

Ashton Keynes Village Hall Management Committee

Fire Safety Risk Assessment

Description of Premises

Ashton Keynes Village Hall is the centre of the community within Ashton Keynes and is situated in the middle of the Village. The original Main Hall dates back to 1911. An extension was added in the early 1980's and in 1999 a GP Surgery and Waiting Room were incorporated into a previous internal open area. The building consists of a Main Hall (with stage), second room (called the Ashton Keynes room) that can be divided in two, kitchen with serving hatches to both rooms, the GP waiting room (also called the Thames Room), the GP Surgery, Ladies, Gents and Disabled Toilets. We have a small entrance lobby. There is a substantial car park. During the 1999 refurbishment the external and internal doors were upgraded to meet with the revised Fire Regulations (as stipulated by the Officer from NWDC) and we ensured that we met with the requirements of the forthcoming changes to the Disability Act. The Hall is regularly inspected as the Village Play Group operates from the Village Hall each weekday during the School term. The Hall has a portable Bar (stored on the stage) that can be set-up in either of the large rooms; alternatively the kitchen can be used for serving. The Premises Licence also covers an 8m x 15m adjacent to the Main Door (southern elevation) and a fenced 8m x 5m area to the eastern elevation. These areas are primarily to allow for events with Pig Roasts and BBQs. Apart from the substantial security for the GP, no dangerous drugs are stored on the premises.

The Village Hall is a Registered Charity and is run by a Management Committee representing User Groups and elected members of the public, who are the Managing Trustees of the Charity.

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 Rules of Hire draw the hirers' attention to the health and safety and licensing obligations that the Booking places upon them. A Member of the Management Committee only staffs the hall during a booked event when it is agreed necessary. Hirers are expected to provide attendants to meet the requirements of licensing conditions.

The Hall is licensed for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises. The Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) is David John Sheppard of 20 Eastfield, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, SN6 6PR. Telephone 01285 860158. In addition to the DPS being a Personal Licence Holder (PLH) the Village Hall has access to a further PLH associated with the Management Committee.

Principle Uses of the Village Hall

The Village Hall is used for a wide variety of functions. These cover, but are not limited to Badminton Club, Bowls Club, Bridge Club, Golden Years, Karate Club, Lunch Club, Mother & Toddler, Parish Council meetings, Play Group, Thursday Club and WI. The Village Hall Management Committee will encourage all regular users of

the Hall to carry out their own Fire Risk Assessment, highlighting the areas that pertain to their own Group of users and their activities.

In addition to the above, the Hall is widely used for Discos, Fetes, Live Music, Parties, Plays, Presentations, Receptions and many other social and fund raising activities. It is the intention of the Management Committee to introduce a rural cinema at some stage in the near future.

This Fire Risk Assessment has been done by the Village Hall Management Committee to cover all aspects of the Hall, but in particular for those Hirers who are not familiar with the layout and equipment.

The Management Committee encourages Hirers 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.

Who is at Risk of Fire

The Village Hall does not employ any staff, but has cleaners that operate on an hourly basis and adjust their time to suit the requirements of the Hall.

The premises are occupied by the cleaning staff at times to suit the hiring profile of each day. This invariably includes a period between 0630hrs and 0830hrs each weekday morning and several sessions during the afternoon.

It is normal that a Cleaner will be on their own within the premises. The Cleaners are familiar with the layout of the premises.

Hall Users (up to 200). These will be familiar with the public area as there are only two main rooms (plus toilets and kitchen) and users can very quickly assimilate themselves with these areas. The emergency signage is illuminated above Fire Exit Route doors. These 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. All Emergency Exit doors are on a level with the paths outside the doors being either concrete or paved.

Children. All Children within the Hall are supervised and as mentioned above, the two prime Groups (Play Group and Mother & Toddler) are likely to have their own Fire Risk Assessment. The enclosed Play Area to the eastern elevation is fenced at a level where an adult could lift Children over the fence.

Possible Causes of Fire

The ones identified by the Management Committee are:

- Main power supply
- Main Oil supply
- Portable electrical appliances
- Kitchen equipment (other than portable electrical appliances)
- Smoking Policy
- Waste
- Stage lighting system (including dimmer and distribution system)
- Soft furnishings
- Deliberate ignition

Control Measures

The primary and general control measures taken by the Management Committee are to ensure:

- that sufficient and correct fire fighting equipment is available and that a qualified practitioner inspects it at least once per year. A Certificate of Maintenance will be obtained for each inspection. The equipment currently (April 2006) consists of the following extinguishers: 2 x 2kg CO², 4 x Model 240 9litre Water, 1 x SP 4kg Dry Powder; a Fire Blanket and 2 x Smoke alarms fitted in the corridor. The Management Committee will use the advice of the inspection practitioner to increase, change or move location of the fire fighting equipment.
- that the location of the fire fighting equipment, emergency lighting and escape routes are clearly marked on a Plan that is available to all users and staff.
- that all Fire Exit doors are checked for illumination, ease of opening and that the Emergency Exit Routes are clear on a weekly basis. A test of continued illumination in event of a power failure will be done quarterly. A test of the Smoke Alarms will be done quarterly.
- that the Management Committee test the ease of access to and through the escape routes and to the assembly points at least once per year and log the results.
- that a qualified practitioner checks the internal electric installation once per year (including all portable electrical appliances and stage lighting system) and the overall power supply to the Village Hall at least once every five years. A Certificate of Inspection will be obtained for each inspection.
- that any furnishings that belong to the Village Hall and are less than one metre from the floor are made of a non-combustible material or a material that has been Fire Proofed to the standard applicable at the time of purchase. This applies to all curtaining on the stage irrelevant of distance from the floor level.
- that the Oil Boiler is maintained at least once per year and that during the inspection the engineer checks the sections of the oil pipeline that can be seen and all of the electrical functionality of the Boiler.
- a No Smoking policy will be encouraged until such time as legislative changes mean that we can enforce a Smoking ban. Smoking is strictly banned on the Stage, rear dressing rooms and kitchen. Once we can legally enforce a ban throughout the building, signage will be strategically placed.
- that security lighting (sensor operated) is provided and maintained on both Northern and Southern elevations as well as the Car Park in order to discourage potential intruders.
- that wherever possible, locking mechanisms for ensuring internal safety without comprising emergency routes are fitted.
- that a record of key holders and of those hirers (Group names) that have been given temporary access to a key is kept by date and session (times).

- that the location where the waste bins are stored is checked each time the kitchen is cleaned (daily during peak times) for any fire hazards (loose inflammable) materials. Where any loose material is found it will be placed inside the waste bins or removed from site.
- that all Village Hall Users will be made aware of their responsibilities under the Premises Licence via the Booking Form.
- that all Regular User Groups will be advised that they should carry out their own Risk Assessment and that a copy should be lodged with the Management Committee. Whilst the Management Committee will advise and encourage, it is cannot be held responsible for a group not carrying out their own Risk Assessment.

Note that the Assembly Points are:

High Road

Opposite side of the road to the Village Hall

Car Park

At the furthest point from the Village Hall without straying on to the road