Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators:

Health and Safety Policy

1. Introduction

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators (Conservators) are committed to maintaining high standards of health, safety and environmental protection in all of its operations and practices in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (as amended) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended), so far as is reasonably practicable.

2. Objectives

To manage health and safety risk to prevent accidents and work-related ill health to officers, employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the public.

To commit to continual improvement in health and safety management and performance.

3. Requirements

- The Conservators must ensure that employees are provided with clear instructions, information, appropriate equipment, personal protective equipment and adequate training to ensure they are competent to do their work safely.
- The Ranger and Clerk are responsible for preparing risk assessments for tasks and activities on the Commons where risks have been identified and require management. Risk assessments must be shared with volunteers and explained during safety briefings before tasks and activities begin or emailed to volunteers who will be working without supervision, for example sent to the responsible adult of a child volunteering through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. All risk assessments will be reviewed in line with their scheduled review dates and updated as necessary to ensure that risks are identified, managed, and reduced as far as reasonably practicable. While we do not publish detailed risk assessments on this website, members of the public are welcome to request copies of specific assessments, subject to data protection and security considerations.
- In addition to the provision of risk assessments, the Ranger is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are provided with clear safety instructions and personal protective equipment to complete the required task or project safely. The Ranger will supervise volunteers when using tools.
- The Ranger is responsible for ensuring that external contractors confirm that they have valid insurance, are appropriately trained and hold the necessary certifications, wear suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) and have completed task-specific risk assessments to demonstrate competence and safe working practices.
- Compliance is monitored using a contractor checklist, which must be signed by the contractor's responsible person and submitted to the Clerk each year, along with copies of their public liability and employers' liability insurance. These records will be maintained on OneDrive. The Ranger will provide contractors with clear written instructions for each task or project.
- The Ranger to carry out checks and maintenance of all hand and battery-operated tools after each use, checks to be recorded by the Ranger in a maintenance book.

Volunteers are allowed to use their own tools; the Ranger will check these for safety.

- As part of day-to-day duties, the Ranger will identify potential hazards and report to the Clerk and or Committee for assessment and mitigation.
- Accident and incident logs to be maintained by the Ranger in a hard copy logbook, to be summarised and reported quarterly to the Conservators.
- Complaints to be recorded on the One Drive, reviewed, responded to and reported quarterly to the Conservators.
- The Ranger and Clerk to keep their first aid qualifications up to date and to ensure that first aid equipment is in date and replenished.
- The Ranger and Clerk to ensure that any vehicles used on Conservator business must have insurance for business use.

4. Limitation of responsibility

Members of the public have a duty of care to themselves on Common land. Unless the Conservators set out to create a risk, or is reckless about whether a risk is created, the Conservators are not liable for any injury caused by:

- any natural feature of the landscape including any tree, rocks, shrub, plant, river or stream
- any ditch or pond, whether natural or not
- people passing over, under or through a wall, fence or gate, except if they're making proper use of a gate or stile

The interpretation of the legislation on liability to the public is a matter for the courts to decide as referenced in this link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-access-land-management-rights-and-responsibilities#your-liability-to-the-public

5. Responsibilities

The Conservators are ultimately responsible for managing their health and safety responsibilities on the Commons and of officers, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors. The Ranger and Clerk have day to day responsibility for managing the Conservators' health and safety responsibilities on the Commons.

6. Training

Staff training will be reviewed annually as part of the development reviews. Records of training certification and renewal dates to be kept by the Clerk and reviewed annually.

7. Insurance

The Conservators have insurance for employers' liability, public liability and personal accident. Details of the policy are available at https://twcommons.org/financial-records/

Date of review: October 2026

Date of next review October 2027