

Fire-Safety Risk Assessment

Updated November 2021

Description of Premises

The **Nigel Poulton Community Hall** is a modern, steel-framed and brick-built building situated on the village playing field in Watton-at-Stone. All parts are available to hire for both private and public events.

The Community Hall, which meets all current building-regulations regarding fire hazard and has disabled access, comprises the following.

- Separate men's (2), women's (2), unisex (1) and disabled toilets (1).
- A front-entrance lobby, with access to the disabled-toilet and to one men's and one woman's toilet.
- A Meeting Room/Library.
- A Pavilion with twin Emergency-exit doors to the outside of the building, a separate kitchen with a serving hatch and its own fire-proof door to the front entrance lobby.
- A Main (sports) Hall with single Emergency-exit door to the outside and two internal fire-exit doors (routes), and two cupboards; one being used for the storage of equipment (e.g., sports-associated) whereas the other is the Plant Room/cleaner's room. Both of these cupboards can only be accessed from the inside of the Main Hall. Leading from the Main Hall is a corridor with access to one men's and one woman's toilet, and to two large and two smaller changing-rooms (e.g., for Referees). At the end of the corridor is an Emergency-exit door to the Carpark outside.
- One external unisex toilet, adjacent to the car park.
- Two external storage-rooms, adjacent to the carpark.
- External Boiler Room (containing the gas supply and two gas-fired boilers), adjacent to School Lane.

It can be seen from the above that there are three Emergency/Fire exits from the building, each of which is clearly lit with emergency lighting also the Main Entrance/Exit.

The area to the South of the building is a Car Park which is the designated ASSEMBLY POINT. Internal doors are fire-resistant and Exit-doors open outwards. Window blinds are made of fire-resistant material. Cooking and kitchen water-heating are by electricity. The building is a **NO SMOKING** zone throughout. There are no land-line/public telephones within the building or locally. A cleaner visits the building every day to empty waste-bins and check that Fire Exits are clear.

With regard to capacity, the:

- Meeting Room/Library can accommodate approximately 30 people standing
- Main Hall/changing rooms can accommodate approximately 240 people standing
- Pavilion/Kitchen can accommodate approximately 100 people standing.

This gives a total of 370 people standing for the whole building. However, it should be noted that the figures quoted are considered to be maximums and are not recommended and must never be exceeded.

The car park is to south-side of the building and has space for approximately 15 cars (including 1 disabled space).

No FIREWORKS, GAS APPLIANCES, FLAMMABLE SUBSTANCES or IGNITED CANDLES are permitted inside the building. Smoke detectors in various locations trigger an alarm in the event of fire.

Fire extinguishers are located in the Kitchen, Main Entrance, Changing-room corridor and the Plant Room. They are routinely inspected. The certificate is on the Notice Board in the front-entrance lobby.

Fire Hazard is low, and therefore RISK IS LOW.

Principal uses of the Community Hall

The building or parts thereof is/are hired by a range of organisations and private individuals for a wide variety of activities. Hirers have to sign a written hire-agreement in which the Rules of Hire draw their attention to health and safety, and obligations that the booking places upon them.

The Community Hall Board of Trustees encourages all users of the building to carry out their own Fire-Risk Assessment, highlighting the areas that pertain to their own group of users and their activities.

This Fire-Risk Assessment has been done by the Trustees to cover all aspects of the Hall, but in particular for those Hirers who are not familiar with the layout of the building and equipment.

THE HIRER IS DEEMED THE “RESPONSIBLE PERSON” AND IS DESIGNATED AS THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE COMMUNITY HALL DURING THE HIRE PERIOD. It is advisable to take a note of the name of everyone attending your event.

The Trustees encourage Hirers to make themselves aware of the exit routes and fire-fighting equipment. A plan of the building, showing the location of the equipment and escape-routes, is displayed on the walls of the front-entrance lobby, the Meeting Room and the Changing-room corridor, and is available to all users and contractors.

Hires must identify the Emergency Assembly-Point and be aware that there is no land-line/public telephone within the building or locally.

It is the responsibility of hirers to ensure that the building is securely locked after use. The building must never be left open and unoccupied. The main doors are fitted with specialist security-locks (which prevent unauthorized keys being cut) and access to the keys is controlled by the Parish Council Clerk and Trustees. Certain areas of the building are accessed by having separate locks and keys.

People at Risk

Those at risk in the event of fire are:

- **Contractors.** The Trustees engage various Contractors, on both an ad-hoc and regular/scheduled basis, for the purposes of cleaning, safety checks building maintenance and repair-work. Local Contractors who are familiar with the building may gain access to it by borrowing a key from the Parish Council Clerk or a Trustee, whereas others are always escorted by the Parish Council Clerk or a Trustee.
- **Hirers.** These will generally be familiar with the building. Those that aren't will find the simple layout easy to navigate and assimilate. The building layout is simple and has easily-identifiable exits on all of its sides. Emergency lighting is installed over fire-exits and around the building, and this is tested on a regular basis.
- **Disabled Persons.** It is the responsibility of all Hirers to ensure that any disabled persons present are given adequate assistance in the event of an evacuation.
- **Children.** It is the responsibility of all Hirers to ensure all children within the Hall are supervised and that they are given adequate assistance in the event of an evacuation.
- **Members of the public who are not using the hall.** Members of the public may walk past the hall on their way to the playing field or just passing by, etc.

Possible Causes of Fire

- Main power-supply fault
- Deliberate Ignition
- Faulty portable electrical-appliances
- Faulty kitchen-equipment (other than portable electric appliances)
- Cooking accidents
- Waste material (e.g., by accidental ignition)
- A lighting-system fault
- Equipment (e.g., by accidental ignition)
- Gas Heating fault/gas leak.

Control Measures

The primary and general control measures taken by the Trustees are to ensure that:

- Sufficient and correct fire-fighting equipment is available and that a qualified practitioner inspects it at least once per year. A Certificate of Maintenance will be obtained for each inspection. The equipment consists of the following extinguishers. 1 x 2kg CO2 and 1 x 6 litre water in front-entrance lobby, a Fire Blanket, 1 x CO2 extinguisher and Smoke alarm fitted in the kitchen, 1 x 2kg CO2 in the Plant Room and 1 x CO2 and 1 X 6 litre water in the changing-room corridor. There are also 4 Fire Alarms (with 4 glass-fronted panic buttons) in the building.
- The advice of the inspection practitioner to increase, change or move the location of the fire-fighting equipment is followed.
- The location of the fire-fighting equipment, emergency lighting and escape routes are clearly marked on a plan that is displayed on the walls of the front-entrance lobby, the Meeting Room and the Changing-room corridor, and is available to all Hirers and Contractors. This plan is also available on-line and forms part of the Hire agreement.
- All Fire-Exit doors are checked (on a weekly basis) for illumination and ease of opening, and that the Emergency-Exit routes are clear. A test of continued illumination in event of a power failure is done on a six-monthly basis, as are a test of the Smoke Alarms.
- The Trustees test the ease of access to and through the escape routes and to the Assembly Point every six months.
- Any furnishings belonging to the Community Hall that are less than 1 Metre from the floor are made of a non-combustible material, or a material that has been fire-proofed to the standard applicable at the time of purchase.
- Security lighting is provided and maintained on all elevations, as well as the car park, so as to discourage potential intruders.
- A record of key-holders is kept. Also a record, by date and session, of those Hirers that have been given a key on a temporary basis (e.g., those people running regular sessions).
- The waste bins are checked for any fire hazards (e.g., loose flammable materials such as paper) each time that the kitchen is cleaned. When any such material is found, it will be placed inside the exterior waste-bins or removed from site.
- All users of the Community Hall will be made aware of their responsibilities when signing a Hire agreement.
- All regular Hirers will be advised that they must carry out their own Fire-Risk Assessment. Whilst the Trustees will advise and encourage, they cannot be held responsible for a Hirer who fails to carry own their own Fire Risk Assessment.