



Ottery St Mary Parochial Church Council

Keyholder Policy

Approval and review	Dates
Approved by the PCC	November 24 th 2021
Reviewed every two years	

1. Introduction

The duty of ensuring a secure and safe building for church members is the shared responsibility of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Ottery St Mary (PCC) and the Church Corporation. Selected people will hold keys to the church according to their role/responsibility that requires them to be able to gain entry to the church. These recipients are entrusted with keys to the church to carry out specific tasks and are trained to operate the security system and/or attend and take appropriate action after a security system activation/fault. They will complete a keyholder agreement – Appendix 1 and their names and contact details will be held centrally on Breeze for ease of contact **before** being given a key.

Keyholders will include:

- The Vicar and other designated clergy or PTOs
- The Church Administrator
- The Chair of the Governors
- The Clerk of Governors
- Churchwardens and assistant wardens
- The Cleaner
- The Verger
- The organists and others who have been given permission to practice the organ when the church is closed
- The Choir Director
- Belltower captain and any other lead bellringers
- Those running regular events for the church e.g. Coffee and Chat
- Those opening up and supporting at Baptisms
- The Lead Flower arranger
- Servers

- Those opening and locking the church
- Those doing maintenance in church

At least one spare key will be held securely in the church office for signing out when there is a temporary need for a person to hold a key.

2. Criteria for selecting a Keyholder:

Keyholders have an important duty to perform, and their selection is a matter of considerable responsibility. In choosing keyholders the Incumbent/Chair of Governors will consider certain factors, as outlined below.

Keyholders should:

- Be willing and able to undertake the task responsibly
- Be of sufficient number to ensure a keyholder is available in the case of an emergency, with at least four keyholders being selected for their proximity to the church.
- Have an understanding of how to use the alarm system, being appropriately trained in all of the processes and procedures for opening and closing the premises, including setting and turning off the security system for either the full church or the Vicar's Vestry, as appropriate, using the correct codes for the situation.
- Possess a working mobile phone, which they should endeavour to have with them at all times, or know how to make use of the vestry phone to allow them to contact the emergency services and/or other keyholders in the case of an emergency, as well as to inform the Clerk of Governors about repairs requiring emergency tradesmen, such as locksmiths, glaziers and builders. In turn, the Clerk of Governors will keep the Incumbent informed of any issues regarding security of the building.
- Have a knowledge of the Lone Working Policy, found on the church website, and follow the guidance outlined when entering the church alone.
- Agree not to lend their key to anyone, unless in the case of an accident or emergency when they themselves are unable to unlock the church and the person requiring entry does not have the time or opportunity to sign out a spare key from the Church Administrator. (The key will be returned as soon as is possible following the incident and the Incumbent and Chair of Governors informed)
- Ensure the key safe is closed at all times, as soon as keys have been removed, and also make certain that all the keys have been returned and the key safe secured, checking it is never left open when unattended.
- Never hand any of the church keys from the key safe to another person, unless they are in the building with them and can ensure the key is returned to the key safe promptly and that the key safe contains the full set of keys prior to the keyholder leaving the building.

The keyholder list will be reviewed annually, with those relinquishing an office that requires a key, returning the key to the Administrator, who will remove their name and contact details from the Keyholder list held in Breeze, recording the date that this has taken place - **Appendix 3**

3. Terms and Conditions of being a Keyholder:

The following terms must be followed by anyone who is an authorized keyholder:

- All authorised persons will be required to sign a copy of the keyholder agreement **before** they will be issued with keys or codes in connection with any alarm system
- All keyholders agree to their contact details (phone and email) being stored on Breeze for effective communication.
- Only authorised persons are allowed to be in possession of a key(s) or alarm codes to the church building.
- Only authorised persons are permitted to change the codes to the alarm – these include the Incumbent, Chair and Clerk of Governors and the Church Administrator. The keyholders will be informed as soon as possible, via the Breeze tag, if this takes place.
- The keyholder must, before leaving the premises, ensure that the premises are physically secured, that the alarm is set (See Appendix 2 – Checklist for Keyholders when leaving premises)
- No person may give his or her key or alarm code to an unauthorised user for any period of time. Any key(s) found to be in the possession of an unauthorised person will be confiscated and any person found to have provided a key or alarm code to an unauthorised user will receive further training, should they need to continue to hold a key for their role.
- Unauthorised duplication of a key is strictly prohibited. No person may duplicate a key or request the duplication of a key without permission from the Incumbent or Chair/Clerk of Governors.
- Lost or stolen keys must be reported to the Incumbent and Chair/Clerk of Governors immediately. A lost key may require the Vicar's vestry door to have a change of lock and this process may cost a substantial amount of money.
- Keyholders are required to report to the Incumbent and Chair/Clerk of Governors or Administrator, who will pass on the information if it is found that any doors have been left unsecured or alarms have not been set.
- Keyholders must return their key to the Incumbent and Chair/Clerk of Governors immediately upon request. They should also return the key assigned to them in the event of the termination of a role they hold, which has required using a key to the church, or if they have been asked to cease being a keyholder for any other reason.

Appendix 1:



Keyholders' Agreement

(To be held securely in the Church Office)

Full name	
Email	
Phone	

The Churchwardens and PCC of Ottery St Mary Parish Church wish to thank you for taking on a role in the church with particular responsibilities that require you to hold a key to the church building.

As the Incumbent, PCC and Church Corporation have responsibility for the security of the church building, it has been agreed that it is important to hold records of all keyholders, which are stored centrally for ease of access and communication, should an emergency arise.

All keyholders **before receiving a key** must read the Keyholder Policy and agree to the conditions for holding a key by signing and dating this agreement, which should be returned to the Church Office:

As a keyholder:

- I have read, understood and agree to the conditions set out in the Keyholder Policy
- I agree that my contact details will be stored centrally on the Church Management System: Breeze, for access by the Church Administrator, the Incumbent, the Churchwardens as well as the Chair and Clerk of Governors.
- I understand that the key should be used solely by the keyholder and not lent to anyone else, unless in the case of a serious emergency.
- I agree that at the end of my term of office requiring the holding of a key, I must return the key to the Administrator at the Church Office when it will be signed back in and kept in the Church Office safe.

I agree to the statements above.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2:

Checklist for keyholders when leaving the premises prior to setting the alarm system, keyholders should ensure that:

- All doors and windows are closed and securely locked in the main building
- No keys are left sitting in locks.

- The key safe is closed at all times, as soon as keys have been removed and also after they have been returned, so that it is never left open when unattended.
- There are no church members or visitors remaining in the building
- There is nothing in an area covered by movement detectors which is likely to cause false alarms
- All lights have been turned off
- There is nothing that may limit the area normally covered by the detector, for example, stock stored in front of the detector
- The keyholder is ready to leave as soon as the alarm setting procedure is initiated.
- The keyholder checks that the Vicar's vestry door is securely locked by leaning on the door and turning the handle. (Should the door open, the alarm needs to be turned off immediately to avoid it going off, then the alarm is reset, and the door locked and checked again.)

Appendix 3:



Form for the Return of Church Keys
(To be held securely in the Church Office)

The church key assigned to the named keyholder:

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has been returned by:

(Print full name, if different from the keyholder named above)

Signed:	
Date:	

This is acknowledged and recorded by:

Print full name:

Signed:	
Date:	