



Wenhaston Village Hall

Charity Number: CN 1001694

Custodian Trustees: Parish Council

Managing Trustees: Management Committee

Fire Risk Assessment and Policy

Contents	Page
Description of the premises	2
Principal uses of the village hall	2
Who is at risk of fire?	3
Possible causes of fire	3
Control measures	4
Periodic fire safety checklist	5
Appendix 1 – Fire Notice	6
Appendix 2 – Checklist for function organisers/supervisors	7

Description of the Premises

Wenhaston Village Hall was built in 1975 and is at the centre of the village. The hall is a registered charity and the Custodian Trustees are the Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet Parish Councillors. The hall is run by a Management Committee who are the Managing Trustees and they oversee the day to day running and maintenance of the building

The building consists of the lobby where the Post Office is sited, one meeting room, the ladies', gents' and disabled toilets, steps leading up to another meeting room, the main hall with a stage and side room with a door leading off to the loft area and a kitchen and bar area connected to the main hall. There is a good-sized car park with an outside shed housing the boiler and wood chip store. The Management Committee is justly proud of the hall's green credentials, boasting a large roof array of photo-voltaic panels and a wood chip boiler.

The hall is hired by a range of voluntary organisations, private individuals and statutory organisations for a variety of activities, some of which are licensable. A written agreement between the village hall and the Hirer forms the basis of the hiring arrangement. The booking form and Conditions of Hire draw the hirers' attention to the health and safety obligations that the booking places upon them.

Principal Uses of the Village Hall

The Village Hall is used for a wide variety of functions. These cover, but are not limited to: regular activity groups, exercise and dance classes, table tennis and badminton, WI, WEA, art classes, bingo, jumble sales, book launches, concerts, a wine club, flower and vegetable show, other hall events, Christmas bazaar, Christmas parties and lunches, Parish Council meetings, and occasional private parties. The café is open Saturday and Wednesday mornings and is a popular meeting place. An art exhibition is changed monthly with art displayed being offered for sale. Film nights are held twice a month and kurling nights once a month. A produce, craft and flea market is held once a month on a Saturday morning.

A Fire Risk Assessment has been conducted by the Management Committee to cover all aspects of the hall. The Management Committee ask users to make themselves aware of the exit routes, the fire-fighting equipment and the plan of the hall detailing the location of the equipment and the escape routes. The plan is available to all hall users and is also on the notice board. The Management Committee do not provide any staff during a booked event. Hirers are expected to provide attendants to meet the requirements of licensing conditions.

Seating at events in the hall:

Advice has been obtained from Suffolk Fire & Rescue via Community Action Suffolk regarding the arrangement of seating at events. **For informal sessions of under 50 people, chairs may be unlinked and arranged in a straight or horseshoe design, allowing a central gangway and two side gangways of just over one metre each.** This allows for adequate space for attendees to leave quickly if required. For much larger events, consideration should be given, on a case by case basis, for linking chairs. Further details are available in the hall policy file located in the hall kitchen.

The Fire Assembly Point is:

The car park by the main entrance.

Who is at Risk of Fire?

The Sub Postmistress

The Sub Postmistress works on her own and with her partner present at times. The Post Office is situated immediately adjacent to the main doors which are unlocked during occupation. The doors to the hall are left open when the hall is not being used, affording a clear view to the hall, kitchen and café beyond.

The Cleaner

The cleaner is paid by the hour and adjusts her time to suit the requirements of the hall. The Management Committee and Bookings Secretary liaise with the cleaner. The premises are occupied by the cleaner at times to suit the hiring profile of the hall and she is normally on her own in the hall. She is familiar with the layout of the premises and the location of fire exits.

Hall Users (up to 170)

Users should familiarise themselves with the public areas and fire exits. The emergency signage is situated above fire exit doors. Users may need guidance from the event organisers or person responsible for the hall booking.

Disabled Persons

At a typical function there may possibly be a limited number of disabled persons. It is assumed these people will need evacuation assistance. The main entrance is wheelchair friendly. There are double fire exits in the main hall and the café which have level threshold door sills. There is a paved path leading from all exits to the car park.

Children

All children within the building are to be supervised.

Possible Causes of Fire

Portable gas appliances and naked flames are not permitted inside the building.

The possible areas of concern have been identified by the Management Committee and are:

- Electrical power supply
- Portable electrical appliances
- Kitchen equipment
- Stage curtains and other soft furnishings
- Waste
- Storage in the loft area
- Deliberate ignition

Control Measures

Primary and general control measures are taken by the Management Committee to ensure that:

- There is sufficient fire-fighting equipment (as at August 2020). This consists of a fire blanket and CO₂ extinguisher in the kitchen, two extinguishers in the main hall, one water and one foam, one foam extinguisher in the entrance lobby, one CO₂ extinguisher in the small Committee room up the stairs beyond the toilers, one foam and one CO₂ in the side room by the stage, one water extinguisher in the loft, one foam and one CO₂ in the boiler house. A qualified person inspects it at least once per year. A certificate of maintenance is obtained for each inspection.
- A plan of exits and equipment is by the fire panel in the lobby and in the kitchen.
- There are smoke alarms in the ceiling of the side room by the stage, three within the loft storage area and one in the old boiler area which is accessed by an outside door.
- The Management Committee take the advice of the inspector to increase, change or move the location of the fire-fighting equipment.
- The location of the fire-fighting equipment, emergency lighting and escape routes are clearly marked on a plan that is displayed on the wall by the fire panel in the lobby, by the kitchen door and in the Policy file and is also made available to all users.
- All fire exit routes are regularly checked for illumination & ease of opening, and the emergency exit routes are clear prior to each use of the hall. A test of continued emergency illumination in event of a power failure is conducted annually.
- The Management Committee regularly check the ease of access to and through the escape routes and to the assembly points several times per year and logs the results.
- A qualified person checks the hall's overall electricity supply at least every five years or less if considered necessary.
- All portable electrical appliances are checked annually and labelled accordingly.
- A certificate of inspection is obtained for each piece of fire-fighting equipment when it is inspected annually. This is attached to the equipment.
- Before leaving, the user checks that all electrical equipment has been switched off.
- The stage curtains are treated with flame retardant to ensure they comply with regulations and are non-combustible. All blinds are made of fire-retardant material.
- 'No Smoking' signs are prominently displayed inside the building and users are reminded via the Booking Form and Conditions of Hire that smoking is strictly prohibited throughout the building.
- Locking mechanisms for ensuring internal safety without compromising emergency routes are fitted.
- A record of key holders is kept.
- Waste bins are emptied regularly and the area outside the kitchen where the waste bins are located is kept clear of waste.
- All village hall users are made aware of their responsibilities via the Booking Form.
- Good housekeeping is carried out to avoid a build-up of unwanted or flammable materials and no materials are stored by distribution boards and stage lighting.

Periodic fire safety checklist

This checklist is used as a prompt during the annual review of the Fire Risk Assessment.

- Has the structural fire resistance been impaired by alterations and repairs?
- Have any alterations or repairs been planned, or carried out, which might affect the fire resistance?
- Have any improvements or decorating been planned or carried out, that might affect flame spread characteristics of surface linings?
- Have any furniture, curtains or drapes been brought in or are going to be delivered, that need consideration of their flammability properties?
- Are curtains clear of the ground?
- Is the self-closing mechanisms of the loft fire door operating and closing the doors properly?
- Are emergency exit push-bar devices functioning correctly?
- Are fire exits and escape routes clearly marked?
- Are the lighting and emergency lighting systems adequate and functioning correctly?
- Is the means of ensuring that the maximum permitted number of people entering the hall is not exceeded, operating?
- Are the floor coverings in good condition?
- Has the electrical equipment and supply been professionally checked?
- Has the fire-fighting equipment been serviced?
- Are the no smoking rules being adhered to?
- Are the areas open to the public free of combustible stores?
- Is rubbish being kept safely and removed frequently?
- Are the security measures functioning?
- Do all Committee members know how to use the fire-fighting equipment and are they able to brief hirers?
- Are there any hazards anticipated or overlooked?

Appendix 1 – Fire Notice

FOR ALL FUNCTION ORGANISERS/SUPERVISORS

FIRE NOTICE For the purposes of this notice, the Supervisor of the function is the responsible person and hereinafter is referred to as ‘the Responsible Person’.

In case of fire

DO NOT PANIC

1. Activate a fire call point to sound the alarm and ask everyone to leave the premises in an orderly fashion by the nearest door/emergency fire exit. If the hall is being used for public entertainment, the house lighting should be raised, the public addressed.
2. Ensure the safety of any disabled person and provide assistance if required.
3. Proceed to the fire assembly point by the main carpark entrance.
4. Advise the Responsible Person of the location and nature of the fire.

The Responsible Person will:

1. Decide whether to tackle the fire with the available appliances if it is safe to do so.
2. Give instructions and directions if necessary, for someone to contact the Fire Brigade (there is no telephone in the hall, other than when the Post Office is open). There is no longer a nearby functioning public telephone box.
3. Try to assess whether all occupants have vacated the hall without putting himself/herself or anyone else in danger.
4. Meet the Emergency Services on arrival and provide them with the relevant information that is currently available regarding the incident.

Appendix 2 – Checklist for Function Organisers/Supervisors

Before people arrive, check that:

1. All exit doors are unlocked, any fastenings removed, and the push-bar mechanism tested and in good working order.
2. Escape routes are free from obstruction and available for use.
3. Any fire doors are closed, not wedged or propped open.
4. Fire-fighting equipment is in place and readily accessible.
5. Nothing combustible is stored in areas open to the public.
6. The fire alarm is operable.
7. Exit signs are clearly visible.
8. There is no obvious fire hazard in or near the building.

After the function, check that:

1. Nothing is smouldering, for example cigarette ends outside and near the exits.
2. All heaters, cookers, etc, are turned off.
3. All portable electrical appliances are unplugged.
4. All lights are off.
5. All internal doors are closed.
6. All external doors & all windows are secure.