**Lone Worker Policy for Benefice of St Goran and St Michael, Caerhays (Iss 1)**

**Summary:** Working alone is an essential practice for many in our church, either within the church buildings, in their own homes or other people’s homes. Lone working cannot always be avoided. However this policy recognises the risks, and tries to minimise them by common sense and appropriate measures.

**Authorisation:** This policy was last updated and authorised by the PCC on 2nd July 2018 and will be reviewed annually by the PCC. It forms one part of our wider Church Health and Safety at Work Policy and will be available on request and from the church website along with our current risk assessments.

**Who does this affect?**

* The Parish Priest and other clergy
* The Parish Nurse
* The Verger
* The Cleaner
* Volunteers who come into church to sort out sacristy, the flowers, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services
* Those locking and unlocking the church
* Those doing maintenance in church
* Pastoral Visitor doing a solo pastoral visit to people’s homes
* Volunteers taking cash to the bank
* The Priest working at home

Each person affected will be given a copy of this policy upon the commencement of their work.

 **The Policy:** The purpose of this lone worker policy is to ensure that all church members are aware of the specific risk in working alone and to set out the respective responsibilities of the PCC and each individual to minimise such risks. The PCC commit to carrying out their responsibilities in a thorough and disciplined way. It is expected that all church members will abide by this policy.

**The Risks:** This list is not exhaustive but identifies some of the risks faced.

* Physical accident (from injury, fire, etc such as when using kitchen or maintenance equipment when there is no one available to fetch help if necessary)
* Sudden illness, again when there is no one to raise the alarm
* Physical violence or threat of abuse in any form from a visitor
* Sexual behaviour or advances deemed to be inappropriate or threatening
* Accusations by a visitor of inappropriate behaviour by staff / volunteers when there are no witnesses
* Stress caused by working in isolation or from abusive calls or digital media

**Responsibilities:**

**The PCC / Church Wardens** – should show that “reasonably foreseeable risks” have been identified and updated regularly with appropriate action taken to minimise them.

They should also ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all lone working, with standard practices adhered to. For example the accident books are in place and properly monitored.

To equip vulnerable staff with appropriate communications tools so they can summon help when needed. For example personal alarms for staff in the church alone, or visiting homes.

To ensure that every member of the church feels that the PCC has taken all reasonable steps to ensure their safety. For paid staff this should happen during their reviews.

To ensure that the PCC holds records of an employee’s next of kin.

Ensure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident

To insist that everyone follow the guidelines laid down on safe solo working.

**Individuals (staff and volunteers)** – also need to ensure that they don’t put themselves in unnecessary danger by taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions;

If possible do visits in pairs. In the case of the Parish Nurse this will usually not be possible. There will be a system put in place agreed between the Parish Nurse and the Line Manager to monitor such visits.

Do not agree to meet anyone in an isolated place. Consider carrying a personal alarm.

Be alert to possible dangers and minimise them – for example keep lights on until a building is completely vacated; using safety guards on power tools – and not using them when in the building alone.

Inform the Wardens or Priest of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made to individuals.

**Advice**

* When working in the church alone (or visiting someone in their home) make sure someone else knows where you are, and what time you are due home. Get them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can’t contact you, to raise the alarm.
* Carry a charged mobile phone with you, to use in case of emergency. It is also recommended that your ICE contact number is added to the contacts list on your mobile phone.
* Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone.
* Whenever possible do not visit people in their homes alone. If it is only possible to undertake a solo visit ensure you have easy access to an exit.
* If the person you are visiting seems under the influence of drugs or alcohol that visit should be rearranged.
* If working in church after dark, lock the doors.
* Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash