



FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Background

Waldringfield Village Hall is a single storey building of brick construction, opened in 2001. There is a main hall (Deben Room), a smaller hall (Kennedy Room), a kitchen, lobby with cloakrooms, an office and two storage rooms. Outside there is a car park, an oil tank and two storage sheds. Waldringfield Village Hall is hired by a range of organisations and private individuals for a wide variety of activities, some of which are licensable. A written agreement between the Waldringfield Village Hall Trust and the Hirer forms the basis of the hiring arrangement. The Booking Form and Terms and Conditions of Hire draw the hirer's attention to the health and safety and licensing obligations that the booking places upon them.

The hall is licenced by East Suffolk DC for plays, films, live music, recorded music, performances of dance (or similar), making music, dancing and facilities for similar entertainment.

Numbers of persons shall not exceed:

	Main Hall without stage	Main Hall with stage	Small Hall
Seated at tables	162	126	32
Dancing & tables	216	168	42
Dancing only	324	252	
Closely seated	216	168	42

The Trustees encourage all users of the hall to carry out their own Risk Assessment, highlighting the areas that pertain to their own group of users and their activities.

THE HIRER IS DEEMED THE "RESPONSIBLE PERSON" AND IS DESIGNATED AS THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE HALL DURING THE HIRE PERIOD. It is recommended that hirers take a note of the name of everyone attending their event.

The Trustees encourage hirers to make themselves aware of the exit routes, the firefighting equipment and the plan of the hall detailing the location of the equipment, the escape routes and assembly points. The plan is available to all hall users and is also displayed on the wall by the front entrance.

It is the responsibility of hirers to ensure the hall is securely locked after use, as the building should never be left open and unoccupied.

Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into force on 1st October 2006, replaces most fire safety legislation with one simple order. It means that any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire. The Order applies to virtually all premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space. It applies to community halls and community premises and is relevant, therefore, to Waldringfield Village Hall.

This Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Order and having regard to the Government guidance on Fire Safety Risk Assessment in Small and Medium Places of Assembly. The guide describes 5 steps to be taken when carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment:

Step 1 – Identify fire hazards

Step 2 – Identify people at risk

Step 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Step 4 – Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Step 5 – Review

1. FIRE HAZARDS: SOURCES OF IGNITION, FUEL AND OXYGEN

The main sources of ignition are:-

- the various items of electrical equipment located in the kitchen, for example:- cooker and hob, dishwasher, microwave, fridge/freezer, boiler;
- electrical heaters and extension leads;
- hirer's equipment;
- naked flames and smoking.

Other sources of potential ignition are electric sockets, portable appliances and office equipment.

The roof has PV Solar panels.

Principal sources of fuel are petrol and mower stored in the shed outside the hall to its rear; the oil tank situated to the rear of the kitchen.

Other sources of fuel are foam seating, curtains and items in the storage cupboards.

Arson is also a possible source of ignition.

The main source of oxygen is the natural airflow through doors and windows.

2. PEOPLE AT RISK

People at risk if there is a fire. Numbers permitted are described above. They include:-

- **Staff:** The Village Hall Committee contracts a part-time cleaner, who has a key to the building and is generally on their own when working. The Committee also contracts a part-time gardener who is also generally on their own when working.
- **Trades People:** The Trustees employ local trades people on both an ad-hoc and scheduled basis for the purposes of cleaning, safety checks and building maintenance. Local trades people who are familiar with the building may gain access to the hall by borrowing a key from the Trustees, while others are escorted by one or more Trustees.
- **Hall Users – including volunteers:** Many will be familiar with Waldringfield Village Hall. Those that are not will find the simple layout easy to navigate and assimilate. The Deben Hall is open plan and has easily identifiable fire exits on three sides. There are double-fire doors in the Deben Hall that exit directly outside and are fitted with a push-bar release. The Kennedy Room has three exits. All exits are clearly marked and emergency lighting is installed over fire doors and around the building, and this is tested regularly.
- **Disabled Persons:** At a typical function there may be a limited number of disabled persons. It is the responsibility of hirers to ensure disabled persons are given adequate assistance in the event of an evacuation. All emergency exit doors are on a level with the areas or ramps outside, which are either tarmaced or paved, so there are no barriers to wheelchairs.
- **Children:** It is the responsibility of hirers to ensure all children within the building are supervised and that they are given adequate assistance in the event of an evacuation.

3. EVALUATE, REMOVE, REDUCE AND PROTECT FROM RISK

3.1 The risk of fire occurring

It is considered that the risk of fire occurring is low. There is no gas supply to the building. There is an oil-fired boiler in the kitchen and an oil tank separated from the building at the rear.

Combustible materials are kept away from sources of ignition.

Flammable materials such as curtains, and seating, are treated to be flame retardant.

A NO SMOKING policy operates in all areas of the building.

NO FIREWORKS, GAS APPLIANCES, FLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES or NAKED FLAMES are permitted to be used inside the building.

Electrical equipment, including heaters are maintained and tested.

3.2 The risk to people

The main entrance/foyer, Deben Room, kitchen, Kennedy Room and storage areas, are all at ground floor level (this is a single storey building) and are open to the various escape routes available - being the main entrance and two external fire doors in the Deben Hall and the single door between the kitchen and the Kennedy Room. The fire

escape routes are protected by fire doors. Fire exits are shown on the attached plan. The hall was inspected by Suffolk Fire Services when it was licenced in 2001.

Escape routes are lit by emergency lighting (3 hour duration) and signed (in accordance with Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

There is a manually operated fire alarm system. It is actuated by break glass points near the fire exits.

Smoke detectors trigger an alarm in the event of fire.

Assembly areas are identified adjacent to the fire exits.

Hirers are made aware of the fire precautions and are responsible for ensuring that fire precautions are followed.

3.3 Removal/reduction of the hazards

The identified potential hazards comprise the range of electrical equipment contained in the kitchen, Deben Hall, Kennedy Room and office are an essential part of the facilities available to the users of Waldringfield Village Hall. Removal would not be in the best interests of the village hall or its users and the potential hazards are reduced as far as possible through regular maintenance, inspection and servicing.

Electrical equipment is maintained and hirers are required to ensure any electrical equipment brought into the hall is safe, in good working order and used in a safe manner.

The oil boiler is regularly serviced and tested.

Mobile stage and exercise equipment stored in the Village hall, does represent a potential hazard but these are the minimum practical and storage areas and are kept tidy and confined.

Materials stored in the sheds are separated from the main building.

Rubbish is stored in bins, is removed weekly and is not allowed to accumulate.

3.4 Removal/reduction of the risks to people

The fire risk to people has been minimised as far as reasonably practicable.

A Fire alarm system warns people in the event of fire. Fire escape signs are in place as is emergency lighting to assist people in the event of fire and to allow them to escape safely. The alarm and emergency lighting are tested annually. There is a fire action notice in the main lobby.

There are smoke alarms throughout the property as shown on the attached plan. They are tested annually as part of the fire alarm test.

Fire extinguishers are located in kitchen (and a fire blanket), Deben Hall, Kennedy Room and they are inspected annually. The certificate is displayed in the lobby of the Hall. Location and type is shown on the attached plan.

The hatch between the kitchen and Deben Hall has a fusible link

There are three main escape routes available and are readily accessible from all parts of the hall. All are independent of each other. The main escape routes are (1) the main entrance (2) an external fire door off the Deben Hall, and (3) an external fire door between the kitchen and Kennedy Room. Internal doors are self-closing.

Escape routes are marked. All external fire doors lead to the outside and provide open space for safe and easy evacuation of the hall.

Instructions on actions in the event of fire are displayed on the notice board, along with a plan showing the fire precautions, and are drawn to the attention of hirers.

4. Record, Plan, Inform, Instruct and Train

Terms of hire reflect this fire risk assessment, including actions to be taken in the event of fire and to reduce the risks to people.

Hirers are made aware of the fire precautions and their responsibilities as a responsible person during the hire.

A checklist of items based on Appendix A ACRE Information Sheet 37 will be developed for Trustees to use to ensure that the precautions identified are being maintained.

5. Review

This fire risk assessment will be reviewed when:-

- There are substantial changes to the building including the structure, internal layout, fixtures and fittings;
- changes to storage arrangements i.e. what is being stored and the level of risk in storing it – is it hazardous?
- a significant increase in the number of people attending an activity and the presence of people with some form of disability;
- failures of the fire detection systems such as any alarms that may be in the building.