrangements, including lone working, but the Council will cooperate and coordinate with contractors where necessary to manage risks associated with work undertaken on Council premises or on its behalf.

3. Definition of Lone Working

Lone working occurs when an employee carries out work without close or direct supervision or without another person being immediately available to provide assistance.

For Treverbyn Parish Council, this may include:

- Working alone in the Council offices during normal working hours.
- Working in the office or meeting room complex outside normal working hours.
- Opening or securing the premises when no other employee is present.
- Attending meetings, site visits or other Council business alone.
- Travelling alone on Council business.

4. Responsibilities

The Parish Council

The Council will:

- Assess reasonably foreseeable risks associated with lone working.
- Provide appropriate security and safety arrangements.
- Ensure employees are familiar with the policy and relevant emergency procedures.
- Review arrangements when circumstances change or following a relevant incident.

The Parish Clerk

The Parish Clerk will oversee the day-to-day implementation of this policy, including ensuring that the Administrator is familiar with the relevant procedures.

The Clerk will also follow the policy when working alone and report any significant concerns to the Chair of the Council or another designated councillor.

Employees

Both employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety.
- Following agreed security and lone working procedures.
- Reporting incidents, concerns or identified risks.
- Avoiding activities that present an unacceptable risk when working alone.

5. Security of the Premises

The Council's office and meeting room complex is equipped with an intruder alarm and controlled door entry system.

When working alone, employees should:

- Ensure that external doors are appropriately secured.
- Use the door entry system to control access to the premises.
- Avoid admitting unknown or unexpected visitors without establishing their identity and reason for attending.
- Ensure the intruder alarm is set when leaving the premises, as appropriate.
- Avoid confronting intruders or individuals behaving aggressively.
- Contact the police in an emergency.

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Employees must not place themselves at risk to protect Council property.

6. Working Alone During Normal Office Hours

Lone working during normal office hours is permitted where the activity is assessed as low risk.

Normal administrative duties, telephone calls, correspondence and routine office activities may generally be undertaken without another employee present.

Employees should have access to a working telephone and be familiar with the location of emergency exits and first aid provisions.

The Council does not require constant supervision or monitoring of employees undertaking routine, low-risk office duties.

7. Working Outside Normal Office Hours

The Parish Clerk may occasionally need to work outside normal office hours, including evenings, to accommodate Council business.

Where lone working takes place outside normal hours:

- The employee should consider whether the work can safely be undertaken alone.
- External doors should remain secured, subject to safe emergency escape.
- A nominated person should be aware of the employee's presence where the circumstances or assessed risk make this necessary.
- The employee should have a means of contacting assistance.
- The employee should ensure that the premises are secured when leaving.

Where the lone worker is attending an evening meeting, the presence of councillors or other attendees should be taken into account when assessing the risks.

8. Communication and Welfare Arrangements

The Council recognises that regular, intrusive monitoring would not be proportionate for routine office-based administrative work.

However, employees should have a suitable means of communication when working alone.

For higher-risk circumstances, such as unusual out-of-hours attendance or visits to isolated locations, a proportionate check-in arrangement should be agreed in advance.

This may involve notifying a nominated person of the expected finishing time and confirming when the employee has safely completed the activity.

Where a check-in is agreed, the nominated person must know what action to take if the employee fails to make contact.

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9. Communication and Emergency Contact Arrangements

When working alone, the Parish Clerk may contact the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council should assistance be required. If neither is available, the Vice-Chair of the HR Committee, who lives within a short walking distance of the premises, may be contacted. The Administrator should contact the Parish Clerk in the first instance, or the Chair of the Council if the Clerk is unavailable. Both employees should have access to the relevant contact details and ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to summon assistance in an emergency. Where a check-in arrangement has been agreed, the nominated contact should take appropriate action if the employee fails to make contact as expected.

10. Dealing with Difficult or Aggressive Individuals

Employees may occasionally encounter members of the public who are distressed, confrontational or aggressive.

Employees should:

- Remain calm and avoid escalating confrontations.
- Maintain a safe distance and an unobstructed route to an exit.
- End a meeting or conversation if they feel threatened.
- Avoid arranging lone meetings with individuals known to present a significant risk.
- Seek assistance or contact the police where necessary.

Any incident involving threats, intimidation, harassment or aggression must be reported and recorded.

11. Accidents, Illness and Emergencies

Employees working alone must be familiar with the Council's emergency arrangements, including evacuation procedures.

In the event of serious illness, injury, fire or an immediate threat to personal safety, employees should contact the emergency services by calling 999 where necessary.

Employees should not undertake activities alone where the risk assessment identifies a need for another person to be present.

All accidents, incidents and relevant near misses should be reported and recorded in accordance with the Council's health and safety procedures.

12. Site Visits and Working Away from the Office

Where employees undertake Council duties away from the office, they should consider the location, nature of the visit, communication arrangements and any known risks.

For routine low-risk visits, formal check-in arrangements may not be necessary.

For isolated locations, unfamiliar premises, potentially confrontational meetings or other higher-risk activities, appropriate precautions should be agreed beforehand.

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Employees should not undertake hazardous inspections or other high-risk activities alone without suitable risk assessment and controls.

13. Risk Assessment

The Council will assess lone working risks as part of its wider health and safety arrangements.

Risk assessments will consider, where relevant:

- The nature of the work.
- The security of the premises.
- Access to emergency assistance.
- The risk of violence or aggression.
- The time and location of the activity.
- Individual circumstances where relevant to safety.
- Whether the work is suitable to be undertaken alone.

Control measures will be proportionate to the identified risks.

14. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following a significant incident, a material change in working arrangements or changes to relevant legislation or guidance.

Adopted by the Human Resources Committee of Treverbyn Parish Council on:

Adopted by the Full Council on:

Full Council Minute Reference:

Next Review: May 2027

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