

Dear Hall user or Hirer,

I am delighted that you are using our facilities here at the Windhill Churches Centre.

Current legislation concerning Health & Safety carries with it certain responsibilities for the owners of such buildings. The Westminster Diocesan Trustee requires Parishes, as part of the Trust, to make available certain information to all users of Diocesan premises of which our Churches Centre is one.

I enclose information that fulfils our legal obligation to make you aware of Health and Safety requirements when using the Churches Centre. Please read it and keep it available for those of your organisation who use the facilities. It is your responsibility to bring it to their attention.

With best wishes,

Yours faithfully,



Fr Peter Harris, Parish Priest

Windhill Churches Centre (WCC) – St Joseph’s Facilities
Parish Organisations - Risk Management and
Health & Safety Responsibilities

The Parish is advised by Precision Safety Services Ltd, a specialist company in Risk Management & Health & Safety, under the authority of the Trustees of the Archdiocese of Westminster.

Within the St Joseph’s Resource Room on the first floor of WCC there are two document folders provided by Precision which contain the detailed advice about various Health & Safety and Risk matters relating to the use of the WCC.

It is the responsibility of each of the leaders of each Parish Organisation to ensure that either they or another person within their Group delegated to this matter, consult the Precision folders for detailed information and guidance about all aspects of Health & Safety/Risk Management relative to the use by their Group of the St Joseph’s facilities within the WCC.

Although the appointed Parish Priest and St Joseph’s Hall Management/Joint Management Committees are responsible for ensuring that the building is compliant with all current Legislation and Regulations, this does not absolve each Parish Group from recognising that they have a direct responsibility to all of their own members/users of the facilities to ensure that they comply with the Risk Management and Health & Safety guidance within the Precision Folders. It is a Condition of Use of the facilities that you as leader or the other party(s) designated in your Group with responsibility for Health & Safety/Risk Management, have taken time to review and further study the Precision documentation.

Each year the subject matter is reviewed with Precision, the building inspected and the information in the folders amended or up dated to ensure compliance with current Regulations etc.

The St Joseph's Hall Management Committee have identified the following critical issues that we feel should be drawn to your attention.

- 1) Nothing is to be stored under the stairway in the ground floor Reception area other than the piano.
 - 2) To ensure that the regulations about children and access to the kitchen are closely followed.
 - 3) All Exit routes are to be kept clear at all times.
 - 4) None of the Fire Doors are to be kept open by any means – they should be closed other than to allow entrance or exit.
 - 5) If you bring electrical appliances into the building you must ensure they have a valid PAT certificate and use in the WCC is at your own risk.
 - 6) There is ample storage space available within the St Joseph's area of the WCC including individual lockable units with the Resource Centre room on the first floor. Manual handling of heavy items is a high risk situation and it is Parish Policy that no item that cannot be lifted with one hand will be stored above shoulder height unless suitable and sufficient means of placement and removal is provided and the risk of that item falling is very low. It is a requirement of the St Joseph's Hall Management Committee that such items are always stored on the low level shelving.
 - 7) Linked to manual handling and height is the issue of storage of chairs and tables. Chairs must not be stacked above 4 chairs and a trolley is provided to allow chairs to be moved other than by lifting or dragging. The tables are to be individually stored on the table trolley provided and tied in accordance with the instructions.
 - 8) Lone working is a high risk issue and should you or any of your Group be alone within the WCC it is a Condition of Use that the person on their own has a functioning mobile phone for use in case of emergency.
 - 9) Should it become necessary to evacuate the building for any reason then it is the Group leader's responsibility, if it is safe to do so, to check all your group have safely vacated the premises before leaving yourself, and to report to the Assembly Area (Grassed area by the rear of St Joseph's Church) that all of their group has or has not safely left the building.
- Diagrams for Escape Routes and Assembly Point are being prepared and will be displayed in each room and all users' attention should be drawn to these so that in a case of emergency they know the escape routes.
- Fire safety training will be given to nominated persons such as group leaders who will practise emergency evacuation annually.
- 10) All "COSHH" (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) substances must be stored in the lockable cupboard within the Cleaners Room and no such substances are to be used by any person other than the authorised cleaners.
 - 11) Should any member of your Parish Group have a disability then it is the Group Leader's responsibility to use the ground floor meeting room and to appoint one of the Group to act as the designated helper to the person with the disability.
 - 12) Working at Height is a major Risk and no ladders are to be used within the WCC other than by Contractors/persons authorised to do so and have the skills and knowledge to use ladders.

Summary

It is in the best interests of all who make use of the WCC facilities that they can be enjoyed in a safe and carefully managed way. Most risk issues can be managed by common sense but it is hoped that the availability of the detailed guidance provided through Precision and the guidance within the folders held in the Resource Room, will ensure that preventative measures form part of reducing Risk to a minimum.

You will now find on the Notice Boards within the St Joseph's Main Hall and in the first floor meeting room a Notice issued by the Health & Safety Executive that also provides useful information. Attached to this communication is a leaflet produced by the Health & Safety Executive which you may wish to consider handing to members of your Group – photocopies can be made available via the Parish Office.

If, in using the facilities, you have concerns about any Health & Safety/Risk Management issues then please draw them to the attention of the St Joseph's Hall Management Committee direct or via the Booking Secretary.

St Joseph's Hall Committee