

# **HARLOW COUNCIL**

## **CIVIC CENTRE The Water Gardens The High Harlow, Essex CM20 1WG**

### **FIRE PLAN**

#### **Covid 19 Guidance**

During restrictions ensure that you are familiar with the Fire Safety Assessments for the building you are working in. If the fire alarm sounds continuously, you must leave the building and go to the nearest assembly point. Ensure you take responsibility for any visitors and guide any customers who may have mobility impairments. Attempt to socially distance where possible and when asked to return to the building please try and do this in a staggered way to prevent people congregating. Where possible wash your hands upon entering the building

**SEPTEMBER 2022 VERSION 18**

	<u>Page</u>
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>General Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix A Normal Working Hours General Information</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix B Normal Working Hours Instructions for Staff</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix C Out of Normal Working Hours Instructions for Staff</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix D Normal Working Hours Instructions for Fire Marshals</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix E Normal Working Hours Instructions for Contact Harlow Duty Managers/Nominated Coordinators/Stewards</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix F Normal Working Hours Instructions for Evacuation Co-ordinators</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix G Normal Working Hours Instructions for Contact Harlow Staff</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix H Normal Working Hours - Assembly Points</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Evacuation Procedure – Appendix I Normal Working Hours - Evacuation Team Responsibilities</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Civic Centre Fire Marshal List</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>18</b>
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# **HARLOW COUNCIL**

## **FIRE PLAN**

### **CIVIC CENTRE**

#### **General Statement**

Harlow District Council has a legal and a moral duty to look after people in respect to fire safety. We are proactive in reducing fire risks, so that fires are less likely, and we also have a plan in place so our people know what to do if there is a fire. This document is one of those plans for one of our workplaces.

Our assessment of fire risks is spread over a number of documents:

1. This fire plan;
2. An expert report produced by a consultant fire engineer; and
3. Our progress on addressing the recommendations in the above expert report.

The appendices, attached to the fire plan, provide additional information and advice on general evacuation procedures and duties undertaken by specific members of staff.

Failure to comply with the fire plan will be considered a breach of Harlow Council's health and safety procedures and could result in disciplinary action being taken.

The Civic Centre comprises of ground, mezzanine, first, second, third floors and a roof space, (with boiler, pumps and facilities equipment). All maintenance and servicing are the responsibility of the nominated contractor in liaison with Facilities Management.

#### **Fire Prevention**

Within the Civic Offices the main risks are; electricity, rubbish, heating systems, kitchens, flammable liquids, out of hours Council/social functions and arson, a deliberate starting of a fire.

##### **a) Electricity**

Each service and/or department within the Civic Centre should produce an inventory of portable electrical equipment. The inventory is to include details of; item, make, model, serial number, location and a contact name and number. Arrangements are made to have the equipment tested by an external contractor on a periodic basis.

All machines and equipment in the Reprographics Room are maintained and serviced and PAT tested as necessary for safe and efficient working.

Computer equipment should also be included.

Any obvious faults with electrical equipment or systems, including lighting, should be reported to your Line Manager immediately.

The use of extension leads etc. should be avoided whenever possible. The permanent use of extension leads and adaptors would indicate the possible need for additional sockets.

The use of electric fans and fan heaters should be agreed with the Facilities Manager.

b) Rubbish

Every effort should be made to ensure that unwanted materials are disposed of as quickly as possible.

The building cleaners will empty the office rubbish bins every night.

c) Heating Systems

The main building heating system is regularly serviced to ensure that it is safe and does not pose a fire risk.

Gas services are maintained by a Gas Safe registered contractor.

d) Kitchens

Only the equipment provided is permitted to be used in kitchens.

Tea/coffee making equipment is not permitted to be sited in any part of the Civic Centre apart from the kitchens.

e) Out of Hours Council/Social Functions

All functions of this type will, where appropriate, be undertaken only in accordance with the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003.

An assessment will be undertaken prior to any function taking place.

f) Arson

Members of the public do not have access to anywhere in the Civic Centre other than the ground floor, except by invitation from staff.

When the building is closed, all windows are shut. There are no letterboxes or apertures that can be opened where flammable materials can be inserted.

## **Fire Precautions**

In order to minimise the risk from any fire that may occur within the Civic Centre and to ensure safe evacuation, the following control measures have been implemented.

a) Evacuation Routes

Evacuation routes, including lobby areas and stair ways must be kept free of all flammable materials and obstructions at all times.

All evacuation routes are signed. Evacuation routes, including evacuation staircases, will be checked at the time of the weekly fire alarm test.

b) Fire Exits

Ground floor fire exits must be kept free of all obstructions, both inside and out, and be available for use at all times the building is in use.

c) Fire Doors

Fire doors are provided to help prevent the spread of smoke and fire and must be kept closed at all times. The operation of automatic fire doors will be checked at the time of the weekly fire alarm test.

d) Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are positioned on all floors of the Civic Centre. The type of extinguisher will be appropriate to the fire risk.

Staff should familiarise themselves with the location and operation of fire extinguishers within their work areas, and the types of fire they are suitable for use on. There is no expectation that employees will/should attempt to put out a fire with an extinguisher. If however you feel that it is safe and you feel competent to tackle a small fire, without putting yourself or anyone else at risk, you may choose to extinguish it if it is safe to do so

Within the Computer Suite/Legal Deeds store, there are Aragonite gas cylinders in the ceiling to extinguish flames in the event of a fire in the room. These are serviced and maintained 6 monthly.

e) Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting has been installed along evacuation routes and will remain on should there be a power failure.

f) Fire Alarm

The Civic Centre is fitted with a comprehensive fire alarm system that includes smoke and heat detectors. The alarm is connected through to a call centre, Red Care, which automatically alerts the fire service. The Fire Service will only attend upon confirmation that there is an actual fire at the premises.

The fire alarm panel is connected through to all the adjacent restaurants, allowing an early alert of potential fire nearby. If there is a fire in the restaurants, the Civic Centre will go into an intermittent beep mode. On hearing this, prepare to evacuate, but only do so if the full continuous alarm then sounds. The shops and restaurants will test their alarms weekly.

Staff should familiarise themselves with the location of the operating, or call, points within their work areas.

The fire alarm is tested between 10am and 12 noon on Monday of each week. During the course of a twelve-month period all fire alarm call points will be used to activate the fire alarm system.

g) Fire Drills

There will be a full evacuation drill of the Civic Centre at least four times a year, with similar drills for people using the building out of normal hours.

h) Signs

Appropriate fire safety signage is displayed throughout the Civic Centre.

i) Lifts

Whenever there is a need to evacuate the building the lifts must not be used. When the alarms sound, lifts automatically drop to the ground floor.

#### j) Door Management System

When the fire alarm system is operated it overrides the door management system (swipe card). The override arrangements will be checked at the time of the weekly fire alarm tests.

### **Evacuation**

The Evacuation Coordinator will have overall responsibility for evacuations including:

- When to commence an evacuation
- When to instigate a visual inspection
- When people can return to the building
- When to involve the Emergency Services
- Any other steps appropriate to the circumstances

### **People with Additional Needs**

Each service will need to assess the needs of any members of staff and/or visitors who may require assistance to either be alerted that an emergency evacuation is taking place, or to leave the workplace safely. Line managers are responsible for creating a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for each person who needs one, with the person affected and for documenting it using a template available on the Kaonet. Facilities management and the Safety Team are available to provide assistance if the needs are complex. Every new or updated PEEP should be shared with the Evacuation Coordinator.

Members of the public attending meetings will be the responsibility of the Chair or inviting member of staff whilst they are in the building, and it will be their responsibility to organise PEEPs as necessary in advance of their attendance.

### **Training**

Fire Safety training is provided as part of Harlow Council's overall commitment to Health and Safety related training.

All staff based within the Civic Centre will have access to relevant fire safety training as required.

The best fire training is practical, which is why we run fire evacuation drills at least quarterly.

### **Maintenance**

The fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, lifts and automatic doors are all subject to periodic inspection and maintenance.

### **General**

Although every effort will be made to ensure that fire safety standards are maintained within the Civic Centre, this can only be achieved with the cooperation of staff.

Deficiencies with any of the fire precautions e.g. evacuation routes etc. should be referred initially to the Facilities Manager.

The fire risk assessment, and appendices, will be reviewed on a periodic basis.  
All tests, drills, inspections and training will be recorded in the Civic Centre fire logbook.

## HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE

### FIRE PLAN – Appendix A

#### EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]

##### GENERAL INFORMATION

**IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT AMENDED PROCEDURES FROM THE ESSEX FIRE SERVICE NOW CONFIRM THAT THEY WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY RESPOND TO AN AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM CALL – ALL SUSPECTED FIRES NEED TO BE INSPECTED BY FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, CONFIRMED AND FOLLOWED UP WITH A 999 CALL FOR THEM TO ATTEND THE PREMISES.**

1. Whenever there is a continuous operation of the fire alarm the building must be evacuated. The only exception to this being when the alarm is tested between 10am and 12 noon on Monday of each week. On these occasions the alarm will be operated in short intermittent bursts.
2. Lifts must not be used during an evacuation.
3. Use the assembly area and evacuation staircase nearest to your service location.
4. Some services/departments keep a list of the staff that normally work in the Civic Centre. On evacuation this must be taken to the assembly point in order that staff can be accounted for.
5. Any visitors to the Civic Centre will be the responsibility of the person/service they are visiting.
6. Be aware of any staff or visitors who may require assistance during evacuation.
7. All staff must be made aware of who the Fire Marshals are for the area in which they work. The Fire Marshal will report to the Assembly Point Coordinator on the status of the evacuation.
8. In the event of an evacuation all staff must go to an appropriate assembly point and report their presence. People should not be gathered to the front of the building. On no account must anyone stay inside the building. All staff must remain at their assembly point until given formal permission to leave or re-enter the building, (by Facilities Management or the Fire Service if they have been called).
9. During an evacuation every effort should be made to close doors and windows, and to turn off electrical equipment. Door stops should be removed. There is no expectation that employees will/should attempt to put out a fire with an extinguisher. If however you feel that it is safe and you feel competent to tackle a small fire, without putting yourself or anyone else at risk, you may choose to extinguish it if it is safe to do so.
10. Please forward concerns or comments regarding any of the evacuation procedures to the Health & Safety Team or Facilities Manager.

Health & Safety Team  
September 2022



## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix B**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS] INSTRUCTIONS FOR STAFF**

##### **ON DISCOVERY OR SUSPICION OF A FIRE (REGARDLESS OF HOW SMALL)**

1. Raise the alarm by breaking the nearest call point, if you suspect/confirm a fire
2. Call the Fire Brigade. (See below for further details).
3. Warn people in the vicinity of the fire.
4. If safe to do so, try to extinguish the fire by using a suitable fire extinguisher

##### **DO NOT TAKE PERSONAL RISKS**

##### **ON HEARING THE ALARM**

1. Treat every fire alarm operation as if it were a fire.
2. Give any assistance necessary to ensure that all staff evacuate safely.
3. If possible, close doors and windows to help prevent the fire spreading.
4. Walk to the nearest safe exit and proceed to an assembly point. Do not stand outside the front of the building. Gather with your colleagues, section or team.

##### **DO NOT USE LIFTS – ACT CALMLY**

5. **Line Management** will ensure that the evacuation within their area/floor has commenced and then report to the assembly point.
6. **Fire Marshals** will supervise the evacuation from their designated areas before reporting to the Assembly Point Coordinator on the status of the evacuation.
7. The **Evacuation Co-ordinator** will ensure that the Fire Brigade has been called, instigate procedures for preventing re-entry into the building and take overall control of the evacuation.

##### **ASSEMBLY POINTS**

**1 – Outside the Gym**

**2 – At the side of Coffee Shop**

##### **CALLING THE FIRE BRIGADE**

1. Call the Fire Brigade immediately to every fire or on suspicion of a fire.
2. Lift the receiver and dial **112** or **9-999**.
3. When the operator answers ask for Fire and you will be connected to the Fire Brigade.
4. When the Fire Brigade operator answers give the location as:  
**CIVIC CENTRE – WATER GARDENS – HARLOW – CM20 1WG**
5. Do not replace the receiver until the address has been correctly repeated back.

Health & Safety Team  
September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix C**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

**[OUT OF NORMAL WORKING HOURS – AFTER 4.45PM ]**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR STAFF**

#### **ON DISCOVERY OR SUSPICION OF A FIRE (REGARDLESS OF HOW SMALL)**

1. Raise the alarm by breaking the nearest call point
2. Call the Fire Brigade. (See below for further details).
3. Warn people in the vicinity of the fire.
4. If safe to do so, try to extinguish the fire by using a suitable fire extinguisher.

#### **DO NOT TAKE PERSONAL RISKS**

#### **ON HEARING THE ALARM**

1. Treat every fire alarm operation if it were a fire.
2. Give any assistance necessary to ensure that all staff in your area are able to evacuate safely.
3. If possible, close doors and windows to help prevent the fire spreading.
4. As there will be no Assembly Point Coordinators at this time, you should exit via either end of the building, using the emergency stairwells, or the evening access door, and make your way to a safe place. If safe to do so make your way to the front of the building and await Stewards instructions to re-enter the building via the evening access door.

#### **DO NOT USE LIFTS – ACT CALMLY**

5. If present, a senior member of staff should ensure that the Fire Brigade has been called.
6. Await further instructions from the senior person if present and/or Fire Brigade.
7. Do not re-enter the building until authorised to do so by fire brigade, Health & Safety Team, Facilities Management or senior person on site.

#### **CALLING THE FIRE BRIGADE**

1. Call the Fire Brigade immediately to every fire or on suspicion of a fire.
2. Lift the receiver and dial **112** or **9-999**.
3. When the operator answers ask for Fire and you will be connected to the Fire Brigade.
4. When the Fire Brigade operator answers give the location as:  
**CIVIC CENTRE – WATER GARDENS – HARLOW – CM20 1WG**
5. Do not replace the receiver until the address has been correctly repeated back.

Health & Safety Team  
September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix D**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIRE MARSHALS**

1. On hearing the alarm:
  - a) Ensure that your floor/area has been evacuated, checking all offices and toilets;
  - b) Arrange for any necessary assistance to be given to staff or visitors experiencing difficulty. If a member of staff chooses to stay within a refuge area, as a result of eliminating all options of evacuation, a Fire Marshal needs to report this to the Assembly Point Coordinator as priority on exiting the building. Fire Crews to be notified on their arrival.
  - c) There is no expectation that Fire Marshal/employees will/should attempt to put out a fire with an extinguisher. If however you feel that it is safe and you feel competent to tackle a small fire, without putting yourself or anyone else at risk, you may choose to extinguish it if it is safe to do so. Periodic training carried out.
2. On completion of the evacuation make your way to an assembly point.
3. At the assembly point report the status of the evacuation from the floor/area that you are responsible for to the Assembly Point Coordinator.
4. Ensure that staff from your floor/service remain at the assembly point and people are not gathered at the front of the building. Attempt to move members of the public away from the front of the building if possible – however this cannot be enforced to non-staff.
5. Do not attempt to re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Fire Brigade, Health & Safety Team or Facilities Management.

Health & Safety Team  
September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix E**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]**

##### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTACT HARLOW DUTY MANAGERS [ASSEMBLY POINT COORDINATORS]**

1. On hearing the fire alarm ensure the ground floor fire exits are accessible.
2. Wearing a high visibility jacket a Contact Harlow Coordinator will take a central position at each assembly point, making sure that they are visible to Line Managers and Fire Marshals.
3. Keep in contact with the Evacuation Coordinator/Health & Safety and relay any information regarding the status of the evacuation, via radio.
4. Contact Harlow staff to position barriers/cones across the main entrance doors after evacuation. Staff to ensure no one attempts to re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Evacuation Coordinator, the Fire Brigade or a member of Health & Safety.

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [OUT OF NORMAL HOURS]**

##### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR STEWARDS**

1. Help direct people out of the building and give any assistance to senior/disabled persons present.

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September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix F**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVACUATION COORDINATORS / STEWARDS**

1. Ensure that the Fire Brigade has been called, if a fire has been confirmed, and that the lifts have returned to the ground floor.
2. Note the zone on the fire alarm control panel indicating where the alarm has been activated from.
3. Wearing a high visibility jacket take up a position in front of the building keeping in contact with the Assembly Point Coordinators.
4. On arrival of the Fire Brigade inform them of anyone reported as being in the refuge areas. Inform of the situation regarding evacuation and, if known, the location of the fire and/or zone indicated on the fire alarm control panel.
5. Once the Fire Brigade has given the all clear, and after consulting with any available members of Facilities Management and Health & Safety Team, staff can be allowed back into the building.

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September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix G**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTACT HARLOW STAFF**

1. As soon as the alarm sounds ensure that the entrance doors are locked open.
2. Ensure that all members of the public in the main reception area, cash office area and using interview rooms evacuate, giving any assistance as necessary.
3. Leave the building and go to the appropriate assembly point.

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September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix H**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]**

##### **ASSEMBLY POINTS**

###### **ASSEMBLY POINT ‘1’**

On the walkway outside gym, top of slope

###### **ASSEMBLY POINT ‘2’**

On the walkway at the side of Coffee Shop, Water Gardens

**NB** In the event that an incident requires staff to move away from the normal assembly points the fall back assembly point will be OUTSIDE OF THE PLAYHOUSE

Health & Safety Team  
September 2022

## **HARLOW COUNCIL – CIVIC CENTRE**

### **FIRE PLAN – Appendix I**

#### **EVACUATION PROCEDURE [NORMAL WORKING HOURS]**

#### **EVACUATION TEAM – EVACUATION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **Civic Centre Evacuation Team**

Scott Merry	Interim Facilities Manager	6699
Jackie Davies	Safety Officer	6499
Wayne Boreham	Steward	6699
Richard Devine	Steward	6699
Adrian Hopps	Steward	6699
David Stean	Steward	6699
Russell Flack	Steward	6699
Les Ayres	Steward	6699

##### **Evacuation Coordinators**

Scott Merry, Jackie Davies, Stewards

- Overall responsibility for the evacuation process
- Will ensure Fire Brigade has been called if necessary
- Liaise with emergency services
- Assess when it is safe to re-enter the building
- Take reports from the assembly point coordinators on the state to the evacuation
- Advise Fire Brigade on the condition of the evacuation

##### **Assembly Point Coordinators**

Duty Managers and Nominated Coordinators

- Ensure ground floor fire exits are accessible
- Take up position at designated assembly points
- Take reports from services as they evacuate
- Pass on evacuation information to the Evacuation Coordinator

Health & Safety Team  
September 2022



## CIVIC CENTRE FULL EVACUATION REGISTER

Assembly points = PURE GYM / OLD ESQUIRES UNIT

Date:

Time:

Checked in/Clear

Department/Area



<b>Ground floor</b>	Disabled Toilet / Public Area / Cash Room / Interview Rooms / Rear Offices / Reception / Rest Room / First Aid & Stewards Room	
<b>First floor</b>	Mezzanine Floor / Gallery	
	Communications	
	Corporate Governance	
	Members Room	
	Chief Executives Office / Directors Corridor	
	Internal Audit	
	Insurance	
	Unison	
	Community	
	Finance / Accountancy	
	Meeting Room 2	
	Huddle Rooms	
	Council Chamber	
	Committee Room 1	
	Committee Room 2A	
	Committee Room 2B	
	Toilets	
<b>Second floor</b>	Revenues & Benefits	
	Housing Property Services	
	Housing Business Support	
	Home Ownership	
	Area Housing	
	Housing Options and Advice	
	Huddle Rooms	
	Meeting Room 5	
	Toilets	
<b>Third floor</b>	Health & Safety	
	Human Resources	
	GIS / Estates	
	Regeneration Enterprise / Policy & Performance	
	Environmental Health	
	Parking	
	Street Scene, Waste & Landscape Client Team	
	Legal	
	Licensing	
	IT	
	Planning / Building Control	
	Reprographics	
	Post Room	
	Huddle Rooms C & D / Meeting Room 6 / Toilets	

**HARLOW COUNCIL  
FIRE PLAN  
CIVIC CENTRE ACTION PLAN**

<b>Hazard &amp; Potential Risk</b>	<b>Who Is At Risk</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>By Who</b>	<b>Timescales &amp; Review</b>
<p><b>Evening Evacuations</b></p> <p>Lack of procedure involving staff working late and attendance at evening meetings</p> <p>In the event of a full evacuation of the premises, it is not known who is in the building and where. Public meeting areas are the responsibility of the staff facilitating them, however late workers were not identifiable</p>	<p>Council employees</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>An evening register has been implemented and working effectively – Evening Stewards have a written record as to who is in the building after 7pm</p> <p>Staff to call down and report their presence and inform when they leave the building</p>	<p>Health &amp; Safety Team &amp; Facilities Management</p>	<p>Chief Executive article reminding staff of procedure</p>
<p><b>Training</b></p> <p>Staff training to be up to date and documented</p>		<p>New staff to be informed of evacuation drills and line managers to enquire about any need for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)</p> <p>All staff to take part from time to time in planned fire evacuation drills.</p>	<p>Line Managers</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>When new staff join</p> <p>Quarterly</p>

Additional Information	Who Is At Risk	Action Required	By Who	Timescales & Review
<p>Recycling / general waste store bins, to the rear of the building exit/entrance doors to be managed – A buildup of waste and materials could be a potential fire risk</p> <p>Ensure no flammable sources near the store cupboard and the metal shutter is secure</p> <p>Smoking at the back entrance is managed</p> <p>Good housekeeping is maintained in store areas – paper stores and cupboards</p>	<p>Council employees</p> <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Regular inspections of the area to be carried out to ensure kept clear and not overflowing blocking access</p>	<p>Stewards &amp; Facilities Management</p> <p>Staff</p>	<p>Weekly collections carried out by Contractor</p> <p>Stewards carry out periodic checks</p> <p>Smoking shelter erected Summer 2013 – Location agreed by Water Gardens Management</p> <p>Regular ongoing checks</p>