



Health and Safety Policy

This is the statement of general policy and arrangements for North Petherton Town Council; it aims to promote health and safety within the Town Council, identify responsibilities and provide a framework for dealing with health and safety matters;

Approved by the Town Council 23 March 2026
(Next scheduled review date September 2026)

Agreed

Statement

(in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 Section 2)

North Petherton Town Council regards the promotion of health, safety and welfare as an essential objective. It therefore recognises and accepts the requirements for providing so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy workplace and a safe working environment for employees and further accepts its responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by the Town Council's activities.

Background Information

1. The Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities e.g. service users, members of the public, volunteers, visitors and Councillors.
2. As the employer, North Petherton Town Council, has overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters and for ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation but this responsibility is discharged through the Town Clerk.
3. North Petherton Town Council will periodically review the operation of its health and safety policy and will ensure that:
 - Employees, volunteers and Councillors receive relevant and appropriate training on health and safety matters
 - Risk assessments are undertaken and recorded, and a summary report is provided to a Committee or Council meeting for consideration at least once a year
 - Accidents and “near-misses” are investigated and reported to a Committee or Council meeting as soon as possible after the event
 - Arrangements are in place to monitor the maintenance of equipment
 - The health and safety law poster is displayed in the admin offices at both J24 and the Library.
4. The main objectives of the Town Council's health and safety policy are:
 - To provide a safe and healthy working environment including safe systems of work
 - To provide a structure to effectively manage and monitor the health and safety arrangements
 - Increase the awareness of all councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors of their responsibilities for the health and safety of themselves and others
 - Ensure that adequate resources are available to implement the policy and strategy
 - Ensure the provision of such information, instruction and training as is necessary.
5. Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Town Clerk.

6. The Policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or sooner if there are relevant legislative changes.

Indicative Responsibilities Regarding Health and Safety

Town Council, through the Resources Committee

- Will ensure that there is an effective health and safety policy
- Will periodically review the effectiveness of the health and safety policy and ensure any necessary changes are made.
- Provide a lead in developing a positive health and safety culture throughout the Town Council
- Ensure that decisions take account of health and safety considerations
- Ensure adequate resources, including budget, are available for equipment and training relating to health and safety
- That there is financial provision to seek external health and safety advice from appropriate agencies

Town Clerk

- Ensure that the health and safety policy is implemented, monitored, reviewed, amended and developed
- Communicate the Town Council's health and safety policy to staff, councillors and other relevant people and organisations
- Ensure that staff understand their responsibilities regarding health and safety
- Identify health and safety training needs and appropriate training
- Work with staff to ensure that risk assessments are completed and reviewed as necessary
- Work with staff to ensure that safety inspections are undertaken regularly and that defects are promptly rectified
- Ensure insurance cover is provided and reviewed
- Consult with employees on health and safety issues
- Investigate safety issues and implement changes to working practices if required
- Report at least annually to Committee / Town Council on health and safety matters e.g. the findings of health and safety risk assessments, training

Councillors, Employees & Volunteers

- Take reasonable care regarding their own safety and that of colleagues, members of the public, volunteers and visitors
- Observe safety rules
- Comply with the health and safety policy
- Comply with instructions / directions regarding health and safety
- Co-operate with colleagues on all matters regarding health and safety
- Report health and safety concerns to the Town Clerk, Chair of the Resources Committee or the Mayor
- Work with the Town Clerk to ensure that risk assessments are completed and reviewed as necessary

- Work with the Town Clerk to ensure that safety inspections are undertaken regularly and that defects are promptly rectified
- Use the provided safety equipment and protective clothing
- Maintain equipment in good condition and report defects to the Town Clerk
- Ensure that their working area is kept tidy
- Attend health and safety training
- Report accidents and “near-misses” to the Town Clerk

Breaches of safety rules or procedures or interfering with safety equipment will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Contractors

- Contractors who regularly undertake work for the Town Council will be expected to read and sign to say they have read and will implement, this Health and Safety Policy and the principles contained therein
- For discrete projects contractors will be expected to provide method statements and health and safety risk assessments
- Contractors are responsible for compliance with health and safety legislation and are responsible for the health and safety of their employees and that of the public when they are undertaking work for the Town Council
- Contractors must have appropriate insurance arrangements – evidence of which must be supplied to the Town Council upon request.

Health & Safety Strategy

Overarching Principles and Arrangements

(in alphabetical order)

Accident Book

The Accident Book is kept in the Town Council Office (The Somerset room, junction 24, Market Way, North Petherton TA6 6DF). It meets the requirements for accidents recording that are required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation 2013 (RIDDOR). Specific injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences must be reported - the HSE has a brief downloadable guide to reporting accidents and incidents at work which can be accessed using the following link

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg453.pdf>

Details of reporting procedures and the on-line forms can be found on the Health and Safety Executive’s website at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reporting/how-to-make-riddor-report.htm#forms>

Accident Investigation and Reporting

An accident is an unplanned event that causes injury to people and / or damage to property / equipment.

A “near-miss” is an unplanned event where actual injury or damage did not happen but there was a great potential for injury or damage.

Accidents and near misses should be reported by employees and volunteers to the Town Clerk via their line manager, or by Councillors direct to the Town Clerk, and the Town Clerk will conduct a

proportionate investigation which will be formally reported to Councillors at a Committee or Town Council meeting.

Certain accidents causing injury or disease and dangerous occurrences are reportable to the appropriate enforcing authority under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). The Health and Safety Executive website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor> has a list of the reportable incidents and an electronic incident reporting portal.

Alcohol And Drugs

Employees, volunteers, contractors and Councillors are not permitted to be in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst on Town Council business.

An employee, volunteer, contractor or Councillor, who, when reporting for duty is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or medication which impairs their ability to undertake their role, will be asked to go home and will be escorted from the premises immediately.

Intoxication at work either as a result of alcohol or illegal drugs will normally be treated as gross misconduct and result in disciplinary action.

Asbestos

In the event of a major refurbishment or demolition of Town Council owned property the Town Council will obtain a full Demolition Survey prior to the commencement of work.

Cemetery

Graves must be dug in accordance with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Code of Safe Working Practice for Cemeteries.

Memorials may only be installed by masons who are registered with the National Association of Memorial Masons or the British Register Of Accredited Memorial Masons

Contractors

All contractors working on Town Council owned or managed premises and / or land are required to comply with the appropriate legislation for their activities; before any work is started the Town Clerk must be provided with a risk assessment and method statement and a copy of the contractor's insurance.

Note: Memorial Masons providing memorials in North Petherton Cemetery must be either a member of the National Association of Memorial Masons or the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons and memorials installed according to the standards of the professional body.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Under the COSHH legislation employers have a duty to assess the risks related to substances. The Town Council will implement measures to identify such substances that are used by Town Council employees or to which they may be exposed in the course of their work.

Where practical, effective, alternative solutions exist harmful substances will not be used. Substances that the Town Council do use will be assessed and control measures introduced to reduce risk; the control measures will include:

- The COSHH assessment and Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet will be referred to by the employee before the substance is used
- Known hazardous substances will be handled, contained stored and used according to The COSHH assessment and Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as detailed in the Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet will be issued to employees handling the substance
- Employees will be advised of the risks and trained accordingly

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

All reasonable steps will be taken by the Town Council to ensure the health and safety of employees who use display screen equipment and to comply with the relevant legislation (Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 2002).

- Each workstation will be assessed and risks to users identified
- Remedial action will be taken to mitigate the identified risks
- Information and training about safe use and potential risks of using DSE will be provided to employees
- Staff using DSE are entitled to request and receive eye sight tests paid for by the Town Council together with basic frames and lenses if required specifically for DSE work
- Work duties will be arranged, wherever possible to incorporate changes of tasks in order to prevent intense periods of using DSE
- Staff using DSE will take regular breaks away from the screen - at least 10 minutes away from the screen in every hour
- Adjustable seating will be provided for DSE users
- Screen height adjusters, adjustable keyboards, foot rests etc will be provided to suit the assessed needs of the employee

Employees must:

- Use the equipment that has been supplied for their assessed need and adjust chairs, etc to appropriate and comfortable positions
- Inform their line manager of any disability or health condition which may affect their ability to work using DSE
- Report any disability or health concern that may be associated with the use of DSE
- Take regular breaks

Driving

The Town Council is committed to minimising the risks staff face or create when driving at work. Employees may drive on the public highway as well as on Town Council owned or managed land.

The Town Council will

- Not put unreasonable time constraints on travel
- Ensure that those driving vehicles are competent and fit to drive
- Provide training that may be deemed necessary to reduce driving related risks
- Ensure that vehicles are suitable for purpose
- Ensure that vehicles are maintained to the required legal standards
- Require drivers to annually submit copies of their current driving licence and confirm they are physically fit to drive
- Require drivers who use their own vehicle on Town Council business to provide copies of their insurance cover annually in order to confirm that they are covered for business use.

Employees who are driving as part of the duties have the following responsibilities:

- To comply with Road Traffic Regulations and the Highway Code
- To inform the Town Clerk of anything that could affect or impair their driving e.g. health conditions or use of prescribed medication
- To inform the Town Clerk of changes to their driving licence e.g. offences
- To inform the Town Clerk of any defects and repairs that are needed to Town Council owned vehicles
- To complete the vehicle record sheets for Town Council owned vehicles before and after journeys, daily use
- To inform the Town Clerk as soon as practicable, of any accidents or incidents that have occurred whilst driving on Town Council business
- To drive with consideration for other people
- Not to drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or any drugs, including those prescribed by a Doctor, that may impair driving skills e.g. may cause drowsiness
- Not to operate mobile phones or any other devices which may cause a distraction when driving

Electricity and Electrical Equipment

All building maintenance work will be carried out by competent, qualified people. Staff must not endanger themselves and others by carrying out such work.

Electrical equipment must always be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Any defective items must be repaired according to the manufacturer's instructions or, if beyond economic repair, disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Town Council owned or managed buildings will have the fixed wiring installations supplying electrical sockets, lighting etc inspected at least every five years by a competent electrician.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) will be undertaken at intervals which reflect the potential risks associated with the appliance.

Fire Procedures

Note: The landlords are responsible for testing fire alarms and recording the outcomes of those tests.

The Somerset Room

The fire evacuation procedure is set by J24, the landlords. All staff and Councillors using the J24 office should make themselves familiar with the procedure, the escape routes and the assembly points. Details are posted in a notice on the office door.

The Library / Office / Community Centre

The fire evacuation procedure is set by North Petherton Community Centre, the landlords. All staff, volunteers and Councillors should make themselves familiar with the procedure, the escape routes and the assembly points. Details are posted in a notice by the entrance to the building.

The Town Council will endeavour to work with the Community Centre to undertake two fire drills per year.

First Aid

First aid supplies are contained in clearly marked First Aid Containers which are located in the Town Council office, The Somerset Room, Junction 24, Market Way, North Petherton; there is also a first aid kit maintained by North Petherton Community Centre in the kitchen at the library.

In the event of anything other than minor injuries medical assistance must be sought. Details of all first aid treatment must be recorded in the accident book and reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible after the event.

Home Working

Should employees carry out work for the Town Council at home then the same health and safety requirements apply as they do in any Town Council owned or managed premises.

Hygiene

Employees, volunteers and Councillors must keep all areas, particularly those used for the food and drink preparation clean and tidy

Toilets must be cleaned regularly and kept in a hygienic condition

Wash hand basins should have a supply of hot water, hand wash and towels

Sanitary towel bins will be provided by the Town Council for the toilet at the library, emptied and sanitised regularly by contractors.

The Sanitary towel bin at the J24 office is provided and maintained by the landlord.

Lone Working

The following principles apply:

Staff, Volunteers or Councillors working alone at either J24 or the library office should:

- Ensure that a responsible person is aware they are working alone in the office and what time they are due to start and finish
- Ensure that the door into the office is locked
- Only open door to expected visitors

Staff, Volunteers or Councillors undertaking visits to sites away from the office should

- Ensure that a responsible person is aware they are working alone, know where they are going and what time they are due to start and finish;
- There should be an arrangement in place of what is to happen if the responsible person is not notified by the agreed time of the successful conclusion of the visit.

Staff, volunteers and Councillors should avoid making appointments where they are going to be alone with 1 other person, particularly in that person's home or a location which is unknown / unfamiliar.

Machinery

Employees and volunteers should use and maintain machinery and equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions

Manual Handling (including lifting)

Staff and volunteers undertaking tasks identified as having a significant element of manual handling will receive instruction and training in manual handling best practice.

Employees and volunteers should be aware of their own limitations and use lifting aids and the assistance of colleagues to reduce risks.

Injuries, including twists and sprains that are incurred as a result of manual handling must be reported and recorded as part of the accident reporting procedure.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment will be provided where risk assessments show that a risk cannot be avoided and PPE is an appropriate mitigation.

PPE will be repaired or replaced as necessary to maintain its effectiveness. Employees and volunteers must report loss or defective PPE to their line manager as soon as practicable

Play Areas,

The Town Council does not directly provide any play areas but is the sole corporate trustee for land managed by the North Petherton Playing Fields Charitable Trust and as such recognises the need to keep play areas and play equipment safe for the users.

The Town Council, working in its trustee role, will

- ensure there is a weekly inspection of the play equipment with a written record
- obtain an annual independent inspection.

Public Toilets

Toilets will be cleaned regularly and kept in a hygienic condition

Wash hand basins should have a supply of hot water, hand wash and towels

Risk Assessments

Suitable risk assessments will be carried out to safeguard Town Council employees, volunteers and Councillors and others who might be affected by Town Council activities. Risk assessments will be carried out at intervals proportionate to the potential hazard but will be reviewed at least annually and with the implementation of any new working practice or following an amendment to a working practice.

Under no circumstances should employees, volunteers or Councillors put their safety or that of colleagues or the public at risk on account of the property of North Petherton Town Council.

Smoking

Smoking, which includes vaping, is not permitted inside any premises which are owned and occupied by the Town Council or rented for occupation by Town Council staff .

Staff Consultation

All relevant employees will be consulted on health and safety matters and employees are encouraged to provide information and suggestions via staff meetings or direct to the Town Clerk.

Training

The Town Council is committed to providing adequate information, instructions and training for all staff. Newly appointed or promoted staff will receive induction training for their role and this will include health and safety responsibilities.

Training needs will be reviewed as part of the on-going appraisal process.

Records of all training undertaken are kept on the employee's, volunteer's or Councillor's personal file.

Stress Management

A definition of stress is "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other demands placed upon them"

The Town Council will attempt to identify potential causes of stress and control them whenever possible.

Employees have a responsibility to raise concerns about stress with their line manager

Trees

The Town Council is responsible for numerous trees including at the Cemetery and the allotments and will take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety.

- Specialist Arborists will be commissioned to undertake tree assessments as and when required.

Violence to Staff

The Health and Safety Executive defines work-related violence as: 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'.

The Town Council should ensure that the possibility of violence to its staff is considered when undertaking risk assessments. Every effort should be made to reduce the possibility of violence to the minimum level that is reasonably practicable by using safe working practices

All incidents in which member(s) of the Town Council's staff are abused, threatened or assaulted must be reported to the Town Clerk