Chipperfield Parish Council,

The Village Hall

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1. Purpose and scope

The Council will take reasonably practicable steps to protect employees, councillors, volunteers and others by undertaking authorised Council work alone. Lone work means working without close or direct supervision. This policy applies to office work, home working, travel, evening meetings, allotment inspections, Chipperfield Common and SANG-related visits.

2. Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for assessing risks, providing suitable arrangements, training and equipment, and reviewing incidents. The Clerk implements agreed arrangements and ensures staff understand them. Where the Clerk works alone, the Chair or a nominated councillor will be the designated check-in contact. Lone workers must follow procedures, report hazards and stop work where they feel unsafe.

3. Risk assessment and authorisation

Before lone working, assess the location, task, time of day, access and exits, mobile reception, weather, personal circumstances where relevant, likelihood of confrontation and access to help. Higher-risk tasks require a separate written assessment and may require two people. Lone work is not authorised for activities requiring a second person under applicable safety rules or where risks cannot be adequately controlled.

4. Office and home working

Keep doors and exits secure and accessible; do not admit unexpected visitors if unsafe. Arrange appointments where possible. Avoid meeting an aggressive or unknown visitor alone. Ensure electrical equipment and workstations are suitable. Agree with reasonable contact arrangements for home working and out-of-hours office work.

5. Allotment inspections and enforcement

Inform the nominated contact of the site, expected start and finish times and planned route. Carry a charged phone; wear appropriate footwear; avoid isolated areas in poor weather. Do not enter unsafe structures or confront tenants about breaches alone where hostility is foreseeable. Arrange accompanied visits for contentious inspections, tenancy enforcement or reported threatening behaviour. Leave immediately if threatened.

6. Common, SANG and outdoor visits

Check weather, daylight, terrain, access and mobile signal. Do not work alone near water, unstable trees, machinery, construction operations or other identified high-risk hazards unless a specific assessment confirms adequate controls. Avoid physical intervention with members of the public. Contractors must manage their own safe systems of work and coordinate relevant site risks with the Council.

7. Evening meetings and travel

Consider safe arrival and departure, lighting, parking, building security and arrangements for closing premises. Where a meeting ends late, agree a departure check-in. Do not undertake unnecessary lone visits in darkness to isolated sites.

8. Contact and escalation procedure

Before an off-site visit, the worker provides the designated contact with location, activity, phone number, expected completion time and an agreed check-in deadline. If the worker does not check in, the contact calls promptly, retry using agreed methods, and checks the last known location without putting themselves at risk. If there is reason to suspect immediate danger, call 999; otherwise escalate promptly under the Council emergency contact procedure. Record and review any failed check-in.

9. Emergencies, incidents and wellbeing

In an emergency call 999 and provide an accurate location. Withdraw from threatening situations; do not attempt to restrain anyone. Report accidents, near misses, abuse and threats to the Clerk or, where the Clerk is affected, the Chair. Consider first-aid provision, personal circumstances and work-related stress in the assessment. Apply applicable accident reporting requirements.

10. Training, monitoring and review

Provide induction on risk assessments, de-escalation, check-ins, emergencies and reporting. Test contact procedures periodically. Review this policy annually and sooner after a significant incident, change of duties or change of site risks.

11. Data protection

Use contact and location information only for proportionate safety purposes; restrict access and retain records in accordance with Council retention and data protection arrangements.

Appendix A — Lone working visit record

Worker / contact number: _____

Location and purpose: _____

Date, start and expected finish: _____

Designated check-in contact / number: _____

Check-in deadline and method: _____

Actual return / close-out time: _____

Hazards, controls or incident notes: _____

Appendix B — Site-specific risk assessment prompts

For each activity record: hazard; who may be harmed; existing controls; further action; owner; due date; review date. Assess office visits, allotment enforcement, remote outdoor visits, evening meetings, slips/trips, violence, poor signal, weather, lone driving and emergencies as relevant.

Reference guidance

Health and Safety Executive: https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/ ; https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/employer/manage-the-risks-of-working-alone.htm