



Document Control

Adopted date: October 2026

Next review date: October 2027

FRAMINGHAM EARL PARISH COUNCIL

LONE WORKING POLICY

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy has been prepared to minimise the risks associated with lone working undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council. The Parish Council has one employee, the Parish Clerk, who may work alone at home and may also work away from their normal place of work when undertaking Council duties. The policy also covers Parish Councillors and volunteers when they are undertaking authorised Council activities alone. The Council recognises that lone working cannot always be avoided. Where lone working is necessary, the Council will take reasonable and proportionate steps to identify and control the associated risks.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Under the Health & Safety Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Parish Council, as employer, has responsibilities to assess risks to its employees and to take reasonable steps to eliminate or control those risks. Employees also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by their work, and to co-operate with the Council in fulfilling its health and safety responsibilities. This policy should be read alongside the Council's general health and safety arrangements and relevant risk assessments.

WHO IS A LONE WORKER?

A lone worker is someone who works without close or direct supervision and without another person being present who could provide assistance if something goes wrong. For this Parish Council, this may include:

Employee – Parish Clerk

The Clerk may work alone:

- At home when undertaking Council duties;
- Outside normal working hours where necessary;
- When travelling alone to attend meetings or undertake Council business;
- When visiting Council facilities or locations;
- When carrying out other authorised Council duties away from home.

Parish Councillors

Councillors may occasionally:

- Visit parishioners on Council business;

- Attend meetings or events alone;
- Inspect Council-owned land, buildings or facilities;
- Undertake other authorised Council activities.

Volunteers

Volunteers may occasionally work alone when participating in activities or projects organised or authorised by the Parish Council.

POTENTIAL RISKS TO LONE WORKERS

Potential risks may include:

- Open access or unlocked doors where members of the public may gain access;
- Becoming ill or suffering an accident while alone;
- Inadequate training or understanding of relevant health and safety procedures;
- Hazards associated with the location or activity being undertaken;
- Working in remote areas or locations where mobile telephone coverage is poor or unavailable;
- Parking in poorly lit areas or accessing buildings which are inadequately lit;
- Aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour from members of the public;
- Entering or working in public buildings, or other premises when alone;
- Slips, trips and falls;
- Adverse weather or environmental conditions;
- Any other risks identified through the Council's risk assessment process

ASSESSING THE RISK

Before lone working takes place consideration should be given to:

- Whether the activity can safely be undertaken by one person;
- Whether the work could reasonably be undertaken by two or more people;
- The nature and location of the work;
- The experience, training and competence of the person undertaking the work;
- Whether there is a risk of violence, aggression or confrontation;
- Whether reliable communication is available;
- What arrangements are required to ensure that the person is not exposed to unnecessary or unacceptable risk.

Where the risk cannot be adequately controlled, the activity should not be undertaken alone.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL MEASURES

The Council will undertake suitable risk assessments for activities where lone working is reasonably foreseeable. The following control measures should be considered:

a) Communication

Where a person is working alone away from their normal location, they should, where reasonably practicable, tell another person:

- Where they are going;
- The purpose of the visit;
- The expected time of arrival;
- The expected time of completion or return.

A mobile telephone should be carried where appropriate and should be sufficiently charged. Where mobile telephone coverage is unavailable, alternative arrangements should be considered before the work begins.

b) Working in Isolated Locations

Where the location is isolated, difficult to access or presents particular hazards, lone working should be avoided where reasonably practicable. If lone working is necessary, the person should inform an appropriate Council contact of their location and expected return time.

c) Working from Home

The Parish Clerk may undertake Council work from home. The Clerk should not routinely invite members of the public into their home for Council business. Where a face-to-face meeting is required with a member of the public, it should, wherever reasonably practicable, take place at a suitable public or Council venue rather than at the Clerk's home. Where there is any concern about a particular individual or meeting, the Clerk should arrange for another person, such as the Chair or another Councillor, to be present.

d) Meetings and Visits

Where a meeting or visit is considered potentially difficult, sensitive or confrontational, the Clerk or Councillor should not attend alone where this can reasonably be avoided. Meetings should preferably take place in a suitable public or Council building with access to a telephone or mobile telephone.

e) Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

No employee, Councillor or volunteer is expected to put themselves at risk when dealing with an aggressive, threatening or abusive member of the public.

The individual should:

- Remain calm and avoid confrontation;
- Withdraw from the situation where appropriate;
- Seek assistance;
- Report the incident to the Chair or Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where there is an immediate threat to personal safety, the emergency services should be contacted by calling 999.

CHECK IN ARRANGEMENTS

For activities where the risk assessment indicates that additional precautions are necessary, a check-in arrangement should be agreed.

The person undertaking the activity should provide an appropriate Council contact with:

- Their location;
- The expected duration of the activity;
- An expected return or completion time.

If the person does not make contact by the agreed time, the nominated contact should attempt to contact them. If contact cannot be established and there is reasonable concern for their safety, appropriate further action should be taken, including contacting the emergency services where necessary. For routine low-risk activities, a formal check-in procedure may not be necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parish Council – Employer

As the employer, the Parish Council is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employee;
- Identifying and assessing foreseeable risks associated with lone working;
- Putting reasonable control measures in place;
- Ensuring that appropriate information, instruction and training are provided;
- Reviewing risk assessments following significant changes, incidents or concerns;
- Ensuring that lone-working arrangements remain appropriate for the Council's circumstances.

The Council should nominate an appropriate person, normally the Chair, to act as the main contact for the Clerk when required for lone-working arrangements.

Parish Clerk

The Clerk is responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work;
- Following this policy and relevant Council risk assessments;
- Taking reasonable precautions when working alone;
- Maintaining appropriate communication with the Chairman or nominated Council contact when required;
- Informing the Chair or nominated Council contact when leaving their normal working location to undertake Council duties where a check-in is considered necessary;
- Reporting accidents, incidents, near misses, hazards or concerns to the Council;
- Not undertaking work where they reasonably believe the risk cannot be adequately controlled.

The Clerk will assist the Council in implementing this policy but does so under the direction and authority of the Parish Council as employer.

Parish Councillors and Volunteers

Councillors and volunteers undertaking authorised Council activities should:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety;
- Follow relevant Council procedures and risk assessments;
- Inform an appropriate person of their location where appropriate;
- Carry a charged mobile telephone where reasonably practicable;
- Report accidents, incidents and hazards to the Clerk or Chair;
- Not undertake activities where the risks are considered unacceptable.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In an emergency, the priority is personal safety.

A lone worker should, where possible:

1. Move to a safe location;
2. Call 999 if emergency assistance is required;
3. Provide their location and details of the incident;
4. Contact the Chair or other nominated Council contact when it is safe to do so;
5. Report the incident to the Council as soon as reasonably practicable.

No lone worker should put themselves at further risk attempting to deal with an emergency.

REPORTING INCIDENTS

Any accident, injury, near miss, threatening behaviour or other significant incident connected with lone working should be reported to the Clerk or Chair.

The Parish Council will consider whether the incident requires:

- Further investigation;
- Additional control measures;
- An amendment to an existing risk assessment;
- Changes to working arrangements;
- Any further action required under applicable health and safety requirements.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if:

- There is a significant change to the Council's working arrangements;
- The Council appoints additional employees;
- A new significant hazard is identified;
- A relevant accident or incident occurs;
- There is a significant change in relevant legislation or guidance;
- The Council considers a review necessary.