



July 2023

The Helsington & Brigsteer Village Hall Board operates a Health and Safety Policy which seeks to provide a healthy and safe environment for all hall bookings and events.

All statutory requirements for public health and safety are reviewed and implemented. Regular Risk Assessments, which address the normal use of the hall are carried out and wherever practical. Potential hazards are reduced and if possible, eliminated. Guidance is sought from qualified professionals when required.

Written records of all health & safety issues are kept and available for inspection on request. An 'Accident Report Book' is kept in the kitchen with the First Aid.

User Groups play a key role in maintaining this healthy and safe environment by operating in a way that does not lower H&S standards. The policy statements below seek to support User Groups in maintaining this standard and the User Group nominated responsible person is required to sign an acknowledgement of their responsibility to this policy - as part of their hall booking contract. They or their representative is then responsible for the health & safety of the group during their use of the hall facility.

Any point can be queried with the Helsington & Brigsteer Village Hall's Health & Safety Representative whose word is final.

1. Calls to '999' (or 112) emergency services will be made on a mobile phone from a person present.
2. The entire building including the external decked area to the front is non-smoking at all times. Smoking is restricted to the circular external recreational area at the front of the building.
3. No activities are allowed which involve danger to the public. No obvious fire hazards are allowed on the premises. No unauthorised heating appliances are to be used. No hazardous substances (as regulated by COSHH) are to be used or stored in the hall. No highly flammable substances shall be brought into or used in any part of the premises. No internal decorations of a combustible nature (e.g. polystyrene, cotton etc) shall be undertaken or erected without the permission of the H&S Representative.
4. The Hirer must report all accidents involving injury to the public to a member of the Village Hall Board as soon as possible and complete the 'Accident Report Book' which is kept in the kitchen. Any failure of equipment belonging to the Village Hall or brought in by the Hirer must also be reported as soon as possible. The Helsington & Village Hall Health and Safety Representative will report any incidents in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Regarding Safe Escape in the event of a Fire

5. Users should acquaint themselves with all exits (normal & emergency) and these must be kept clear (internal & external) at all times such as not to impede emergency evacuation. All fire doors are marked as such and must not be wedged open under any circumstances. For any major events involving numbers exceeding 50, the hirer must check that all exits are unobstructed – this includes checking that emergency exits are unlocked and functional as intended. Fire drills are not regularly practiced.

6. In the event of an outbreak of fire however slight, the building must be evacuated immediately – fire extinguishers are provided at all exits to assist in clearing a path for emergency exit. The muster point is in car park across the road from the Hall. Wherever feasible and safe to do so, doors and windows should be closed to reduce the spread of the fire. The Fire Service should then be called on 999 (or 112).

Regarding the use of the Kitchen

7. Any hirer intending to provide catering (beyond cold or hot drinks and cold proprietary packaged biscuits/cakes) must ensure there is a person responsible for food preparation adheres to an acceptable standard of food hygiene. If you require any guidance on this matter contact a member of the Board or refer to the HSE web-site for information.

8. The cooker must be switched off when not in use. Care must be taken when preparing and using boiling water and when handling hot utensils or appliances. The oven/hob should be supervised at all times when in use. It remains hot well after being turned off.

9. Users must remove all food at the end of their booking. Outside rubbish bins are provided for disposal of waste food. Bags of food waste must not be left unless securely within the external rubbish bins provided. Excessive rubbish created such as by parties should be removed by the hirer.

10. A hand wash facility is provided in the toilets near to the kitchen. The kitchen and utensils should be left in a hygienic state – usable by the next booking. Cleaning facilities are provided – generally stored in the store – off the main hall. If the kitchen has been left in an unhygienic state by a previous booking it must be reported to a representative of the Board. The Hall does not arrange cleaning between each booking and the Board cannot be held responsible for the condition of the kitchen from the previous booking.

Activities outside the Hall

11. Any events involving the use of the external area in front of the Hall are limited to the gravel areas and the grassed area up to the hedge.

12. Visitors to the Hall should similarly be prevented from accessing the areas to the sides and rear of the hall. These areas present possible hazards due to falling rocks and steep slopes.

13. Drivers must take care at all times and they should note that the exit is directly onto a rural road with no speed limit.

14. Parking adjacent to the building has been designated for disabled use.

15. Due to the Hall being in a residential area we request all users to respect our neighbours and to keep noise levels to a minimum

Use of the Car parks

16. There are 2 car parks, one directly in front of the hall and the other opposite. Hirers should notify the hall representative at the time of booking should all parking spaces be required: 35 cars is the maximum number and will require supervision to maximise the space.

17. There is no speed limit on the road passing the hall, so extra care is needed when crossing, particularly in the dark.

18. Should any resident of Brigsteer be aware of contractors wishing to use the parking facility, it is a requirement that the Board's Health & Safety Representative is consulted. This requirement has arisen through an uncontrolled and potentially dangerous situation arising. Permission may be granted subject to the hall not being hired by persons requiring full use of the car park, suitable method statements being available, and guarding, as required by best practice, to mitigate against hazardous conditions for members of the public.

Further general points

19. No safety equipment must be tampered with. If any faults are observed, they must be reported as soon as practical to the H&S Representative.

20. In the event of a power failure – an emergency lighting supply is automatically triggered to illuminate exit routes.

21. A First Aid box is kept in the kitchen in the cupboard appropriately marked. Users are asked to advise a member of the Board if any items have been used so they can be replaced.

22. A qualified First Aider is not provided by the hall facility. Users are advised to consider and resolve their own First Aid requirements.

23. Children are to be supervised at all times. The hall has many features such as a kitchen; stage and storage cupboards which while necessary for hall activities, potentially offer hazards during careless and unacceptable behaviour. Children are not allowed in the kitchen.

24. Care must be taken at all times with the front of stage due to its inevitable sheer drop to the floor of the main hall.

25. The Hall has a store room. Care must be taken moving furniture in and out of this room and all items must be stored such as to avoid accidents from over-stacking. Table stacking instructions are shown on the walls of the storeroom.

26. Users are responsible for the safe operation of all equipment they bring into the Hall. Electrical equipment must be used in a safe manner in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

27. The Hall's electrical facilities are regularly inspected by authorised personnel and a certificate issued. Any user noting any questionable defect should report it immediately and where appropriate cease using the faulty appliance.

28. No electrical equipment is to be stored in the hall such that other user groups could mistake it for equipment provided as part of the hall booking.

29. Any users needing to trail cables across the floor should minimise this need and should take care not to create tripping hazards.

30. Certain rooms/cupboards are generally locked for authorised access only – as stated on the doors.

31. The Board welcomes suggestions as to how Health and Safety procedures may be improved at any time.

Health & Safety Representative(s)

John Cheesbrough, Trustee

David Prescott, H&S Co-ordinator

A copy of this policy statement is to be handed to all User group representatives and a signature obtained to register assent and agreement.