

## **DOWNING PLACE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH FIRE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Downing Place URC undertakes to do all that is reasonable to prevent fires and will comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021. Fire precautions are in place to minimise the effect of a fire should it break out. In the event of a fire occurring, the first priority must be to save lives. Saving of buildings and equipment is a secondary consideration.

#### **Responsibilities**

Fire prevention is the responsibility of all staff and leaders of organisations and groups using the premises. However it is the responsibility of the DPURC Elders' Meeting to ensure a regular Fire Risk Assessment is carried out; to ensure adequate Fire Prevention and detection systems are in place; and to ensure that relevant training is provided. (See appendix 1 for details of individuals' responsibilities).

#### **Fire Risk Assessment**

The foundation of good fire prevention procedures is a programme of inspections and assessments, which has the object of identifying fire hazards, assessing the risks and devising control measures. A formal fire risk assessment is carried out annually as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as amended by the Fire Safety Act 2021. This identifies the significant fire hazards and what needs to be done to reduce, to as low as is reasonable and practicable, the risk of those hazards causing harm. In addition, the fire risk assessment identifies what physical fire precautions and other arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of all people in the premises if a fire does start. "The assessment should also identify any additional fire precautions and arrangements needed as a result of actual or planned changes of use of the buildings or advice from the Fire Service."

#### **Training**

Training is provided for all who have a role to play, including those responsible for ensuring safe and effective evacuation of the building and the use of Fire Extinguishers. The fire extinguisher company will be contracted to undertake the latter.

#### **Fire Equipment**

Appropriate fire equipment is installed and professionally maintained by an external contractor. This includes: a fire alarm system; fire extinguishers and fire blankets; emergency lighting; fire curtain; and suitable means of escape with appropriate signage. We should provide the signage. Periodically we will seek the advice of the local fire service concerning these issues.

In addition, the following are checked, in-house, on a weekly basis: visual check of fire extinguishers and fire detectors, emergency lighting, fire exit routes and doors.

### **Fire Notices**

Fire Action Notices are prominently displayed throughout the building (see appendix 2) as well as more in depth Fire Instructions placed in strategic locations.

In the event of an alarm or fire, the Fire Emergency Procedures below will be followed. All hirers and tenants of the premises will be made aware of these procedures.

### **Fire Drills**

An annual fire drill is carried out during a Sunday morning service. An annual fire drill is also carried out with all tenants of the building.

## **2. FIRE PROCEDURES**

### **In case of fire when a church service is being held:**

On Sunday mornings the Beadle acts as the Fire Warden with overall responsibility for ensuring the safe evacuation of the congregation and for calling the fire service. At services where there is no Beadle on duty, whoever is the organiser of that service undertakes this role.

Before the service, the Beadle or other responsible person will make sure that all doorways and exit routes are clear.

On hearing the alarm, The Beadle, or other responsible individual, will ask The Minister, or whoever is leading the service, to *immediately* announce to the congregation the need for an evacuation. The stewards will then take charge of ensuring a swift and orderly evacuation of the Sanctuary to Downing Place, paying particular attention to anyone who is disabled and who needs special assistance. The fire evacuation point is opposite the gates on Downing Place near the bike racks.

The Beadle will check that no-one is in the Hub, courtyard, kitchen, and Gibson Hall.

Steward 1 will check the disabled WC in the Emmanuel Room, the chapel, and the area at the back of the worship space generally.

Steward 2 will go to the 1st floor via the back stairs. They will check the 1st floor, then descend via the front stair near the lift to the ground floor. Steward 2 will then check the lift and adjacent toilets. The fire curtain will have come down by this time, so Steward 2 will exit through the door opposite the WCs.

If there are no Stewards on duty the Beadle/responsible person will perform all checks listed above.

Whoever is responsible for the Children's Ministry on the day will take responsibility for the evacuation of the children and young people in their charge at the time, from wherever they may be in the building.

On completing their respective checks, the stewards will leave the building, reporting to the Beadle once they are safely out of the building.

The Beadle will call the fire service.

When the fire shutter drops the lift is immobilised. Anyone who cannot get down the stairs will assemble at either end of the upstairs corridor at the area of refuge evacuation points. They will press the button to alert people they are there and the fire brigade will rescue them on arrival.

Where a fire is detected, but the alarm has not automatically activated, The Beadle, or other responsible person, will activate it by pressing one of the call points, then follow the procedure as outlined above.

#### **In case of fire when a concert is being held:**

On hearing the alarm, the concert steward, or other responsible individual, will signal the musicians to pause, if they haven't already. The steward will then announce the need for an evacuation. The steward will take charge of ensuring a swift and orderly evacuation of the Sanctuary to Downing Place, paying particular attention to anyone who is disabled and who needs special assistance. The steward will check that no-one is remaining will check the disabled WC in the Emmanuel Room, the chapel, and the area at the back of the sanctuary generally. The steward will then leave the building.

Any staff, hirers, and tenants also in the building during a concert will follow the procedures listed below for "other times when the church is occupied" except that staff will not need to check the Sanctuary and Emmanuel Room as that will have been done by the concert steward.

The concert steward will call the fire service or satisfy themselves that someone else has already done this.

#### **In case of fire at other times when the church is occupied:**

##### ***Staff***

Any member of staff who is in the building is responsible for ensuring that any visitors (including volunteers and members of the congregation) are instructed to evacuate the building and gather in Downing Place.

They will check that no-one is in the sanctuary, the Hub, ground floor offices, toilets and Gibson Hall and the offices upstairs.

They will then leave the building themselves and proceed to the evacuation point. They will either call the fire service or satisfy themselves that someone else has already done this.

### ***Hirers***

All hirers of any part of the church premises must have one identified individual who will act as the responsible person in the event of a fire. If no one has been identified, it is assumed that the responsible person is the person that booked the facilities.

On hearing the alarm they will ensure that all those associated with that event evacuate the building as quickly and safely as possible and gather in Downing Place. They will check if all those that should have evacuated have actually done so.

They will either call the fire service or satisfy themselves that someone else has already done this.

### ***Tenants***

All tenants of the building must have one identified individual who will act as the responsible person in the event of a fire. On hearing the alarm they will ensure that all those in the physical area covered by the tenancy evacuate the building as quickly and safely as possible, and gather in Downing Place. They will check if all those that should have evacuated have actually done so.

They will either call the fire service or satisfy themselves that someone else has already done this.

## **Appendix One**

### **Responsibilities for Implementing the Downing Place URC Fire Policy and Related Procedures**

#### **Fire Policy and Related Procedures**

Responsibility for ensuring the Church has an effective Fire Policy and Related Procedures rests with The Elders' Meeting, delegated to the Property Management Group. The group will review these on an annual basis, reporting any changes required to The Elders' Meeting for approval.

#### **Annual Fire Risk Assessment**

Responsibility for ensuring this is done rests with The Elders' Meeting, delegated to the Property Management Group. In practice the Elder who is a member of the Property Management Group will ensure this happens.

#### **Training**

Responsibility for ensuring that all staff, Elders and relevant members of the congregation are properly trained rest with The Elders' Meeting. For staff that is delegated to the Elder with responsibility or staffing matters. Arranging for this training and keeping of training records is the responsibility of Pippa Jones, Church Secretary, and Jess Uden, Office Staff Team Leader.

#### **Fire Drill**

Responsibility for ensuring this is done on Sunday mornings on an annual basis rests with The Elders' Meeting, delegated to the Property Management Group. In practice, the Elder, who is a member of that group, has agreed to ensure this happens. Matt Barker, Residential Caretaker & Facilities Officer, is responsible for arranging an annual fire drill for tenants of the building.

#### **Fire Equipment**

Matt Barker, Residential Caretaker & Facilities Officer, is responsible for ensuring the church has appropriate contracts in place for the maintenance of all fire equipment and that appropriate records of such maintenance are kept. He will also ensure that a weekly visual inspection of the equipment is carried out, reporting any matters that need attention.

#### **Fire Action Notices**

Jess Uden, Office Staff Team Leader, is responsible for ensuring Fire Action Notices are displayed around the church building.

## **Fire Instruction Notice**

Jess Uden, Office Staff Team Leader, is responsible for ensuring that a detailed Fire Instruction Notice is displayed in the church building.

## **Fire Procedures**

The Elders, with support from the Property Management Group, are responsible for ensuring that all staff, Elders, Junior Church Leaders and others with leadership responsibilities in the church are made aware of the fire procedure for when the church is in use for worship or other church-related purpose. In turn, these individuals are responsible for carrying out their allotted roles in case of fire.

## **Hirers and Tenants**

Jess Uden, Office Staff Team Leader, is responsible for ensuring that all hirers and tenants of the building are given written information concerning the church's fire policy and procedures. All hirers and tenants must have one identified individual who will act as the responsible person in the event of a fire. Jess will keep a record of the name of these individuals as part of the routine booking process.

## Appendix 2



# Fire Action Notice

## IF FIRE ALARM SOUNDS:

### 1. **EVACUATE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY:**

Assemble on Downing Place (the road)  
Check people in your group are all present.  
Assist anyone who is disabled  
or has mobility problems.

### 2. **DIAL 999 AND REPORT A SUSPECTED FIRE AT:**

**Downing Place United Reformed Church,  
Downing Place, Cambridge, CB2 3EL**

### 3. **PEOPLE TO NOTIFY IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE:**

Matt Barker (Residential Caretaker)  
07354 517 346

or

Jess Uden (Staff Member)  
07731 883 697

**DO NOT RETURN TO THE BUILDING UNTIL  
THE FIRE BRIGADE CONFIRM IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.**

---