

Lucy and Vincent Brown (Attenborough) Village Hall

Fire Risk Assessment Policy

1. Introduction

a) 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.

b) 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 therefore relevant to Lucy and Vincent Brown (Attenborough) Village Hall.

c) For the purposes of carrying out the Fire Risk Assessment the 'responsible person' is the Lucy and Vincent Brown (Attenborough) Village Hall Management Committee who from time to time appoint one or more 'competent' persons to undertake a risk assessment. This assessment should be carried out and the results and any recommendations noted and filed in the relevant folder. Appropriate action must be taken by the 'responsible person' to reduce the risks, and a signed and dated record kept of both the assessment and any actions required/taken.

d) The Fire Risk Assessment should be 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 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 - file results in relevant folder in date order.

5) Review

This Fire Risk Assessment follows this structure and will be carried out for each of the principal areas of useable space in the village hall, namely:

- All 3 rooms, i.e. Main Hall and kitchen, Douglas Taylor Room and kitchen and the Eric Mason Room
- Upstairs Attic area and storerooms
- Toilets
- Outside areas, including garden and sheds/garage

f) For each of these areas an assessment will be carried out of sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen, fire detection, fire-fighting and precautionary equipment, escape routes, emergency lighting, signs and notices.

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

a) The main sources of ignition are the various items of electrical equipment located in the kitchen eg hob, oven, fridge, water heaters. Elsewhere, the main sources of ignition are gas boilers, electric sockets and lighting located throughout all the hall areas.

- b) The principal sources of fuel are concentrated in the kitchen, and storage rooms used by regular user groups.
- c) Elsewhere, the main sources of fuel are the upholstered seating, *stage curtains and blinds at all of the main windows *these are fireproof retardant materials.
- d) The main source of oxygen is the natural airflow through doors, windows and other openings. This natural airflow is sometimes supplemented by mechanical means when the heaters are used.

3. People at Risk

People who use the hall and may be at risk if there is a fire include:-

- The Village Hall Management Committee
- Hirers and visitors who are unfamiliar with the hall layout
- Contractors
- Cleaners
- Children and the elderly
- People with disabilities (mobility, hearing or vision impairment)

4. Evaluate, Remove, Reduce and Protect from, Risk

The Risk of Fire Occurring

- a) It is considered that the risk of fire occurring is relatively low. The main sources of ignition comprise electrical equipment located in the kitchen in the Main Hall and Douglas Taylor Room. Combustible materials should be kept away from these sources and all equipment should be regularly serviced, maintained and checked to be in a good state of repair.
- b) Elsewhere, electric sockets and lighting should be well maintained.

The Risk to People

- c) An evaluation should be carried out of the actual risk to people identified in step 2 in the event a fire started and spread from those areas with the main sources of ignition.
- d) All entrances and rooms, kitchens, toilets and storerooms are all at ground floor level and are open to the various indicated escape routes available. The upstairs attic is only accessible to regular user groups and should never be accessed when no-one else is in the building.

Removal/Reduction of the Hazards

- e) The identified potential hazards comprise the range of electrical equipment contained in the kitchens and elsewhere which are an essential part of the facilities available to the users of the village hall. Removal would not be in the best interests of the village hall or its users but the potential hazards must be reduced as far as possible through regular maintenance, inspection, servicing and replacement.
- f) Similarly, the gas boilers/radiators are essential for the comfort and well-being of users of the hall. Their potential hazards are minimized through regular servicing.

- g) Lucy & Vincent Brown (Attenborough) Village Hall operates a No Smoking policy in all areas of the building and adheres to the Smoking Regulations introduced in 2007 and display No Smoking signs.
- h) Elsewhere flammable materials are limited to blinds, tables and seating, and generally are kept away from potential hazards.

Removal/Reduction of the Risks to People

- j) The fire-risk to people has been reduced to as low a level as is 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. **ALL regular User Groups should have their own fire policies and plans that include regular fire practices.
- k) Fire extinguishers for particular types of fire are situated in the entrance lobby, Main Hall and Douglas Taylor Room and kitchens. These should be inspected annually, and the Certificate of Inspection is held by the Booking Secretary. Fire blankets are located in the kitchen.
- l) There are six main escape routes available at ground floor level and they are readily accessible from various parts of the building. All are independent of each other with some having emergency escape lighting. The main escape routes are (1) via the road entrance from the Main Hall (2) Douglas Taylor Room (3) via external door from the DTR Kitchen (4) via external door from the MH Kitchen into the back garden area (5) via patio doors in the MH (6) via internal and external door in EMR.
- m) Escape routes must be unencumbered. Those who leave the building to go into the garden area must be encouraged as soon as possible to access the road via the gates at each end of the building, and then to gather near the front of the building on Attenborough Lane or in the car-park of the adjacent Blue Bell Public House.
- n) Escape routes and exits together with the locations of firefighting equipment are indicated by appropriate signs throughout the building. Fire exit signs are fitted with lighting panels above the doors in the Main Hall and Douglas Taylor Room front exits of the hall.
- o) Notices indicating the location of fire doors and extinguishers are situated in a variety of positions around the building. Each fire extinguisher has operating instructions clearly displayed.

Installation, Testing and Maintenance

- p) All fire prevention and fire-fighting equipment must maintained in effective working order through regular checks, periodic servicing and maintenance. Sources of risk must also be checked on a regular basis.
- q) Annual checks are made of water heaters, fridges, emergency lighting, fire doors, lights, and water boiler.
- r) An annual check is made of the fire extinguishers, and a certificate of inspection obtained. The electrical system must also be checked on an annual basis and a safety certificate obtained.

Standard Conditions of Hire

- s) The Standard Conditions of Hire of the Village Hall state that fire and other exits must not be obstructed. The Standard Conditions of Hire are shown on the Village Hall website.

t) For private hire events, particular health and safety procedures apply and an appointed person i.e. the Hirer, must be responsible for fire safety and emergency evacuation.

5. Record, Plan, Inform, Instruct and Train

Significant Findings and Action Taken

a) The main findings of this fire risk assessment, including the actions taken to prevent fire occurring and to reduce the risk to people, are discussed at Management Committee Meetings and minuted.

Emergency Plan

b) The Village Hall has a relatively simple layout with clear and well signed escape routes. As explained above, the standard conditions of hire state that fire and other exits must not be obstructed and that illuminated fire exit signs must be working for all public entertainment.

Information and Instruction

d) Copies of the Standard Conditions of Hire and the conditions relating to Private Hire Events are provided to hirers online who are required to accept and adhere to them.

e) Signs indicating the location of fire doors and fire extinguishers are posted at various prominent and visible points throughout the village hall.

f) Fire safety advice is given to the hall cleaners and contractors.

6. Review

a) This fire risk assessment has been carried out for the Village Hall following the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The assessment is 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.

Recording of Assessments

b) Lucy and Vincent Brown (Attenborough) Village Hall is a small building and the fire risks are minimal, the annual risk assessments for all safety requirements are performed and the results recorded and must be signed, dated and the name of the assessor clearly printed.

c) Should any part of the assessment be regarded as unsatisfactory, the operative MUST bring the potential non-compliance to the immediate attention of the Chair or Hall Manager. The Chair, or Vice Chair or the Hall Manager, must, in conjunction with the assessor, judge the level of risk from severe (may cause immediate or serious harm) to trivial. Where the hazard is regarded as high risk, all activities MUST stop until remedial measures are taken. If the hazard is regarded as medium risk, restricting activities should be considered and corrective action taken as soon as reasonably practical. For low risk problems, normal activities can be resumed and the situation monitored until remedial action can be taken.

d) All remedial actions must be recorded, signed and dated. The non-compliance MUST be discussed at the next full committee meeting or an emergency meeting held forthwith depending on the degree of severity.