Millennium Farm Trust

GN1.1 Fire Safety and Fire Risk Management Procedures V04

Next review date March 2027

Version Control

Version number	Date of changes	Who	Review summary
V02	Jan 2020	T Freathy	Scheduled review. No changes. Need to reconsider when new building is installed.
V03	June 2022	T Freathy	Scheduled review. Changes made following completion of new building
	Jan 2024	T Freathy	Scheduled review. No changes.
V04	March 26	T Freathy	Full review. Revised responsibilities, fire risk assessment, evacuation arrangements, PEEPs, fire drills, training and use of firefighting equipment.

1. Scope and Purpose

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to all buildings, structures and areas owned, leased, occupied or used by Millennium Farm Trust (MFT) at Depden Care Farm.
It applies to staff, volunteers, Farm Helpers, children and young people, contractors and visitors.
Where an activity takes place away from Depden Care Farm, appropriate emergency and fire arrangements will form part of the risk assessment for that activity.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect the lives and wellbeing of everyone using Depden Care Farm.
- Prevent fires occurring wherever reasonably practicable.
- Reduce the risk of fire spreading.
- Ensure that people can evacuate safely in an emergency.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for people who may require assistance to evacuate.
- Maintain suitable fire-detection, warning and firefighting arrangements.
- Ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Comply with relevant fire-safety legislation.

The safety of people takes priority over the protection of buildings, equipment, animals or other property.
No member of staff, volunteer, Farm Helper or visitor is expected to place themselves in danger in order to fight a fire, investigate its cause, rescue property or rescue another person.

2. Legislation

MFT will comply with relevant fire-safety legislation, principally the:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

MFT will also have regard to current government and Fire and Rescue Service guidance relevant to its premises and activities.

3. Fire Safety Responsibilities

3.1 Responsible Person

For the purposes of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, MFT will ensure that the legal responsibilities of the **Responsible Person** are clearly identified and discharged.
The Responsible Person has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate fire-safety arrangements are in place.
This includes ensuring that:

- A suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment is maintained.
- Appropriate preventive and protective measures are implemented.
- Fire-detection and warning systems are appropriate.
- Means of escape are maintained.
- Firefighting equipment is provided and maintained where appropriate.
- Emergency arrangements are established.
- Appropriate information and training are provided.
- People requiring assistance to evacuate are identified and supported.
- Fire-safety arrangements are monitored and reviewed.

Competent staff or external advisers may assist MFT in carrying out these duties, but the legal responsibility cannot simply be transferred to a contractor or adviser.

3.2 Director

The Director is responsible for ensuring that the Farm's fire-safety arrangements are implemented in practice.
This includes:

- Ensuring actions arising from the Fire Risk Assessment are completed.
- Ensuring required testing and maintenance is undertaken.
- Arranging appropriate fire drills.
- Ensuring staff receive suitable training.

- Ensuring appropriate evacuation arrangements are in place for Farm Helpers and young people.
- Maintaining or arranging maintenance of fire-safety records.
- Reporting significant concerns to the Board of Trustees.
- Obtaining competent specialist advice where required.

Day-to-day tasks may be delegated to appropriately competent members of staff.

3.3 Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers must:

- Familiarise themselves with the fire procedures.
- Know the appropriate evacuation routes and assembly point.
- Keep fire exits and escape routes clear.
- Report fire hazards or defects promptly.
- Follow evacuation arrangements.
- Support Farm Helpers and young people to evacuate according to their needs.
- Never take unnecessary risks in responding to a fire.

4. Fire Risk Assessment

MFT will maintain a suitable and sufficient written Fire Risk Assessment for its premises.

The assessment will consider, as appropriate:

- Sources of ignition.
- Combustible and flammable materials.
- Electrical equipment.
- Heating equipment.
- Cooking and kitchen equipment.
- Machinery and workshop activities.
- Fuel and other hazardous substances.
- Hay, straw, timber and other combustible agricultural materials.
- Buildings and structures.
- Escape routes and exits.
- Fire detection and warning.
- Firefighting equipment.
- Emergency lighting.
- People at particular risk.
- Disabled people and others who may require assistance.
- Young people.
- Contractors and visitors.
- Arrangements for evacuation.
- The potential for fire to spread between buildings or areas.

The Fire Risk Assessment will identify any actions required and these will be recorded, allocated and monitored until completed.

The Fire Risk Assessment will be reviewed:

- At appropriate intervals.

- Following significant alterations to buildings or their use.
- Following installation of new equipment or significant changes in activities.
- Following a fire or significant fire-related incident.
- Where evacuation arrangements change.
- Where there is reason to believe that the existing assessment is no longer suitable or sufficient.

5. Fire Prevention

Everyone using the Farm has a responsibility to help prevent fire.

5.1 Housekeeping
Buildings and work areas should be kept reasonably clean and tidy.
Combustible waste should not be allowed to accumulate unnecessarily.
Escape routes, fire exits and access to fire-safety equipment must be kept clear.

5.2 Flammable and Combustible Materials
Flammable substances will be stored and used in accordance with relevant risk and COSHH assessments.
Where possible, significant quantities of flammable materials will be stored away from occupied buildings.
Quantities kept within buildings should be kept to the minimum reasonably necessary.
Fuel, gas cylinders and other significant fire hazards must be appropriately stored.

5.3 Electrical Equipment
Electrical equipment must be maintained in a safe condition.
Damaged equipment, plugs, cables or sockets must be taken out of use or reported promptly.
Electrical sockets and extension leads must not be overloaded.
Portable heating or cooking equipment must only be used where authorised and in accordance with the Fire Risk Assessment.

5.4 Smoking and Vaping
Smoking and vaping are controlled under **GN1.2 Smoking and Vaping Policy**.
Smoking is not permitted within Farm buildings or other areas prohibited under that policy.

5.5 Contractors and Hot Work
Contractor activities which increase the risk of fire must be appropriately assessed and controlled.
Activities such as welding, grinding, cutting or other work producing flames, heat or sparks must not take place without appropriate precautions.
Where necessary, a specific safe system of work or hot-work permit arrangement will be used.

6. Fire Detection, Warning and Alarm Arrangements

Suitable means of detecting fire and warning occupants will be provided according to the Fire Risk Assessment for each building.
The means of raising the alarm may vary between buildings according to their size, construction and use.
Everyone using the premises must be able to recognise the fire-warning method applicable to the area they are using.
The arrangements must take account of people who may:

- Have hearing or visual impairments.
- Have communication difficulties.
- Have learning disabilities or SEND.
- Not recognise or understand an alarm.
- Become distressed or confused by an alarm.
- Require prompting or physical assistance to evacuate.

Any defect in fire-detection or warning equipment must be reported immediately and temporary precautions put in place where necessary.

7. Firefighting Equipment

Appropriate portable firefighting equipment will be provided according to the Fire Risk Assessment.
Fire extinguishers and other equipment will be inspected and maintained by a competent provider in accordance with appropriate standards and manufacturer requirements.

The primary purpose of staff in a fire is evacuation, not firefighting.

An extinguisher may only be used where:

- The person has received appropriate instruction or training.
- The fire is small and appears capable of being extinguished safely.
- The person's escape route is clear and remains available.
- There is no significant smoke or other indication that the fire is developing rapidly.
- The person feels able to do so safely.

There is **no expectation or requirement** for a member of staff to fight a fire.
If there is any doubt, the person must evacuate.
No person may re-enter a building specifically to fight a fire.

8. General Emergency Evacuation Procedure

If a fire is discovered or the fire alarm/warning is raised:

1. **Raise the alarm immediately.**
2. **Evacuate the building by the nearest safe exit.**
3. **Call 999** and request the Fire and Rescue Service.
4. Proceed to the designated assembly point.
5. Account for staff, volunteers, Farm Helpers, young people and visitors.
6. Inform the Fire and Rescue Service of:
    - The location or suspected location of the fire.
    - Whether everyone is accounted for.
    - Anyone believed to remain in the building.
    - Any known significant hazards.
7. Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so.

Doors should be closed on leaving where this can be done immediately and safely.

People must **not delay evacuation** in order to:

- Collect belongings.
- Shut windows.
- Investigate the cause of the alarm.
- Collect equipment.
- Fight the fire.
- Rescue animals or property.

9. Staff Responsibilities During Evacuation

Staff supporting Farm Helpers or young people should encourage and assist them to leave immediately by the nearest safe route.

Where it is safe to do so, staff may make a brief visual check of their immediate working area as they leave.

Staff must **not** undertake an extensive search or enter an area where there is:

- Smoke.
- Fire.
- Significant heat.
- Uncertainty about conditions.
- Any other indication of danger.

The evacuation of people takes priority over checking rooms or property.

At the assembly point, staff should report:

- Who is present.
- Anyone unaccounted for.
- The last known location of anyone missing.
- Any person known to require assistance.
- Any relevant hazards.

Only the Fire and Rescue Service should enter a building to search for a person where doing so would expose staff to danger.

10. Farm Helpers and Young People

Staff must recognise that not every Farm Helper or young person will respond to an emergency in the same way.
Some people may:

- Not recognise an alarm.
- Not understand the need to evacuate.
- Become frightened or distressed.
- Freeze or refuse to move.
- Try to return to a familiar place.
- Have limited mobility.
- Have sensory or communication needs.
- Require additional processing time or reassurance.

Relevant individual risk assessments should identify known concerns.
Staff should use clear, calm and familiar communication and provide the level of assistance identified for the individual.
Physical guidance or support may be provided where necessary and appropriate to enable safe evacuation.

11. Emergency Evacuation Plans

11.1 General Emergency Evacuation Plan
MFT will maintain general emergency evacuation arrangements for its buildings and activities.
These arrangements will identify:

- Alarm or warning arrangements.
- Escape routes.
- Assembly points.
- Staff responsibilities.
- Arrangements for accounting for people.
- Contacting the emergency services.
- Arrangements for people who may need assistance.

11.2 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans – PEEPs
A **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)** will be prepared where an individual's disability or other needs could affect their ability to recognise an emergency, respond to an alarm or evacuate safely.
A PEEP may be required because of:

- Mobility difficulties.
- Visual or hearing impairment.
- Learning disability.
- Autism or other SEND.
- Cognitive or communication difficulties.
- Anxiety or distress associated with alarms.
- Medical needs.

- Any other factor affecting safe evacuation.

The PEEP should identify:

- What assistance the person requires.
- How they will be alerted to an emergency.
- Appropriate communication.
- Preferred evacuation route where relevant.
- Whether mobility assistance is needed.
- Staff roles.
- Any specialist equipment required.
- Alternative arrangements if the normal route is unavailable.

The person should be involved in developing their PEEP as far as reasonably practicable.
Where appropriate, parents, carers, support workers or relevant professionals should also contribute.
PEEPs will be kept with relevant support and emergency information and reviewed when the individual's needs or circumstances change.
A PEEP must provide a practical method of evacuation. It should not rely upon leaving a person within a building to await rescue unless this forms part of a specifically assessed, competent fire-safety strategy.

12. People with Temporary Mobility or Other Difficulties

A PEEP or temporary evacuation arrangement may also be required for someone whose ability to evacuate has temporarily changed, for example because of:

- Injury.
- Surgery.
- Pregnancy.
- Temporary illness.
- Use of crutches or another mobility aid.

The need for temporary arrangements should be considered as soon as MFT becomes aware of the change.

13. Visitors

Visitors should be appropriately accounted for while on site.
Staff receiving visitors are responsible for ensuring that they understand relevant emergency arrangements and assisting them during evacuation where required.
Visitors must proceed to the assembly point and remain there until advised otherwise.
Where a visitor has a disability or other need which may affect evacuation, appropriate arrangements should be agreed.

14. Contractors

Contractors working on site will be informed of relevant fire and evacuation arrangements.
They must:

- Follow MFT fire precautions.
- Keep escape routes clear.
- Control ignition sources.
- Use and store flammable materials safely.
- Follow agreed arrangements for hot work or other high-risk activities.
- Evacuate immediately when instructed or when the alarm is raised.

Contractor numbers and locations should be known or capable of being established during an evacuation.

15. First Aid During a Fire

The priority during a fire alarm is evacuation.
Where a first aid kit is immediately available and can be collected without delaying evacuation, a first aider may take it to the assembly point.
Nobody should delay their evacuation to find or collect first aid equipment.
Where a casualty can be safely assisted from the building without exposing others to significant risk, appropriate assistance should be given.
Where a casualty cannot be safely evacuated:

- Staff must not expose themselves to serious danger attempting a rescue.
- The Fire and Rescue Service must be told immediately.
- The casualty's location and condition should be communicated as accurately as possible.

Where a person's mobility or other needs are already known, those needs should have been considered in advance through a PEEP or other evacuation planning.

16. Assembly Point and Accounting for People

The designated assembly point for Depden Care Farm will be identified in the Fire Risk Assessment and displayed fire-action information.
The current assembly point is:
the north-east corner of the car park in front of HQ, unless the Fire Risk Assessment or emergency circumstances require an alternative.
Everyone evacuating should report to the assembly point and remain there until instructed otherwise.
Staff will use the available attendance, sign-in or other records to establish whether people are accounted for.
Nobody should leave the assembly point without ensuring that the person coordinating the evacuation knows they have left.

17. Calling the Fire and Rescue Service

Where there is a fire or reasonable suspicion of fire, the Fire and Rescue Service will be contacted by calling **999**.
Staff should not assume that someone else has made the call.
Information provided should include:

- Depden Care Farm.
- Rookery Farm, Depden.
- The nature and location of the incident.
- Any persons believed to remain inside.
- Relevant hazards such as fuel, gas cylinders, machinery or animals where known.

A member of staff should, where safe and practicable, meet the Fire and Rescue Service on arrival and provide relevant information.

18. Fire Drills

Fire drills will normally take place **at least twice each year**.
Additional drills will take place where appropriate, for example:

- Following significant changes to buildings or evacuation arrangements.
- Where new risks have been identified.
- Where a previous drill has identified shortcomings.
- Where a significant number of staff or Farm Helpers have changed.
- Where there has been a fire-related incident.

Because different Farm Helpers and young people attend on different days, drills will be planned over time to ensure that a reasonable range of people experience and understand the evacuation procedure.
Drills should test, as appropriate:

- Recognition of the alarm or warning.
- Speed and effectiveness of evacuation.
- Staff response.
- Support for people with PEEPs.
- Escape routes.
- Accounting arrangements.
- Assembly-point procedures.
- Communication.

The purpose of a drill is to **test and improve the system**, not simply to achieve the quickest evacuation time.
Drills will be recorded and any learning or actions identified will be followed up.

19. Alarm and Emergency Lighting Tests

Depden Care Farm does not have an electronic fire alarm system.

The main building is single-storey, non-residential, of simple layout, with two principal rooms, two toilets and multiple available exits. The fire-warning system therefore consists of **manually operated fire bells mounted on the walls**, which are used to raise the alarm throughout the building.

Anyone discovering a fire or signs of fire must immediately raise the alarm by operating the nearest manual fire bell and alerting others verbally where necessary.

Staff, volunteers, Farm Helpers and young people will be made familiar with:

- The sound of the fire bell.
- The location of the manual fire bells.
- The requirement to evacuate immediately when the alarm is raised.
- The location of the designated assembly point.

The manual fire bells will be checked regularly to ensure that they remain accessible, functional and capable of being heard throughout the areas in which people may be present. Checks will be recorded in the Fire Safety Log.

The adequacy of the fire-warning arrangements will be considered as part of the Fire Risk Assessment and during fire drills. If changes to the building, its use or occupancy mean that the existing arrangements are no longer sufficient, alternative or additional fire-detection or warning measures will be considered.

Where emergency lighting is provided, it will be inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the Fire Risk Assessment, relevant standards and manufacturer recommendations.
Any defect affecting a fire bell, emergency lighting, exit signage or other fire-safety equipment must be reported promptly and appropriate temporary precautions put in place until the defect is remedied.

20. Fire Doors and Escape Routes

Escape routes and exits must:

- Be kept clear.
- Be capable of being opened where required.
- Be appropriately signed where necessary.
- Remain usable whenever the building is occupied.

Fire doors must not be wedged open unless specifically designed to be held open by an appropriate automatic release system.
Defects affecting escape routes, exits or fire doors must be reported promptly.

21. Re-entry Following an Alarm or Fire

Nobody may re-enter a building until it has been confirmed that it is safe.

Where the Fire and Rescue Service attends, re-entry must not take place until the officer in charge confirms that it is safe to do so.
Where an alarm is known to be false and the Fire and Rescue Service is not attending, the Director or appropriately authorised person may permit re-entry only when satisfied that there is no fire or other continuing risk.

22. Fire Incidents and False Alarms

All actual fires, significant smoke incidents and significant false alarms will be recorded.
Following an incident, MFT will consider:

- What caused the incident.
- Whether the Fire Risk Assessment remains adequate.
- Whether fire precautions worked as intended.
- Whether evacuation was effective.
- Whether any PEEP needs amendment.
- Whether staff training needs to change.
- Whether equipment or procedures require improvement.

Significant incidents and learning will be reported through MFT's appropriate governance arrangements.

23. Fire Safety Training

All staff will receive appropriate fire-safety information and instruction as part of their induction.
Training will include:

- How to raise the alarm.
- Evacuation procedures.
- Assembly arrangements.
- Responsibilities for Farm Helpers and young people.
- PEEPs where relevant.
- How people are accounted for.
- When and how to call 999.
- The limits of staff responsibility for firefighting.
- Relevant local fire hazards.

Refresher information or training will be provided periodically and following significant changes.
Staff with specific fire-safety responsibilities will receive additional instruction or training appropriate to their role.
Farm Helpers and young people will receive information about fire evacuation in a way appropriate to their communication needs and level of understanding.

24. Fire Safety Records

Appropriate fire-safety records will be maintained.
These may include:

- Current Fire Risk Assessment.
- Fire Risk Assessment action plan.
- Fire alarm tests.
- Emergency-lighting tests.
- Firefighting equipment inspection and servicing.
- Fire-door and escape-route checks.
- Fire drills.
- Training.
- PEEPs.
- Fire incidents and false alarms.
- Repairs and remedial actions.

Records may be maintained electronically or within a Fire Safety Log.

25. Animals

Human life and safety take priority during any fire emergency.
Staff, volunteers and Farm Helpers must **not** remain in or re-enter a burning or potentially unsafe building to rescue animals.

Where livestock or animals can be moved without delaying human evacuation or placing anyone at risk, action may be taken in accordance with relevant Farm emergency arrangements.

The Fire and Rescue Service must be informed of the location and nature of animals where these may affect firefighting operations.

26. Bomb Threats and Other Security Emergencies

A bomb threat or suspicious item requires a different response from a fire and must not automatically result in the normal fire evacuation procedure.
Anyone receiving a threat should, where possible:

- Remain calm.
- Record the exact wording of the threat.
- Note any information about location, timing or nature of the threat.
- Inform the Director or senior member of staff immediately.
- Contact the police on 999 where appropriate.
- Follow police instructions.

The normal fire assembly point should not automatically be used if its location could place people at risk.
A fire alarm should not be activated solely as the method of evacuation following a bomb threat unless advised or assessed as appropriate, as this may direct people towards an unsafe location.

27. Monitoring and Review

Fire-safety arrangements will be monitored through:

- Fire Risk Assessment.
- Fire drills.
- Routine checks and maintenance.
- Incident review.
- Staff feedback.
- Health and safety inspections.
- Competent professional review where appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where:

- The Fire Risk Assessment identifies significant changes.
- Buildings or activities materially change.
- Relevant legislation or guidance changes.
- A fire or significant incident occurs.
- A drill demonstrates that arrangements are not working effectively.
- The needs of people using the Farm change significantly.

The Board will receive appropriate assurance that significant fire risks are being managed and actions completed.