

# Fire Risk Assessment

August 2023

**Battle Baptist Church**  
*Being Transformed Together*



Battle Baptist Church  
Mount Street  
Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EG

In drawing up this Fire Risk Assessment, the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's (ESFRS) ['Guide for Businesses'](#) document has been used as a template. In addition advice has been sought from the ESFRS document '5 Key Stages to Risk Assessment'; HM Government's 'A short guide to making your premises safe from fire' and 'Fire risk assessment for small and medium places of assembly'; and the Baptists Together guideline leaflet L10 'Health and Safety and Fire Precautions' (latest version issued November 2021).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fire Risk Assessment

### 1. Premises details:

Battle Baptist Church, Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EG  
Tel: 01424 774825

#### Use of premises:

BBC is primarily a place of Christian worship. Many groups use the premises for different community purposes throughout the week including for example a parent / toddler group; a youth group for teens; and a coffee club for retired people.

Caterpillar Pre-school operates from the children's room during school term times. Pre-school staff manage risk assessment policies for their setting.

The Church Administrator is responsible for the day to day running of the premises.

#### Date of Assessment:

#### Date of Review:

### 2. General Statement of Policy

This is set out in Battle Baptist Church's 'Health and Safety Policy' (revised March 2023).

### 3. Management Systems

The Church Administrator will carry out the initial Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) with the Chair of the Premises Committee. Richard Short, of JS Fire Protection, visited the premises on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to discuss the FRA and we continue to await his full report on remedial works that are necessary.

Where necessary, information will be shared with the small staff team and with Trustees. Our Health and Safety Policy, of which Fire Safety is a part, is presented annually to members at the AGM, and is published on our website.

We engage JS Fire Protection Ltd to inspect our firefighting equipment, and volunteers carry out the necessary checks on the fire alarm system.

This FRA will be reviewed annually, or more frequently should any fire incident occur.

#### **4. The Premises**

a. General description of the premises

The original chapel is stone built and is dated 1820. The rest of the premises is built out of bricks and dates from last quarter of the 20th century.

b. Occupancy

Since the COVID pandemic, typical occupancy now looks like this:

Staff team: Monday – Friday 0830 – 1700 (max 7 adults)

Pre-School team: Monday – Friday 0830 – 1730 (up to 6 adults; 28 children)

Sunday Worship: 0830 – 1230 (up to 100 adults and 20 young people);

Parent & Toddler group: Mondays 0900 – 1100 during term time (up to 30 adults and 25 babies/toddlers)

Tuesday Fellowship: 1330 – 1530 during term time (up to 30 adults)

Renew 1066: Wednesdays 1000 – 12 noon (up to 25 adults)

After School Club: Thursdays 1530 – 1700 (up to 40 children aged 7-12, 5 teenaged young leaders and 8 adults)

Friday Coffee Club: 1000 - 1200 noon every Friday during term time (up to 25 adults, mostly elderly)

Friday 4:12: 1900 – 2100 (up to 20 teenagers and 3 adults)

The activities listed above show the routine use of the building and the largest groups that we host. In addition to this, several other smaller groups meet at the church regularly, and many members come and go from the buildings during the week. The busiest times are Sundays and Fridays. We employ four cleaning staff, and contractors visit the premises when necessary.

c. Size

The chapel can accommodate approximately 150 people seated. It has a gallery which seats around 50 people.

The rest of the accommodation at the front of the building is single storey. At the back of the premises there is a single staircase to the first-floor offices, youth room and prayer room. There is a lift too.

#### **5. Fire Safety Systems**

a. Fire warning system

i. Automatic fire detection system is in place at back of premises.

ii. Break-glass system in place by both main access points in the foyer of premises.

b. Emergency Lighting is in place and is maintained by competent volunteers.

#### **6. Plan Drawing**

Plan drawings are attached showing the location of escape routes, exits, stairs, fire safety signs and notices, fire warning devices, emergency lights and firefighting equipment.

## 7. Identify Fire Hazards by area

8. Area	Ignition Source	Fuel Source
Manna House Kitchen	Electrical equipment Gas hob	Cloth (tea towels, oven gloves) Food
Manna House	Electrical equipment	Curtains, play equipment
Chapel	Electrical equipment	Curtains, chair covers, blinds, boiler, PA equipment
Children's Rooms	Electrical equipment	Play equipment, cloth, display boards, paper
1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	Electrical equipment	Blinds, chair covers, notice boards, paper

- a. Work Processes – none
- b. Structural features  
Void above ceilings (MH loft, void above chapel)

## 9. Identify people at risk from Fire

See notes under 4b ('Occupancy').

## 10. Evaluate, Remove, Reduce and Protect from risk

### Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring

The chance of a fire starting on the premises is **low**. However, it is important to consider the chances of a fire starting:

- Accidentally
- By act or omission
- Deliberately

### Consider:

- a. *Housekeeping (day to day practices)*  
We employ cleaners who work to prevent build-up of debris and waste materials. There are rubbish bins across the premises and the cleaners (or volunteers) remove these to wheelie bins which are stored away from the building in the car park. BBC has a policy of shutting all windows and doors when the building is not in use (ie reduction of oxygen supply).
- b. *Storage*  
Most storage areas are kept tidy and well organised. The resources room on the ground floor was reorganised again at Easter 2023, but it can still become something of a dumping ground – just need to keep on top of this. The toy store is well organised, but is perhaps over full. However, it does not impact on any escape route and the only potential sources of ignition are the lights, and so I would assess this area as being at low risk of fire. In the chapel foyer there is a small storage cupboard used for electrical equipment such as microphones, amps and some musical

instruments. This also houses one of our boilers...

c. *Dangerous chemicals*

- i. We own a small number of LPG cylinders which we use for camps etc. They are stored away from the building.
- ii. We have a supply of paint that is stored under the stairs in the chapel foyer.
- iii. Use of real flames, including candles is rare and is monitored carefully by staff and other adults. Fire extinguishers are on hand.

d. *Equipment and machinery*

The cooker hood was cleaned professionally 03/07/20 and repaired 16/07/20. Since COVID the use of the cooker has declined considerably.

Our photocopier is maintained by CopyLink, with whom we have a contact.

e. *Electrical Safety*

All appliances to be inspected visually.

All portable appliances were tested and passed by an electrician on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

f. *Smoking*

Neither smoking nor vaping is permitted at BBC.

g. *Existing layout and construction*

There is a void above the Manna House (the loft) in which we store some resources including Christmas decorations; puppets and a puppet theatre; craft materials etc. This is accessible via a ladder. There is also a void above the chapel – inaccessible without specialist equipment.

h. *Possible hazards in corridors / stairways (ie escape routes)*

We have a few items in the main entrance: two small chairs, a small table, a coat stand and a photocopier. None would impede access to fire exits. Nothing is kept on the stairs. Some cleaning equipment and supplies (such as hand towels, toilet rolls, a vacuum cleaner and a carpet shampooing machine) are stored close to the cleaning cupboard at the bottom of the stairs, and although none of this blocks the doorway.

i. *Insulated core panels*

I don't think BBC has any insulated core panels: certainly there is none on the exterior of the building. Need to check eg prayer room. See p 50 of HMG's Fire Safety Risk Assessment (small and medium places of assembly) for more detail.

j. *Restricting the spread of smoke and fire*

All chair coverings, blinds and curtains are made of fire-retardant fabric.

k. *Arson*

Rubbish bins are stored away from the building. New bins have been in place since May 2021, one of which is lockable. Windows and doors are secure. External lighting overlooking the car park at the rear of the building was upgraded in October 2021, which should act as a further deterrent.

I. *Help for people with special needs*

The greatest risk for people with special needs lies probably in the chance of a fire taking hold which limits access to the stairway whilst people with mobility issues are upstairs. However, the area is well equipped with fire extinguishers and the risk of fire breaking out in this area is low.

**11. Means of escape: horizontal evacuation**

At the moment, our largest gathering is usually the congregation that gathers for worship on Sunday mornings. Currently, there is no need to control the number of occupants: everyone should be able to evacuate the building safely via one of the four fire exits on the ground floor. I estimate that it would take our least mobile members five minutes to get out of the building, and perhaps seven or eight to reach the muster point. **We need to draw up a buddy system for people with disabilities.**

**Signage to Fire Exit for those in the Chapel gallery needs to be put in place and signage about what to do in the event of a fire needs to be improved.**

**12. Means of escape: vertical evacuation**

We have only one stairway. This is perhaps our greatest potential fire risk: if people with disabilities have accessed the first floor using our lift and then a fire breaks out affecting access to the stairway. However, it is unlikely that a fire would take hold specifically in this area: the nearby cleaning cupboard contains cleaning materials, but there are no likely sources of ignition in the area. We have fire extinguishers at the top of the stairs and in the rear foyer, so it should be possible to extinguish any fire if it were to break out.

**13. Fire safety signs and notices**

- a. All fire safety signs comply with the current standard.
- b. There are no 'fire exit' signs in the chapel, chapel gallery or chapel foyer.**
- c. There are no pictorial fire safety signs showing escape routes from the premises.**
- d. Current signs instructing people what to do in the event of a fire are home-produced and purely textual: could improve these.**
- e. I don't know whether any of our internal doors are fire doors – none has the standard sign on it.**

**14. Fire warning systems**

The fire warning system works adequately for most of the premises, **although there are no sounders in the chapel, the Manna House, the MH kitchen or loos. People with hearing difficulties may struggle to hear the alarm particularly if they were in the loos. Need to address this.**

**15. Emergency lighting system**

The emergency lighting system is effective and well maintained. It works in the event of a power cut. **However, there is no emergency lighting anywhere in the chapel, and not much in the Manna House. We should buy a set of handheld torches to be kept in the resources room.**

**16. Firefighting equipment**

We have sufficient firefighting equipment for the premises, and it is checked annually by JS Fire Protection Ltd. It is located on the escape routes and near to exit doors throughout the premises.

**17. Maintenance**

Our firefighting equipment is maintained annually by JS Fire Protection Ltd. Our fire prevention systems are checked routinely by volunteers Gary and Janet Walsh who work in this area professionally. The fire alarm is tested weekly, the emergency lighting is tested monthly. We have records of these checks / services.

**18. Procedure for calling the fire service**

The person who discovers the fire will call the fire service. There are signs throughout the building which explain what to do in the event of a fire. **But these should be improved (see earlier comments).**

**19. Emergency Action Plan (EAP)**

Our EAP is attached to this document at Appendix A.

**20. Staff Training**

All staff have undertaken 'Fire Warden' training.

**21. Fire drills**

Fire drills are carried out routinely, in line with our Health and Safety policy.

**22. Rectification of Fire Safety Deficiencies**

Date	Deficiency	Priority	Target date	Date completed
02/09/20	Lack of call point by foyer entrance doors	High	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct 20	
02/09/20	Ten emergency lights not working	Med	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	Nov 2020
02/09/20	Tidy area at foot of stairs	Med	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	Ongoing
02/09/20	Improve external lighting	Low	Jan 2021	Oct 2021
02/09/20	Draw up buddy system for people with disabilities	Low	Jan 2021	
02/09/20	Signage needs improving	High	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	
02/09/20	Lack of sounders in older parts of the premises – take advice on this	High	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	
02/09/20	Buy set of torches	Med	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	
02/09/20	Staff need to be informed about the FRA and what needs to be done in the event of a fire	High	23 <sup>rd</sup> Oct	

Significant Findings

Significant Finding	Control measures and actions

### Additional Hazards

In our judgement, there are no specific additional hazards to which we should alert the Fire Service.

### Revisions

- i. 09.09.20 changes made to take account of premises inspection by Church Administrator and Chair of Premises Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> September: to identify ignition and fuel sources (point 7); to note that fabrics used on the premises are fire retardant (10j); to note where signage is absent or in need of improvement (points 11, 13, 18); to note flaws in fire safety systems (points 5, 14).
- ii. 15.06.21 amended to show that fire exit signs all comply with regulations and that the emergency lighting has been repaired.
- iii. 23.08.21 amended to reflect fact that JS Fire Protection Ltd has been in to discuss our FRA; to refer to lockable bin; minor drafting amendments.
- iv. 23.08.22 drafting changes to reflect typical occupancy post-COVID and to record some improvements that have been made.
- v. 11.08.23 minor drafting changes and inclusion of reference to new glass sounder by foyer front doors and most recent date when PAT was carried out.