

Harrietsham Parish Council

Risk Assessment for the Defibrillator

The Parish of Harrietsham currently has three defibrillators owned and maintained by the Parish Council. These are located at the following locations:

- On the outside wall of the Post Office building in West Street (ME17 1HX)
- On a post outside the Parish Office in Southfields Way (ME17 1GE)
- On the outside wall of the Village Hall in Church Road (ME17 1AP)

These are all semi-automated defibrillators which are installed in secure cabinets and are for use by any person needing it. The defibrillators are stored in a locked cabinet to prevent the equipment being stolen and to ensure that it is not susceptible to fluctuating temperatures and vandalism.

Their existence is recorded on the South East Coast Ambulance Service's 'The Circuit' system and the Parish Council is able to update live information to confirm that they are operational. Likewise, the Ambulance Service can then inform the Parish Council immediately if there is a chance that one of the defibrillators has been used so that we can check that it is still available and ready for use.

Access to the defibrillator is by a code given to the originator of a '999 emergency' call, together with the defibrillator's location. On receipt of a 999 call, the operator will, where possible, direct the operation and maintain contact with the caller throughout the emergency pending the arrival of a Paramedic or Ambulance.

The design of the device (an iPad defibrillator) is such that it can be used by totally untrained persons, as it issues instructions itself as to its use, monitors the condition of the patient's heart and decides whether or not to 'shock' the patient. It should be noted that the person offering assistance may be required to perform CPR whilst waiting for the emergency services.

In line with guidance from the Resuscitation Council (UK), the Parish Council may decide to arrange for training sessions to be undertaken, if enough interest is shown by residents.

Attendance on the course does NOT imply, however, any responsibility for the use of the defibrillator. It would simply be furtherance of the Parish Council's objective to enable members of the general public in Harrietsham to be aware of the steps for the handling and initial treatment of Sudden Cardiac Arrest victims, such that if faced with a situation, they have some background to help them maximise the chances of the victims survival.

Conclusion: As the defibrillators are semi-automatic, offering self-initiated guidance to the operator, and available ONLY under the Ambulance Services' direct control, there is little or no operational risk to the Parish Council.