

Swaffham Town Council
Town Hall
4 London Street
Swaffham
PE37 7DQ

Our Ref: SC/STC/April 2019

8th April 2019

Dear Richard

Following my visit on 4th April, please can you extend my thanks to your team not only for their time spent with me, but also their helpful and welcoming nature. I found all the persons I spoke to helpful, informative and open with answers to questions I posed.

I found the tour of the workshop, recreation ground work area and cemetery with Graham West (GW), along with my discussions relating to health and safety paperwork with Hannah Duggan (HD) helpful, beneficial and giving a clear view of health and safety standards across these areas.

I have documented below my findings and recommendations following my visit

Documentation

HD presented various files, including records covering various health and safety topics and document matrix showing current status of various action points and on-going training.

There is a blend of physical files, supported by electronic format. This blend allows for staff to readily view and, if required take the physical file to various points of the building to check/inspect and record findings i.e. fire risk assessment.

General Risk Assessments

HD presented the risk assessments in physical format, which beneficial as this allows for risk assessments to be taken to areas of work and checked against standard practise. It also allows for impromptu 'tool box' type refresher training to be undertaken if required.

Action Required

The viewed risk assessments were signed and dated 2016. Whilst discussing the risk assessments with both HD & GW it is clear that there are very few changes from year to year in relation to some assessments.

Whilst this maybe the case, risk assessments should be reviewed as per legislative requirements, notably:

- When they are deemed as no longer suitable
- After an incident
- Review as part of the management plan. Whilst there is no defined time for reviews, it is good practice to review at least annually

The review process, can be a desk top study or a physical walk of the task/area encompassed within the risk assessment. *Once reviewed the risk assessment/s must be signed, dated and with a printed name and persons role listed.*

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Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

The offices have recently undergone a layout change. Office layout changes often bring issues i.e. light levels, air drafts, noise.

It is encouraging to note that Swaffham Town Council have recognised that risk that could be posed by poor office layout and ergonomics, by undertaking DSE assessments with office staff.

Results from the DSE assessments have been collated, and mostly actioned.

Action Required

The customer interface with the office staff area has been highlighted as an area of improvement in terms of general layout and ergonomics. This area can be improved with changes to physical counter/shutter area, which will aid the staff workstation area.

It may be beneficial to call in the services of an office design company to aid with is, and scope out requirements with them to seek their knowledge.

Fire Control and Fire Risk Assessment

The fire risk assessment (FRA) covers various areas under the Swaffham Town Council control. The FRA was undertaken in March 2017. Various actions have been highlighted from this FRA, which have been collated on a separate table. At the time of this review, outstanding actions were still listed on the table.

Additionally, fire drills were discussed as part of the FRA. A general discussion took place relating to egress from the upper floor chamber and in particular when the museum is closed for the night.

Fire extinguishers are serviced by a competent third party company on an annual basis, with records held. During the visit to the workshop, it was noted that a water extinguisher may have been missed off the annual inspection.

The Fire Evacuation Plan, form part of the procedure suite for Swaffham Town Council. There is no documented evidence that persons have read, these procedures although they are referenced in the staff handbook.

Action Required

The FRA, like any risk assessment should be viewed as a live document. As such, it should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is still valid and no significant changes have occurred since it was created. Withstanding this, a formal review should be undertaken in 2020 by competent persons with the caveat that all the identified actions from the 2017 FRA have been actioned or are being actioned:

- Each action point will need to be annotated with a printed name, signature and date to show works being undertaken, and to also establish that this process keeps the FRA a 'live' document.

Additionally:

- A formal fire drill encompassing the first floor chamber in an 'out of hours' situation i.e. when the museum is closed should be undertaken to prove the escape route.
- The water fire extinguisher in the workshop should be inspected and maintained as per other extinguishers throughout the Swaffham Town Council premises
- Fire emergency plans should be brought to staff attention in a formal way with proof that persons have read. A simple sign off sheet with date, name and signature will suffice.

It maybe prudent to consider other procedures that require documented evidence of staff knowledge i.e. work procedures and risk assessments.

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On line Health and Safety Training

A programme of internet based training has been purchased in March 2018 covering a wide variety of subjects which are appropriate to staff e.g. office or undertaking grounds work / external activities. Subjects range from slip/trip falls through to asbestos awareness. The courses are intended to act as an information and instruction point, therefore supporting staff in their undertakings.

All courses, persons undertaking and progression of the courses are held on a spreadsheet to give a global overview of the courses. A majority of courses had yet to be completed

Action Required

Courses need completing in a timely manner.

Additional Training (held over action point from 2018 review)

"...GW trains and instruct in the use of the grounds equipment (with the exception of chainsaw use), however can it be proved that GW has the required knowledge, skills and competence to undertake the training, ensuring all the salient points are put across e.g. angles of ground ride on mowers can be used, safety distances for third party persons when undertaking strimming etc."

Action Required

GW should put on a groundsman equipment course (normally half day at the place of work) or GW is assessed by the third party trainer for competence.

Physical walk Round.**Sharps**

Sharps i.e. needles was discussed during last years review. The situation appears to have become more of an issue with the collection and disposal of sharps being problematical.

During the walk round I was shown a purpose build sharps container at the rear of the public toilets. This is overflowing. Lifting the lid of the container give easy access to a syringe/needle.

To minimise the overflowing of the container sharps have been collected and placed into either small disposal kits, or held in a plastic box, on the high level storage area.

Human excrement

During conversations with various persons the subject of travellers came to the fore. Particularly the subject of clearing the debris, including human excrement from the travellers camp. It quickly became apparent that the travellers had been using the ground area for a toilet, and also emptying caravan toilets into the immediate vicinity.

This particular incident is out side the scope of a normal day, however human excrement is encountered time to time by some Swaffham Town Council staff during their work.

As highlighted during the last inspection there is a risk of contact with blood borne virous from syringes and human excrement/sewerage.

Action Required

The Swaffham Town Council should have a clear policy relating to the handling of sharps and human excrement. If this is not in place it should be constructed to offer clear and concise information to those who may come into contact with sharps or human excrement during the course of their undertakings.

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Additionally, it is recommended that all persons who come into contact with sharps or human excrement should consult with their own doctor about suitable vaccinations.

Note: as the employees full medical record is personal to them, it is felt that their Dr is best placed in offering recommendations relating to the level of vaccination required.

Vaccinations normally associated with sharps and sewerage are:

- Tetanus
- Polio
- Hep A
- Hep B

Any vaccination undertaken from the above list will be determined by the Dr, and risk assessment i.e. the likelihood of exposure/contact with harmful items.

Workshop and Recreational Grounds Area

The workshop has been completed since the last inspection. The workshop is set out in to enable a majority of the floor area to be given over to work based activities, with a work bench and welfare (handwashing) facilities located at the rear. Electrics are tested and certificated. Fire extinguishers are in place within the workshop (see prior comments relating to fire extinguishers)

Due to the travellers arriving on a recreational park area, there was some items (goal posts) and other items filling a majority of the floor space. However some of these items will be removed in the coming months to allow increased egress/access to the work benches.

There was works being conducted on the old toilet block at the recreational ground. A slot type trench, circa 1,000mm deep had been dug for new water and electrical services to the toilet block.

The exposed excavation and work area was correctly segregated from the public area. There was no evidence of materials (spoil) entering the public area. The trench that had been backfilled was done as not to create deep depressions or raised trip hazards.

Powered hand tools were in use, including reduced 110v equipment, along with non-powered hand tools i.e. spades.

All equipment was presented in good order and suitable for the task. All staff observed in this area were wearing appropriate personal protective equipment i.e. high visibility clothing, eye protection (when operating breaker tooling), safety footwear etc.

Summary

Swaffham Town Council have maintained health and safety to a suitable level for the undertakings within the scope of its works. The action points/recommendations listed in this letter are intended to act as a support to the works undertaken, and enhance those standards. Any lapse in maintaining documents or training may result in injury, damage or enforcement action.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to employees of Swaffham Town Council for making me feel very welcome and taking time out of busy schedules to accommodate my visit.

If you have any questions relating to the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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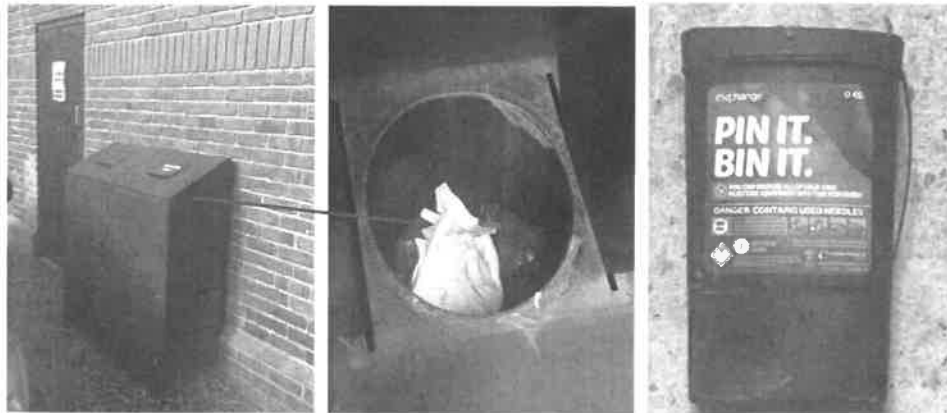
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Photos taken during the visit:

Sharps



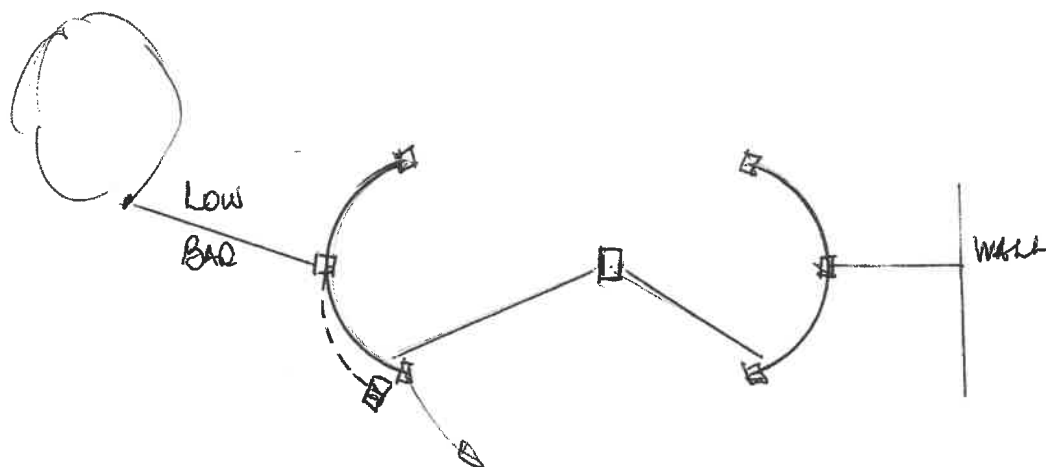
Workshop



Recreational Area (Toilets)





SWAFFHAM CHURCHYARD KISSING GATES

A possible solution for consideration:

Cut the arc of the larger (left) gate. Re-weld and set so gate will open fully.

Fit a light spring so that gate is held against unaltered arc if this is thought necessary and/or provide method for buggy users to open gate.

Repair footway surface at the opening.

This will allow buggy and pushchair users to use the gate without significantly altering the appearance.

