



## **Wistow Parish Council Closed Churchyard Risk Management Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy sets out how Wistow Parish Council manages risks associated with a closed churchyard to ensure it is safe for visitors, volunteers, and contractors, while preserving its historical and environmental value.

Responsibility for maintenance was transferred from the Church to the Parish Council under the Local Government Act 1972, s215.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All areas within the closed churchyard
- Visitors and members of the public
- Parish council employees and volunteers
- Contractors carrying out works

### **3. Responsibilities**

#### **Parish Council**

- Overall responsibility for health and safety
- Ensures inspections and maintenance are carried out
- Allocates budget for safety works

#### **Clerk**

- Maintains inspection records
- Reports and logs hazards
- Arranges remedial works

#### **Contractors**

- Must provide risk assessments and insurance
- Must work safely and comply with legislation

### **4. Key Risks Identified**

Common risks in closed churchyards include:

- Unstable or leaning memorials/headstones
- Uneven ground, potholes, and trip hazards

Adopted: March 26 by Full Council  
Review Date: March 27



- Overgrown vegetation and fallen branches
- Dangerous trees
- Vandalism or anti-social behaviour
- Manual handling risks during maintenance
- Use of tools and machinery

## **5. Risk Assessment Process**

The council will follow the principles of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 by:

- Carrying out regular risk assessments
- Identifying hazards and who may be harmed
- Evaluating risks and implementing controls
- Recording findings
- Reviewing assessments annually or after incidents

## **6. Control Measures**

### **Memorial Safety**

- Conduct stability testing
- Lay down, cordon off, or repair unsafe headstones
- Record all actions taken

### **Grounds Maintenance**

- Keep grass cut and pathways clear
- Remove debris and hazards promptly

### **Trees**

- Maintain and inspect regularly
- Undertake necessary pruning or removal

### **Public Safety**

- Install signage where risks exist
- Restrict access to hazardous areas if needed

### **Contractors**

Require:

- Public liability insurance
- Risk assessments and method statements (RAMS)

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## **7. Incident Reporting**

All accidents, near misses, and hazards must be recorded. Serious incidents must be reported in line with RIDDOR 2013. All actions taken must be documented.

## **8. Record Keeping**

The council will maintain:

- Risk assessments
- Inspection logs
- Memorial safety records
- Contractor documentation
- Incident reports

## **9. Community and Sensitivity**

The council recognises the sensitive nature of churchyards and will:

- Act respectfully when managing memorials
- Attempt to contact families where possible before major works
- Provide clear public communication where changes are necessary