

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN OUR PARISH

In May 2018, the Diocese of Motherwell launched a major initiative to promote the safety of parishioners, visitors and contractors in our churches and to ensure that all our arrangements comply with legislation and with the requirements of the company which insures our church and presbytery. This initiative is being overseen by an external Consultant in Health and Safety appointed by the Diocese. The cost to the parish so far this year is £3,731.85*, a figure which, as you will see below, is set to rise further.

ROLE OF THE CONSULTANT: In July 2018, the Consultant visited the parish and met with three Pass Keepers. After a walk round at the church and chapel house, he prepared a Fire Risk Assessment and a Safety Action Plan. We have kept in touch with him in the intervening months. He also visited us again in October to review the progress made since July. It is good to be able to report that he declared himself happy with the action taken to date. We have also sought advice from the Fire Service. The parish will pay a pro rata fee for this service (as yet unknown)

SIGNAGE: You will have noticed some new signs and posters around the building, for example in the porch, on the door of the boiler room, in the lift and on toilet doors. In the very near future we shall put up additional signs showing the routes to be taken in case of an emergency evacuation of the church. These new signs and posters cost us £94.00

PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING: This relates to urns, kettles, vacuum cleaners, lamps etc. Those who use these appliances are expected to carry out a visual inspection regularly and to report any problem. In addition, the appliances must be tested once a year by a qualified person employed by a contractor approved at diocesan level. This formal testing was carried out in October at a cost to the parish of £468.00. We are pleased to report all our appliances were declared safe.

LIFT: The lift is proving to be a boon to parishioners with a disability or a mobility problem though, as the new signs make clear, it cannot be used in an emergency evacuation. As you would expect, the lift is checked and serviced every three months. The services this year have cost the parish £806.00

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: A visual inspection of the fire extinguishers is carried out 'in-house' each month.

There is also a legal requirement that they be checked annually by a qualified person, employed by a company approved by the diocese. Where necessary, the extinguishers are to be replenished or replaced. This year, we payed £921.85 for the service and for a number of new extinguishers.

FIXED WIRE ELECTRICAL MAINS SYSTEM: In this case, the legal requirement is that the system must be tested every five years, again by a qualified person from a contractor approved by the Diocese. We have arranged for the test to be carried out on 20 and 21 November 2018. We don't like to think about what that will cost us in the parish! (approx. £800.00)*

GAS BOILERS: There are gas boilers both in the church and in the presbytery. The legal requirement is that these must be serviced annually by a qualified person from a contractor approved by the Diocese. These boilers are due for service this month. Here too, we expect a hefty bill to wing its way to the parish.

RECORD KEEPING: Records are kept of all maintenance, services and checks, whether carried out by Pass Keepers or by contractors. The records must be available for scrutiny by the Diocese and its Consultant and by the company which insures our premises.

FIRST AID: We have two well-stocked first aid boxes, one in the outer sacristy and the other in the kitchen downstairs. The boxes are maintained by two parishioners, both of them qualified nurses. Our thanks to them and to the Pass Keepers who are contributing so much to this review.

FIRE ALARM AND EVACUATION: There are several aspects to this. **The Fire Alarm Panel** is checked daily by a Pass Keeper and annually by an approved contractor. **The Fire Alarm** is tested weekly by Pass Keepers and is serviced annually by an approved contractor. **The Fire Escape Routes and Exits** are checked weekly by Pass Keepers. **Emergency Lighting** is checked monthly by a Pass Keeper and annually by the approved contractor. For the recent annual check and service, the contractor's fee was £642.00. With input from Pass Keepers, we are currently reviewing our practice for the **Fire Evacuation Routes and Assembly Points** to which members of the congregation should make their way in the event of an emergency evacuation. These arrangements will have to take account of the new access road to the church and must have a particular care for disabled parishioners. Our current thinking is that:

- **disabled parishioners should exit the church via the porch and make their way to the bottom of the church car park;**
- **all other parishioners should make their way to the area at the Underpass, EITHER via the porch and the stairs outside the church OR via the stairs at the back of the church.**

Before making a final decision on this, we would like to hear from any parishioner with a disability or mobility problem who thinks that this arrangement is unsuitable for them. When that final decision is made, new signs displaying the evacuation routes will be posted at appropriate points in the church and porch.