**AGM OF MEMBERS MARCH 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM 8.4**

**HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

**ROTHERFIELD AND MARK CROSS BONFIRE SOCIETY**

# **Health and Safety Policy Rotherfield and Mark Cross Bonfire Society**

## Policy Statement

Rotherfield and Mark Cross Bonfire Society is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all members, volunteers, participants, emergency services and the general public during all events and activities. We recognize our duty of care and take all reasonable steps to minimize risks associated with our events, including our annual torchlit procession, bonfire night, and participation in other bonfire society events.

## Responsibilities

Other specific responsibilities can also be defined with the associated risk assessments, however main responsibilities are as follows:

* **Company Directors:** Holds overall responsibility for health and safety at all society events.
* **Committee:** Responsible for the oversight and implementation of the Health & Safety systems, polices and procedures.
* **Health and Safety Officer:** Oversees risk assessments, safety implementation, and incident reporting.
* **Event Stewards and Marshals:** Responsible for ensuring event safety, managing crowd control, and enforcing safety guidelines.
* **Members and Volunteers:** Expected to comply with all safety procedures and report any hazards or concerns.

Where competence does not exist within the team, competent 3rd parties will be sourced to support the committee and Directors.

# Arrangements for Health and Safety

## General Arrangements

* All event plans will be pre submitted to the local authorities as required, only approved plans will be applied, any changes to preapproved plans will be resubmitted and approved by the required authority.
* A designated Health and Safety Officer will ensure all safety procedures are followed and updated as necessary.
* Pre-event safety briefings will be conducted for all stewards, volunteers, and key personnel.
* Adequate first aid facilities and trained personnel will be available at all events.
* Fire prevention measures, including controlled areas for bonfires and fireworks, will be strictly enforced.
* Safe crowd management strategies, including clearly marked exits, steward presence, and secure barriers, will be implemented.
* Regular inspections and safety checks of all equipment, torches, and structures will be conducted.
* Incident reporting procedures will be in place to document and address any accidents or near misses.
* Cooperation with local emergency services to ensure preparedness and response planning.
* Alcohol and Drug Use, The Bonfire Society will ensure that alcohol is only sold or consumed in designated areas and that attendees are not permitted to consume alcohol in unsafe or restricted zones.
* The use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited, and any attendee found under the influence of illegal substances will be removed from the event.
* Alcohol consumption will be monitored to prevent any unsafe levels of intoxication that could lead to accidents or disruptions.
* Weather Conditions, Weather conditions can pose risks to safety, especially during outdoor events. The following steps will be taken:
  + Weather Monitoring: Weather forecasts will be closely monitored leading up to and during the event. If adverse weather conditions (such as high winds, heavy rain, or extreme heat) are predicted, contingency plans will be put in place.
  + Weather-Related Evacuations: If necessary, the event will be postponed or cancelled if conditions become unsafe, such as high winds that could affect the bonfire or fireworks display.

## First Aid Needs Assessment

* A first aid needs assessment will be conducted for each event to determine the level of medical support required.
* The number and location of first aid stations will be based on event size, expected attendance, and potential risks.
* Trained first aiders will be present at all events.
* Consideration of 1st aider location, such as key points along event routes and near high-risk areas such as bonfires and torch distribution points.
* A communication system will be in place to quickly summon medical assistance if required.
* Emergency service access routes will be identified and kept clear at all times to ensure prompt response.
* Any first aid incidents will be documented, and records will be reviewed to improve future event safety measures.

# Risk Assessment and Hazard Control

## Risk Assessment and Hazard Control

Prior to each event, a comprehensive set of risk assessment will be conducted to identify potential hazards and to implement control measures to mitigate those risks. The risk assessment will cover areas including:

* Fire safety
* Crowd control
* Site access and egress
* Traffic and vehicle movement
* Weather conditions
* Use of fireworks or pyrotechnics
* Emergency evacuation procedures
* Welfare provisions for staff and attendees

The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated regularly, especially in the event of changes in the venue or activities.

* Public safety is a priority at all events, with designated safe areas and clear signage provided.
* Risk assessments will be conducted before all events to identify and mitigate potential hazards.
* Fire safety precautions, including fire marshals and suppression equipment, will be in place.
* Safe storage, handling, and disposal of flammable materials, including torches, will be enforced.
* Adequate barriers and crowd control measures will be implemented to protect participants and the public.
* Stewards will be stationed along procession routes and event areas to monitor safety and assist the public; these will be pre assessed and defined through risk assessments.
* Adequate lighting will be provided to ensure clear visibility in crowded or dark areas.
* Lost child and vulnerable person procedures will be in place, with designated meeting points and staff trained to handle such situations.
* Risk assessments will be conducted before all events to identify and mitigate potential hazards.

## Route Planning and Event Coordination

* Routes for processions will be carefully planned to ensure participant and public safety.
* Risk assessments will be conducted for all planned routes to identify hazards and mitigation strategies.
* Advance communication with local authorities will be carried out regarding road closures, diversions, and emergency access routes.
* Road closure applications will be submitted in compliance with local regulations, ensuring appropriate signage and stewarding.
* Welfare facilities, including accessible toilets and rest areas, will be provided at key locations along the route.
* Clear communication will be established with local businesses and residents regarding event timings, expected disruptions, and alternative access routes.
* Information regarding event safety, road closures, and emergency procedures will be shared with the public through various channels, including social media, local press, and direct correspondence.

## Safe Conduct and Participation

* All participants must follow safety briefings and event rules.
* Individuals handling torches must wear appropriate protective clothing.
* Alcohol consumption will be strictly controlled, and those deemed unfit to participate will not be allowed.
* Fireworks and bonfires will be managed only by trained and authorized individuals.
* Prerequisites will be agreed with the emergency services present at the evening

# Emergency Procedures

* An emergency plan will be in place for all events, including clear evacuation procedures.
* Communication systems such as radios will be used to coordinate responses.
* First aiders will be present at all events, and all incidents will be recorded and reviewed.
* Public announcements and steward guidance will be used to inform attendees of emergency procedures.
* Emergency services access routes will be designated and kept clear at all times.
* A missing persons protocol will be in place to quickly reunite lost individuals with their group or guardians.
* When developing these procedures, input from professional emergency responders will be sought.

# Attendance at Other Bonfire Society Events

* Members representing Rotherfield and Mark Cross Bonfire Society at other bonfire society events must adhere to both our health and safety guidelines and those set by the host society.
* Members must attend pre-event briefings to understand the specific safety measures, routes, and emergency procedures of the host event.
* Suitable clothing, including fire-resistant (or treated) clothing and appropriate footwear, must be worn when carrying torches.
* Alcohol consumption must be managed responsibly, and any member deemed unfit to participate will not be allowed to take part.
* The Society will ensure that emergency contact details are recorded for all participating members.
* A designated lead member will be responsible for coordinating with the host society and relaying safety information to our members.
* Any incidents or near-misses occurring during participation in external events must be reported to our Health and Safety Officer for review and necessary action.

# Compliance and Review

* The Society will comply with relevant health and safety legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
* This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to reflect changes in legal requirements or best practices.

Signed: Steve Denness

Director and Chairperson, Rotherfield and Mark Cross Bonfire Society

Date:  18 March 2025