

# **WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

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## **General Statement**

The major thrust of health and safety regulation in any organization is to establish an integrated and structured approach to the management of health and safety. As a Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) we are required to provide a healthy and safe place for employees, volunteers, users and contractors by:

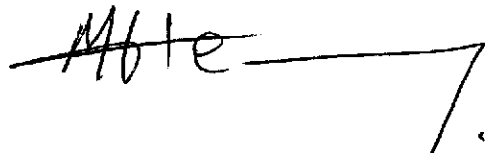
- establishing emergency evacuation procedures
- providing suitable training and information
- restricting access to 'dangerous' or 'private' areas
- assessing risks to employees, volunteers and others on the premises
- taking appropriate measures to reduce or prevent such risks

The VHMC is aware of these responsibilities but requires the full co-operation of employees, volunteers, users, visitors and contractors in complying with the various instructions and regulations issued for their safety. All users and visitors are obliged by a general duty of care to act sensibly and reasonably to ensure their own safety and that of others. They also have a duty to raise matters of concern with the Village Hall Manager (VHM) or any other member of the VHMC.

This statement is signed on behalf of the VHMC by the Chairman and the Hall Manager.

**Michael Hemming – Village Hall Manager**

**Date:** 23/4/2025



**Colin Veale – Chairman**

**Date:** 23/4/2025



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## **ORGANISATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **1 General safety responsibilities**

All references to the VHM mean the person acting on behalf of the VHMC in the role of Hall Manager.

As detailed in the general statement, all employees, volunteers, users, visitors and contractors have a general duty of care not to endanger the health and safety of anyone using the Village Hall (VH).

Users must take reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of employees, volunteers, colleagues, those in their care and contractors by:

- ensuring that safe working procedures are maintained,
- ensuring that furniture, furnishings and equipment are safe, work correctly and are duly maintained.

Any risks or hazards to health and safety, defects in furniture, furnishings, equipment, services or the fabric of the building should be reported to the VHM or a VHMC member and solutions found to reduce the risks or hazards identified.

### **2 Booking arrangements and general services**

The Finance and Administration Officer must draw to the attention of new hirers health and safety requirements and safety policy, the location of first aid boxes, safety notices, fire exits, extinguishers and evacuation procedures. In addition, users are required to notify any faults or damage to the VHM.

The VHM will be responsible for all cleaning, lighting, security, storage and associated services referred to below.

### **3 First aid facilities**

A defibrillator is located at the entrance to the Village Hall, to the left of the main front door. This is supplied under contract by South West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and is maintained in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between our two organisations. As part of this contact an annual awareness training course will be provided for the community.

A regular check of the defibrillator is undertaken according to an agreed rota, to ensure the green 'rescue ready' indicator is displayed. A protocol is in place and clearly visible advising who to contact if the green 'rescue ready' indicator is not displayed, or the defibrillator has been used.

A first aid box, available to all users, is in the foyer. A second first aid kit is in the disabled toilet on the ground floor and a third in the upstairs kitchen. The VHM will restock all boxes as necessary to maintain stock at the correct level.

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## **4 Manual handling (tables/chairs/internal marquee)**

Manual handling equipment to reduce risks, such as trolleys and steps are available when moving chairs or erecting the internal marquee. Only members of the VHMC or trained users/supervised volunteers will be allowed to assemble equipment.

## **5 Control of hazardous substances**

Cleaning materials used are those of a day to day proprietary nature, with employees, volunteers and users advised to follow the instructions recommended by the manufacturers. If necessary, further information will be obtained from the manufacturers. Used containers are disposed of according to the manufacturers' guidelines. Storage of such materials, while not in use, is in a secure area.

## **6 Personal protective equipment**

The VHMC will provide users with personal protective equipment (PPE) as necessary. Users can obtain latex gloves from the cleaners' cupboard if required when dealing with domestic spillages as long as there is no risk. In other circumstances, assistance should be sought from the VHM (telephone number as displayed at the hall).

The cleaning contractor provides their employee(s) with suitable protective equipment and charges the VH accordingly.

## **7 Noise at work**

There are no identified areas where noise is an issue.

## **8 Electricity at work regulations**

Users are requested to bring any defective electrical equipment to the immediate attention of the VHM.

It is not a legal requirement to PAT test annually. However, it is good practice to check portable equipment on a regular basis. Monthly, all leads and plugs are inspected for damage by the VHM and these checks are recorded in the record book. PAT testing is carried out every 5 years by a suitably qualified electrician, in line with the below full electricity check.

A full electrical check is carried out as per regulations (currently 5 years) and the certificate is forwarded to the Halls' insurers to maintain full insurance cover. The last full electrical check was carried out in 2025 with the next test scheduled for 2030.

## **9 Gas supply**

A gas safety certificate for the boilers and the cooker is obtained annually.

## **10 Water Supply**

All taps are flushed weekly by the VHM, and the TMV's are also checked on a weekly rota basis. The VHM will ensure that a contractor is engaged to carry out an annual service of all

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TMV units and carry out safety testing of the hot and cold-water supplies, record results and take any remedial action necessary. This may involve professionally disinfecting the entire water system and subsequent testing for Legionella, Pseudomonas, Coliforms.

### **11 Contractors and suppliers**

All goods and service suppliers must deal directly with the VHM who will ensure that their health and safety policy is such that no-one in the VH is put at risk because of lack of training in respect of health and safety matters.

Whilst on the premises, it is the responsibility of the VHM to ensure the health and safety of such visitors and to provide the necessary level of supervision.

### **12 Fire and emergency evacuation**

Full instructions of the fire/emergency evacuation procedures for the VH staff, volunteers and users are provided to all new users and are posted on the notice board in the foyer. In the event of a fire or an emergency the room(s) affected must be vacated. The alarm system, i.e. Break Glass switches located as shown in the Fire Emergency procedures, should be sounded to alert other staff, volunteers and users. All staff/volunteers/users should familiarise themselves with routes to be used for evacuation purposes and the assembly points by consulting the local notices. The Fire Brigade should be called by dialling 999. Visitors or contractors on site should be made aware of the evacuation procedures and are deemed to be the responsibility of the party they are visiting or carrying out work for. They should be escorted to an assembly point. The senior person or the senior user group representative present should ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and visitors and liaise with the local emergency services if required. If the VHM is not present, then the VHM should be contacted on the number displayed in the foyer and on the external notice board and be requested to provide assistance. Alternative contacts are the VHMC chairman and Finance and Administration Officer whose telephone numbers are also displayed. The fire/evacuation alarm system and related equipment is checked and serviced by the supplier annually. In addition, a regular alarm test is carried out and a record kept. Practice evacuation procedures will be carried out at least annually. New staff and volunteers (Chairman) hall users (Finance and Administration Officer) and contractors (Hall Manager) will be made aware of evacuation procedures.

### **13 Accident investigation**

All accidents involving staff, volunteers, users or contractors should be reported to the VHM or a member of the VHMC who will arrange to investigate the occurrence with at least one other member of the VHMC together with a member of any user group or contractor involved.

If appropriate, steps will be taken to identify the cause of the accident, reduce or eliminate the risk or hazard, as well as considering any wider implication for the users. A record of the incident, the investigation and any recommendation will be reported to the VHMC and retained on file

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## **14 Working alone**

Although there is no general legal prohibition about working alone, the broad Health & Safety at Work Act still applies. Trustees, users, contractors and employees involved in activities including working alone at the hall must ensure they consider the risks involved. Volunteers must always be supervised and are not permitted to work alone.

If intending to work alone, that individual must advise a 'responsible person' in plenty of time, for example a Pre-school staff member, trustee or committee member. The VHM, when making his periodic checks, should preferably do so when the building is occupied by others. If the VHM has to work alone a 'responsible person' should also be advised and if necessary, assistance should be sought from a user group present or a trustee contacted to assist. The cleaning contractor must ensure that high level cleaning is done with more than one operative present. Trustees, users or the VHM must not 'work alone' at height (see Section 15).

## **15 Working at height**

Trustees, volunteers, users, contractors and employees involved in activities including maintenance and repairs at the hall must ensure they consider the risks involved if they need, in particular, to operate at heights inside or outside the premises.

In particular, contractors and employees engaged in authorised work must carry out a risk assessment/and be accompanied by a fellow worker. Trustees, users or the VHM must not 'work alone' at height.

There is an expectation that trustees, Committee members, volunteers and other users will be in groups when using a ladder, for example when erecting the marquee.

The hall step ladders are stored in the meter cupboard adjacent to the hall front door. The keyholders are the VHM and the Chairman.

## **16 New equipment**

All new equipment purchased and that is currently in use will be fit for the purpose for which it is provided and should be used for operation and under conditions for which it is suitable. Operation of VH equipment and the provision of operating instructions as required is the responsibility of the VHM and the VHMC. A minimum of 4 experienced members of the Marquee team will be available for assembly of the Marquee.

The purchase of new equipment, which is normally approved by the VHMC, will have regard to its suitability for the purpose and health and safety. Equipment will be maintained in a good state.

Where the use of equipment is likely to involve a specific risk to health and safety, the use must be restricted to nominated persons after appropriate training.

## **17 Risk assessments**

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Assessments are carried out by individuals designated by the VHMC in order to identify risks or hazards, analyse the likelihood of causing harm and the potential for serious injury and to take measures to reduce or eliminate the risk or hazard identified. The assessments include:

- \*general site safety
- \*cleaning materials
- \*protective equipment
- \*working practices
- \*fire/evacuation procedures
- \*environmental
- \*load/manual handling

Separate assessments or checks are made in respect of portable and fixed electrical equipment and substances potentially hazardous to health.

As appropriate, a representative from the user group may also be involved in any assessment affecting their area and the main users – West Hill Primary School and West Hill Pre-School – will be invited on the general health and safety survey.

The results of the assessments will be reported to the VHMC.