

WALLOPS PARISH HALL

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

A Fire Safety Guide for Users of the Hall

Assessment by the Management Committee, December 2019

Description of the Hall

The Wallops Parish Hall is a single storey community building situated alongside the A343 on Salisbury Hill, Middle Wallop SO20 8EG. It was completely refurbished in 2010 and meets current building regulations regarding fire hazard and disabled access.

The building comprises a main entrance foyer and corridor, two halls, a kitchen, a small office/snug, separate men's, women's and disabled toilets and storage rooms for furniture and other equipment. Cooking and water-heating is by electricity and central heating is by an oil-fired boiler. There is a car park on the west side of the building that can take about 22 cars.

The halls consist of a large hall that covers 100m² that can hold some 200 people standing or 130 sitting at tables and a small hall that covers 39m² that can hold 60 people standing or about 40 sitting at tables. The area of the whole building is 307m² and all parts are available to hire for private and public events.

The hall is owned jointly by Nether Wallop Parish Council and Over Wallop Parish Council and is run for them as a community facility by the Wallops Parish Hall Management Committee ('the committee'). The premises are licensed by Test Valley Borough Council for indoor sporting events, live music, recorded music, dancing and the provision of entertainment events between 10.00 am and midnight each day.

Outline Fire Safety Responsibilities

Under fire safety legislation the committee is tasked with taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire at the hall and make sure people can escape safely if there is a fire.

Users/Hirers of the hall take on the same legal responsibilities when they are in control of the hall.

Fire Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is a list of sensible and proportionate measures needed to control risks that may affect those who use the hall or are involved in its maintenance and upkeep. The assessment is reviewed annually and is made available to those working on or holding an event in the hall.

A detailed fire risk assessment follows.

WALLOPS PARISH HALL - FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

Legal Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into force on 1st October 2006, replaced most fire safety legislation with one simple order. **The Order states that any person who has control of a premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.**
- 1.2 The Order applies to community halls and community premises and therefore applies to The Wallops Parish Hall. **The person in control of a premises is classified as the 'responsible person' and in the case of the Wallops Parish Hall the 'responsible person' is the Wallops Parish Hall Management Committee.** The committee may appoint one or more 'competent' persons to supervise the details of fire safety and to undertake risk assessments. Usually this is the hall secretary/treasurer.
- 1.3 It should be noted that **a hirer of the hall is deemed to be the person in control of the hall during the period of hire and therefore is the temporary 'responsible person'** during this time.

Fire Risk Assessment

- 1.4 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 lists five steps that should be taken when carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment:
 - 1 – Identify fire hazards.
 - 2 – Identify people at risk.
 - 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk.
 - 4 – Record, plan, inform, instruct and train.
 - 5 – Review.
- 1.5 The Assessment follows this structure and has been carried out for each of the principal areas of useable space in the hall, namely:

1. Main entrance, Foyer and Corridor.	7. Small Hall.
2. Large Hall.	8. Storerooms.
3. Kitchen.	9. Boiler Room.
4. Office/Snug and Cleaning Cupboard.	10. Storage Hut.
5. Male and Female Toilets.	
6. Disabled Toilet.	
- 1.6 For each of these areas an assessment has been carried out of sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen, fire detection, firefighting and precautionary equipment, escape routes, emergency lighting, signs and notices.
- 1.7 The findings of the assessment are contained in the table at the end of the document (Annex A) and the key points are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

2. Fire Hazards: Sources of Ignition, Fuel and Oxygen

- 2.1 The main sources of ignition are the various items of electrical equipment located throughout all the hall areas and the oil-fired central heating system.
- 2.2 The electrical system comprises the wiring, the lighting system, electric sockets and any items connected to the sockets. A major group of these items is located in the kitchen: the oven, dishwasher, microwave, fridges, kettles and water heater. There is also the risk of cooking accidents causing a fire in the same room.
- 2.3 In addition, the Wallops Amateur Singers and Performers (WASPS) install a quantity of lighting equipment, sound equipment, and other equipment in the main hall when productions are being staged. This equipment is disconnected from the mains circuits when out of use. Similarly, the Parish News group print a monthly magazine in the snug using a large electric printer. This is also disconnected from the mains circuits when out of use.
- 2.4 The principal source of fuel is the domestic heating oil stored away from the hall in a bunded 2,500L oil tank. This supplies the central heating boiler in the boiler room that can only be approached through an outside door. In addition, a small amount of flammable paint and varnishes is stored in the locked wooden storage hut in the car park well away from the hall.
- 2.5 Elsewhere, the sources of fuel are the wooden floor of the large hall, the upholstered chairs in the halls and storerooms, the curtains in the halls and the snug and any accumulation of combustible waste.
- 2.6 The main source of oxygen is the natural airflow through doors and windows which is sometimes supplemented by further airflow when the high-level ventilator fans in the halls are used.

3. People at Risk

- 3.1 People who use the hall and may be at risk if there is a fire include:
 - Hirers
 - The Hall Management Committee
 - Parish, Borough and County Councillors
 - Local organisations
 - Contractors
 - Cleaners
 - Visitors
 - Children
 - The elderly
 - People with disabilities (mobility, hearing or vision impairment)

4. Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

The risk of fire occurring

- 4.1 It is considered that the risk of fire occurring is relatively low. The main sources of ignition comprise electrical equipment located in the kitchen and the oil boiler system. Combustible materials are kept away from these sources and all equipment and boilers are regularly serviced and maintained in a good state of repair.

- 4.2 Elsewhere, electric sockets and lighting are well maintained and, when WASPS connect their overhead lighting and other electrical equipment when productions are being staged, a competent technician is available to ensure their safe installation and operation. Similarly, the magazine printer is always attended when in use.

The risk to people

- 4.3 An evaluation has been carried out of the actual risk to people identified in Step 3 in the event that a fire did start and spread from those areas with the main sources of ignition.
- 4.4 The main entrance/foyer and corridor, the two halls, the kitchen, the toilets and the storerooms are all at ground floor level and are open to the main front door and the four available fire exit/escape routes. The corridor is wide and doors have been designed for easy use by the disabled and children. The hall can be evacuated rapidly if needed and the risk to people is therefore low.

Removal/reduction of the hazards

- 4.5 The hall was extensively refurbished in 2010 and meets all current building regulations regarding fire hazard and disabled access. In addition to this, fittings and furniture installed meet fire safety standards where possible; the curtains and the fabric on the notice boards have been treated with flame retardant and the upholstery on the chairs meets BS 5825 Part II.
- 4.6 The major group of identified potential electrical hazards comprising the range of equipment in the kitchen is considered to be an essential part of the facilities available to the users of the hall. Removal would not be in the best interests of these users and the potential hazards are reduced as far as possible through regular maintenance, inspection, servicing and replacement.
- 4.7 Similarly, the central heating system is essential for the comfort and well-being of users of the hall. The potential hazard is minimised through annual servicing and safety checks.
- 4.8 The small amount of paint and varnishes stored in the locked storage shed in the car park are considered a minor acceptable hazard as they are well away from those likely to be at risk.
- 4.9 The hall operates a strict No Smoking policy in all areas of the building and fireworks may not be set off in the hall or in the car park. Gas Appliances and candles are also not normally allowed.
- 4.10 Flammable waste material (paper, cardboard, rags, etc) is removed from the hall almost daily as part of the cleaning process. Elsewhere flammable materials are limited to curtains and seating, and generally these are kept away from potential hazards. Similarly, equipment used by local groups (projectors, toys, etc) is kept secure within the storerooms off the halls where the potential fire risk is very low.

Removal/reduction of the risks to people

- 4.11 The fire risk to people has been reduced to as low as reasonably practical by ensuring that adequate fire precautions are in place to warn people in the event of fire and to allow them to escape safely.
- 4.12 The hall has an automatic fire alarm system incorporating alarm klaxons, manually operated 'break glass' alarm points and hard-wired heat and smoke detectors. The control panel is in the main entrance foyer, the components are listed in the table at Annex A and are also shown on the sketch plan at Annex B. The system is local and is NOT connected to the emergency services.
- 4.13 Fire extinguishers for particular types of fire are situated in the main entrance foyer, large hall, small hall and kitchen. A fire blanket is located in the kitchen. These are regularly inspected and serviced. A first aid kit is also available in the kitchen.

4.14 The four escape routes are at ground floor level and are readily accessible from all parts of the building. All are independent of each other and have emergency escape lighting which is permanently connected. The routes exit through:

1. The main entrance door.
2. External fire door off the large hall.
3. External fire door off the small hall.
4. The kitchen external door.

4.15 The external fire doors lead to outside paths and to the car park area that provides open space for safe and easy clearance of the hall. Outside lighting illuminates all fire exits. The fire assembly point is at the rear of the car park.

In extremis the windows in the two halls and the snug can also be used as emergency escape routes (but note the drop outside of 1m to 2m below the window cills).

4.16 The foyer, corridor, two halls, kitchen and snug have integrated emergency lighting which operates automatically if the fire alarm system is activated or if there is a power failure. It should provide up to two hours of basic lighting.

4.17 For ease of use there is a 'fire action point' located next to each of the fire exit doors. These consist of a Fire Alarm Point, a Fire Action Notice and a Fire Extinguisher with its Use Notice.

Installation, testing and maintenance

4.18 All fire prevention and firefighting equipment is maintained in effective working order through regular checks, periodic servicing and maintenance. Sources of risk are also checked on a regular basis.

4.19 Monthly checks are made of the cooker, water heaters, fridges, emergency lighting, fire doors, lights, dishwasher, water boiler and the fire alarm.

4.20 An annual check is made of the fire extinguishers and a certificate of inspection obtained. The oil boiler system is serviced and checked annually and the electrical system has a full statutory condition check every five years. Portable electrical appliances are checked periodically.

Conditions of Hire – Hirers of the Hall

4.21 The conditions of hire of the hall state that the Hirer must conduct his or her own fire risk assessment and must ensure that he or she is aware of the location and use of fire alarm points, fire-fighting equipment, the escape routes, their proper operation and the need to keep escape routes and doors clear.

The conditions of hire are shown on the Wallops Parish Hall website and a checklist of the fire safety responsibilities of hirers of the hall is attached at Annex C.

5. Record, Plan, Inform, Instruct and Train

Significant findings and action taken

5.1 The main findings of the fire risk assessment including the actions taken to prevent fire occurring and to reduce the risk to people are contained in the preceding sections of this report.

5.2 A sketch plan showing the fire safety measures is attached at Annex B.

Emergency plan

- 5.3 The hall has a relatively simple layout with clear and well signed escape routes. A fire may be detected by individuals or by the automatic detection system. Thereafter the raising of the alarm and evacuation of the building should be speedy, safe and effective.
- 5.4 A simple fire action plan for use by all is attached to this assessment at Annex D and fire action notices are displayed next to the four main exits.

Information and instruction

- 5.5 The hall is occupied by Hirers most of the time it is in use or active and, as already stated, they are the temporary Responsible Persons for fire safety during this time. They have all been provided with copies of the Conditions of Hire and are required to accept and adhere to them.
- 5.5 Other users of the Hall (the committee, etc) are encouraged to read this assessment and the checklists attached to it so that they are familiar with fire safety and can brief casual visitors.
- 5.6 Fire safety advice is given to the hall cleaner and contractors by the secretary.
- 5.7 Signs indicating the location of fire exits, fire alarm points and fire extinguishers are posted at various prominent and visible points throughout the hall.

6. Review

- 6.1 The assessment is to be kept under review particularly with regard to any potential new risks and the need to keep them under control, and also to ensure that the fire precautions are still working effectively.
- 6.2 The assessment is to be validated annually by the management committee.

Attachments

- Annex A - Fire Risk Assessment Table.
- Annex B - Fire Safety Measures Sketch Plan.
- Annex C - Fire Safety Responsibilities of a Hirer.
- Annex D - Action in the Event of Fire.