

Health and Safety

As part of the Town Council's Health and Safety contract with Shropshire Council two meetings have been held one with Tim Tearle and Carole Booker to look at an overview of health and safety practices and another meeting with Carole to specifically look at COSHH and risk assessments

Report received following meeting on 23.3.22 with Tim Tearle and Carole Booker

Wem Town Council has a staff roster of 5, including yourself. You are based out of office at Edinburgh House and manage a number of sites in the area including:

- Play areas
- Recreation ground
- Allotments – advice has been given in the past relating to slabs demarking historic boundaries between plots. Area is inspected quarterly.
- Cemetery – memorials are tested and your groundsman has been trained and does this every 2 years.
- Street lights (approx. 200)
- CCTV system for area
- Bus shelters
- Trees in public areas
- Public toilets
- Market Gazebos
- Swimming Pool (this is owned by you and leased to firm running on your behalf and you pay them to do so, and you also fund the maintenance of the site). Suggest you ask for evidence of H&S related management procedures for the site including risk assessments and their H&S policy. We could offer you an audit of the pool by one of the team that specialises in this, this would be an addition to the contract. Happy to discuss further.
- You run a Food Support scheme from the offices also.
- You are looking at options to run a community bus but do not currently do so.

Penny is also treasurer of the Wem Sports & Social Association who run the football ground and kit rooms, the WSSA are paid £19000 per annum to run these. Significant works have been undertaken at the football ground with grants allocated and improvements made to seating and flood lighting and changing rooms.

Policy

HSE law poster is not displayed, I suggest you go with the following and save the free leaflet as a download and provide each staff member with a copy.

[Health and safety law poster \(A3\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/leaflets/hs2623.htm)

H&S policy is in place and signed off annually. There is a Lone Work policy that you feel needs some work to make fit for purpose, and Carole Booker can assist with this in future. Use of PPE is covered under policy and task sheets clarify what is needed and when.

You have a Business Continuity and Risk Management Plan in place which is reviewed annually.

Risk Assessments

Penny updates these annually, and a support visit with Carole Booker is scheduled to look at these in April 2022.

COSHH folder with data sheets and risk assessments is in place and was collated with support from this team.

Play Equipment risk assessments are in place and frequent recorded checks are undertaken as well as an annual ROSPA inspection.

Two of your staff litter pick in the area, one is paid and one is a part-time volunteer, you have risk assessments in place for their activities and monitor their whereabouts and wellbeing. Basic training has been provided to your volunteer, with stipulations in place about what to do and not to do if drug paraphernalia is found.

Fire Risk Assessments are in place, undertaken by a third party assessor. I suggest you have the grounds equipment shed assessed, please, based on the equipment and materials contained within. Fire drills are not currently undertaken, suggest you do one soon please and reiterate to staff their identified muster points. A local guidance sheet for your offices would also be beneficial.

Alarms and other fire equipment are tested and serviced at your sites.

Covid risk assessment is in place.

Lone working – risk assessment in place, but you mentioned that you lone work in offices on a Friday, and a call-in rota with councillors would be a useful control measure to ensure you are safe while working alone on site.

Risk assessment in place for use of flagpole, although groundsman does need work at height training for this and other ladder-related tasks.

First Aid – no risk assessment currently in place (or assessment of needs) and no trained staff. Suggest that we support you to do so, and likely to conclude that a staff member is trained for offices in emergency first aid, and that groundsman also undertakes this.

Noise & Vibration – groundsman uses strimmer/ leaf blower / hedge cutter routinely, probably maximum of 4 hours per day. No risk assessment in place currently, and this needs looking at. You are planning to move to low-voltage electric tools in the near future but some risk still remains. I will ask Occupational Health to make contact to facilitate some baseline health surveillance screening for your groundsman.

Ladder use is covered by a risk assessment, but you do not currently record condition checks. A checklist is attached in the appendix of the Shropshire Work At Height Policy to assist with this.

Asbestos and Legionella risk assessments and management systems are in place

Training

Penny would benefit from undertaking the IOSH Managing Safely refresher course that we run, this is a 4-day certificated course with a 3-yearly shorter refresher.

Your groundsman has undertaken equipment related training in the past, I would recommend that this is refreshed at 3-yearly intervals.
You recently purchased a new tractor and have an annual maintenance contract in place.
Your groundsman is trained to do basic maintenance and records this.

First Aid training is a gap currently as outlined later in email.

Groundsman – would benefit from Work At Height training and Manual Handling training, and we can offer places on this later in the year when things are quieter for you.
Groundsman also deals with drug paraphernalia periodically as does your litter picker. I could arrange access to an e-learning course on the topic of Sharps if you wish.

Fire training is due to be refreshed and you use your third party assessor to cover this.

Accidents

You do not currently record accidents, you need an accident book and please notify this team of any accidents you are concerned about and need advice on. You mentioned some accidents relating to play equipment in the past. Recording and investigating these will help you evidence actions in the event of any claims made against the council.

Events

Jubilee Event – I have sent you the council's guidance document for events management, please work through this and start pulling together a risk assessment and event management plan, and we will visit in May to advise and support further. This is a multiple day event over the long bank holiday weekend and you have secured a premises license for the recreation ground (not alcohol). You will be holding a youth disco at the town hall, and the main event on the recreation ground will feature bands on several stages based on the back of lorry trailers. Thought will need to be given to management of vehicle movements and the use of competent trained stewards. Paid stewarding may be needed in addition to volunteers that you currently use.

You run an annual fireworks event, and support has been given in the past from my team around a robust event risk assessment for this, which you review annually.

A funfair comes to Wem twice a year, one of these coincides with Wem carnival. Other than litter picking post-event, the carnival is not affiliated to or run by yourselves.

Other

Your office has a server room adjacent containing Shropshire Council IT equipment and this has an alarm that occasionally triggers and has to be disabled. This is more of a nuisance than anything else, however if it persists please continue to contact Shropshire IT and raise the issue.

Tim Tearle

Senior Health & Safety Officer
Occupational Health & Safety Team
Resources Directorate

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Risk Assessment Review Meeting held 6.4.22 with Carole BookerRisk assessment in general

Be more specific with types of PPE, particularly gloves.

Make sure that all personnel who are affected by the risks or who have a role in control measures have read and signed the risk assessments.

Vibration risk assessment

This needs to be done. Unfortunately, we don't have a template for vibration assessment but if you do the calculations on the HSE's calculator you can then keep an electronic copy or print it out.

INDG175 Hand Arm Vibration at Work, a brief guide, is a useful, fairly short document explaining the requirement of the regulations – go to www.hse.gov.uk. Vibration levels can be estimated using HSE's published figures (Sources of vibration magnitude data, again on their website) and manufacturers information which you may be able to obtain online or from the relevant instruction manuals. Vibration exposure can then be calculated using HSE's Hand-Arm Vibration Exposure Calculator, once again on HSE's website. It is very likely that your Groundsperson will need health surveillance for vibration and noise.

Just a thought in terms of reducing time spent on the strimmer, mowers etc. have you thought of managing some areas for wildlife, which would involve letting some areas of grass/flowers grow long through the summer and cutting/raking off in late July – e.g. they are doing this in Church Stretton's churchyard and some town councils are leaving part of their parks and verges to "go wild" during the summer. As well as being good for wildlife it can reduce the time and costs of managing those areas. If you are at all interested in this approach for the future here are a few websites for you to look at:

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk>

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may>

<https://middlemarcheslandtrust.org.uk/guest-blogs/restoring-shropshires-verges-project-rsvp>

Ladder use

Ladder checks should be recorded periodically, Tim Tearle sent you a template for this I believe.

Recommend that your groundperson is given a ladder training refresher.

COSHH assessments

These need to be more detailed as we discussed.

Some health surveillance is likely to be required due to some substances used being sensitisers. I should have said yesterday that you should try, wherever possible, to find products to do the job that are less harmful to health. This should be your first port of call.

Please let me know if I can help with anything else.

Many thanks,
Kind regards,
Carole Booker

Action Items arising from Meetings

Area	Action
Swimming Pool	Recommend Town Council ask for evidence of H&S related management procedures for the site including risk assessments and their H&S policy. Possible use of Town Council swimming pool allocation to cover cost of inspection / additional support from Shropshire Council
HSE Poster	Purchased 2 now on display in office and one for Groundsman's shed
Fire Muster station	Details on evacuation now displayed in office
Lone Worker policy	Need to set up system for staff working alone in office
Risk Assessments Coshh	Clerk to go through items with John to provide more detail on coshh forms
Vibration risk assessment	To be drafted – appointment to be booked with occupational therapy dept to assess risk to Groundsman following return from work. Advice sought from Shrewsbury TC awaiting occupational health information from Shropshire Council
First aid	Training need – see separate report First aid kit for office needed john has one in shed.
Accident book	In place in office – staff aware of its location
Ladder Checks	Template to be drawn up and provided for Groundsman to use