

PAMPHILL PARISH HALL

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

Policy adopted by: Pamphill Parish Hall Committee

Responsible Person: Chair, Pamphill Parish Hall Committee

Maximum permitted capacity: 120 persons

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Pamphill Parish Hall is committed to providing a safe environment for everyone who uses the Hall, including hirers, visitors, committee members, volunteers, staff, contractors and members of the public.

The purpose of this Fire Safety Policy is to ensure that:

- the risk of fire is minimised;
- appropriate arrangements are in place to detect and respond to fire;
- everyone using the Hall understands what to do in an emergency;
- escape routes and emergency exits are kept clear;
- suitable fire-fighting equipment is provided and maintained;
- the Hall is operated within its maximum permitted capacity;
- hirers understand their fire safety responsibilities;
- appropriate consideration is given to anyone who may require assistance to evacuate; and
- fire safety arrangements are regularly reviewed.

This policy applies to all activities taking place at the Hall, including private parties, weddings and receptions, community events, meetings, clubs and classes, children's activities, fundraising and social events, skittles, catering and cooking, and activities involving contractors or external organisations.

It applies to the main hall, kitchen, toilets, meeting room, entrance areas, storage areas, skittle alley, bar area and associated external areas.

This policy should be read alongside the Hall's Terms and Conditions and the Hall's Fire Emergency Procedure.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Hall Committee

Overall responsibility for fire safety rests with the Pamphill Parish Hall Committee, acting through its nominated Responsible Person.

The Committee will:

- maintain appropriate fire safety arrangements;
- arrange suitable fire risk assessments and reviews;

- ensure that smoke alarms and fire-fighting equipment are inspected and maintained;
- ensure that emergency lighting and other fire safety equipment are maintained;
- provide appropriate fire safety information to hirers;
- ensure that escape routes and exits are kept clear;
- investigate significant fire safety concerns, incidents and near misses; and
- identify and prioritise necessary improvements.

Fire safety will be considered when planning maintenance, refurbishment or changes to the use of the Hall.

2.2 Hirers

Every hirer is responsible for taking reasonable steps to protect everyone attending their event.

Before their event begins, hirers must familiarise themselves with:

- the fire exits;
- escape routes;
- fire alarm arrangements;
- the location of fire extinguishers; and
- the emergency assembly point.

Hirers must ensure that fire exits and escape routes remain clear throughout their booking and that the Hall is left in a safe condition at the end of the hire.

Any damaged, missing or defective fire safety equipment must be reported to the Hall Committee as soon as possible.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the termination of a hire or refusal of future bookings.

3. FIRE PREVENTION

Everyone using the Hall has a responsibility to reduce the likelihood of fire.

3.1 Smoking and Vaping

Smoking and vaping are not permitted inside the Hall.

Where external smoking is permitted, cigarette ends must be completely extinguished and disposed of safely.

3.2 Candles, Naked Flames and Pyrotechnics

Candles, tea lights, lanterns, incense, burners and other naked flames must not be used without prior approval from the Hall Committee.

Where their use has been authorised, they must be positioned safely away from curtains, decorations, furniture, paper and other combustible materials.

Fireworks, pyrotechnics, barbecues and similar items must not be used unless specifically authorised in advance and appropriate safety arrangements are in place.

3.3 Decorations

Decorations must not:

- obstruct fire exits or escape routes;
- cover fire alarm equipment or fire safety signs;
- obstruct emergency lighting;
- be attached to electrical equipment; or
- be positioned where they could easily come into contact with a source of heat.

Combustible decorations should be kept to a minimum.

3.4 Electrical Equipment

Electrical equipment must be used safely.

Users must not:

- overload sockets;
- use damaged cables, plugs or equipment;
- use equipment that appears unsafe; or
- interfere with the Hall's electrical installations.

Electrical equipment brought into the Hall by hirers should be appropriately maintained and, where applicable, subject to suitable inspection and testing.

Any equipment identified as unsafe must not be used until it has been appropriately repaired or tested.

3.5 Heating

The Hall's heating system must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and any instructions provided by the Hall Committee.

Portable heaters must not be introduced without prior approval.

Combustible materials, decorations, furniture, clothing and other items must be kept away from heaters.

Defective heating equipment must be reported immediately and must not be used if it presents a fire or safety risk.

3.6 Cooking and Catering

The kitchen presents an increased fire risk and particular care must be taken.

Cooking equipment must never be left unattended.

Users must:

- keep cooking areas clean;
- keep combustible materials away from hot surfaces;
- ensure electrical appliances are switched off after use;
- report defective appliances;
- keep escape routes clear; and
- know the location of appropriate fire-fighting equipment.

Water must never be used on an electrical or hot oil/fat fire.

If a cooking pan or appliance catches fire, no person should put themselves at risk attempting to extinguish it. The alarm should be raised and the building evacuated.

3.7 Storage and Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is an important part of fire prevention.

The Hall must not be used for unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials.

Particular care should be taken with:

- cardboard and packaging;
- paper;
- decorations;
- rubbish;
- furniture;
- cleaning materials;
- electrical equipment; and
- materials stored around the stage and skittle area.

Storage must not obstruct escape routes, emergency exits, fire extinguishers or other fire safety equipment.

4. FIRE DETECTION, ALARM AND FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

4.1 Fire Detection and Alarm

The Hall's smoke detection and alarm arrangements must be maintained in good working order.

The Committee will ensure that:

- smoke alarm equipment is regularly checked;
- required servicing is undertaken;
- faults are investigated promptly;
- batteries are replaced where applicable; and
- users are informed of any temporary arrangements where the system is unavailable.

No fire alarm should ever be ignored.

If the alarm sounds, the building must be evacuated unless it is immediately established that the alarm is being tested under an authorised procedure.

Repeated false alarms will be investigated by the Hall Committee.

4.2 Fire-Fighting Equipment

Appropriate fire-fighting equipment will be provided at suitable locations within the Hall.

Fire extinguishers must:

- remain clearly visible and accessible;
- not be obstructed;
- not be moved except where necessary;
- be regularly inspected and serviced; and
- be replaced or repaired where defective.

Fire extinguishers are primarily provided to allow a trained and competent person to tackle a small fire where it is safe to do so.

No person should attempt to fight a fire if doing so would put them at risk.

The priority is always to raise the alarm and evacuate.

5. ESCAPE ROUTES AND EMERGENCY EXITS

All designated fire exits and escape routes must remain unobstructed whenever the Hall is occupied.

Escape routes must not be blocked by:

- tables or chairs;
- boxes or equipment;
- decorations;
- coats or bags;
- children's equipment;
- catering equipment; or
- rubbish or stored materials.

Furniture and equipment must be arranged so that people can leave the building quickly and safely.

Fire exit doors must be capable of being opened quickly from inside without the use of a key or complicated procedure.

The Hall Committee will periodically check that escape routes and emergency exits remain suitable.

5.1 Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting, where provided, must be maintained and tested at appropriate intervals.

It should provide sufficient illumination to assist people in leaving the building safely if the normal electricity supply fails.

Any identified fault must be reported and dealt with as soon as reasonably practicable.

5.2 Emergency Services Access

Access to the Hall and surrounding areas must be kept clear so that emergency vehicles can approach the building.

Vehicles must not be parked in a manner that prevents or seriously restricts emergency access.

6. MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY AND HIRER RESPONSIBILITIES

The maximum permitted capacity of Pamphill Parish Hall is:

120 PEOPLE

This figure must not be exceeded.

The hirer is responsible for ensuring that the number of people attending their event remains within the permitted capacity.

Particular care should be taken at weddings, parties and other events where additional guests may arrive unexpectedly.

Where the Hall is arranged with tables, chairs, a dance floor, buffet, bar, children's activities, bouncy castles or other equipment, sufficient clear space must remain for people to reach emergency exits safely.

Hirers must also:

1. keep all escape routes and fire exits clear.
2. ensure the Hall is not overcrowded.
3. ensure children are appropriately supervised.
4. make suitable arrangements for anyone who may need assistance to evacuate.
5. ensure that no candles, naked flames, fireworks, pyrotechnics or barbecues are used unless permission has been sought and that a fire risk assessment is in place.
6. ensure that electrical equipment brought into the Hall is safe and suitable.

7. ensure cooking and catering activities are properly supervised.
8. never interfere with fire safety equipment.
9. report damaged, missing or defective fire safety equipment.
10. raise the alarm and evacuate immediately if a fire is discovered.
11. leave the Hall in a safe condition at the end of the hire.

7. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND HIGHER-RISK EVENTS

7.1 Children's Activities and Bouncy Castles

Where a bouncy castle or similar children's equipment is permitted:

- it must be installed in accordance with the supplier's instructions;
- it must not obstruct emergency exits;
- sufficient access around the equipment must be maintained;
- electrical equipment must be safely positioned; and
- children must be appropriately supervised.

The hirer remains responsible for ensuring that the equipment does not compromise the Hall's fire safety arrangements.

7.2 Weddings and Large Events

Weddings and similar events can involve larger numbers of people, decorations, catering, entertainment, bars and temporary electrical equipment.

Hirers must ensure that:

- the maximum capacity of 120 people is not exceeded;
- emergency exits remain visible and accessible;
- tables and chairs do not obstruct escape routes;
- decorations do not cover fire safety signs or equipment;
- catering equipment is used safely;
- entertainment equipment and cables are positioned safely; and
- temporary structures or equipment do not obstruct evacuation.

The person responsible for the event must understand the Hall's emergency arrangements.

Where an event involves unusual or additional fire risks, the Hall Committee may require further information or additional precautions before agreeing to the booking.

7.3 Bar and Skittle Alley

The bar and skittle alley must be kept free from unnecessary combustible storage.

Equipment, furniture, drinks, glasses and other items must not obstruct escape routes or fire-fighting equipment.

Electrical equipment must be used safely, and defective equipment must not be used until appropriately repaired or tested.

8. ASBESTOS

The Hall is an older building and asbestos-containing material has previously been identified and overclad with plasterboard.

No person must drill, cut, remove, damage, disturb or otherwise interfere with any material known or suspected to contain asbestos.

Contractors and anyone undertaking maintenance or building work must be informed of the presence of asbestos and must follow the Hall's asbestos management arrangements before work begins.

The Hall Committee will maintain appropriate asbestos information and ensure that relevant contractors are made aware of it.

The detailed management of asbestos, including the asbestos register and management plan, is dealt with separately from this Fire Safety Policy.

9. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

If a fire is discovered or the fire alarm sounds:

9.1 Raise the Alarm

Immediately raise the alarm and alert everyone in the building.

9.2 Evacuate

Leave the building immediately using the nearest safe exit.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do not use an exit affected by fire or smoke.

9.3 Assist Others

Where it is safe to do so, assist children, older people and anyone who may have difficulty evacuating.

The person responsible for the booking should, where safe, check occupied areas including:

- main hall;
- kitchen;
- toilets;
- meeting room;

- other occupied areas.

No one should put themselves at risk to check an area.

9.4 Close Doors

If safe to do so, close doors behind you as you leave.

Do not lock doors in a way that could prevent access by the emergency services.

9.5 Go to the Assembly Point

Everyone must proceed immediately to:

REAR OF THE CAR PARK

The hirer or nominated person should, where possible, establish whether everyone has evacuated.

If anyone is believed to be missing, this information must be given to the Fire & Rescue Service.

Do not re-enter the building to look for anyone.

9.6 Call 999

From a safe location, dial **999** and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service.

Give the full Hall address:

**Pamphill Parish Hall
Abbott Street
Pamphill
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 4ED**

If available, provide the What3Words location:

///stocked.snowstorm.grain

Tell the emergency operator:

- the name of the premises;
- the full address;
- the location of the fire, if known;
- whether anyone may still be inside; and
- any other information requested.

Remain calm and follow the operator's instructions.

9.7 Do Not Re-enter

No person is permitted to re-enter the Hall after evacuation.

The building may only be re-entered once the Fire & Rescue Service or another appropriately authorised responsible official has confirmed that it is safe.

10. END-OF-HIRE, INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

10.1 End-of-Hire Safety Check

At the end of every hire, the hirer should ensure that:

- electrical appliances are switched off;
- cooking equipment is switched off;
- any authorised candles or flames are completely extinguished;
- rubbish is removed and safely disposed of;
- combustible materials are not left in unsafe locations;
- escape routes remain clear;
- doors and windows are secured; and
- no obvious fire hazards have been left behind.

10.2 Committee Checks and Maintenance

The Hall Committee will maintain appropriate records of inspections, testing and servicing of fire safety equipment.

Records should include, where applicable:

- smoke alarm testing;
- emergency lighting testing;
- fire extinguisher servicing;
- electrical inspections;
- relevant maintenance;
- fire risk assessments;
- incidents and false alarms; and
- actions arising from inspections.

Any faults or defects identified must be assessed and rectified as soon as reasonably practicable.

Contractors undertaking work at the Hall must be made aware of relevant hazards and must take appropriate precautions.

Work involving hot works, electrical systems or significant changes to the building must be appropriately planned and controlled.

11. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT, INCIDENTS, TRAINING AND REVIEW

11.1 Fire Risk Assessment

The Hall Committee will ensure that a suitable fire risk assessment is undertaken and kept under review.

The assessment will consider as appropriate:

- sources of ignition;
- sources of fuel;
- people at risk;
- means of escape;
- fire detection and warning;
- fire-fighting equipment;
- emergency lighting;
- electrical safety;
- heating;
- kitchen facilities;
- bar and skittle alley;
- storage;
- decorations;
- children's activities;
- accessibility; and
- the condition and use of the building.

The assessment will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a significant change to the building, its use, equipment or activities.

11.2 Fire Incidents and Near Misses

All fires, suspected fires, significant smoke incidents and fire-related near misses must be reported to the Hall Committee as soon as possible.

The Committee will record significant incidents and consider whether changes are required to procedures, equipment, training, risk assessments or hiring arrangements.

Where necessary, professional advice will be sought.

11.3 Training and Information

The Hall Committee will ensure that appropriate fire safety information is available to committee members, volunteers and hirers.

Committee members and others with specific fire safety responsibilities should receive appropriate information or training.

Hirers will be provided with relevant fire safety information as part of the Hall's booking and hiring arrangements.

11.4 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if:

- there is a fire or significant incident;
- there is a significant change to the building;
- the use of the Hall changes;
- new equipment is installed;
- a fire risk assessment identifies the need for changes; or
- legislation or recognised fire safety guidance changes.

12. IMPORTANT EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Hall: Pamphill Parish Hall

Maximum capacity: 120 persons

Emergency number: 999

Fire & Rescue Service: Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

Hall address:

Pamphill Parish Hall
Abbott Street
Pamphill
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 4ED

Fire Assembly Point: Rear of the car park

Responsible Person: Chair, Pamphill Parish Hall Committee

Fire extinguisher locations: Hall lobby and kitchen

Emergency lighting: Main hall, meeting room and ladies' toilet

Hall Committee: pamphillparishhall@gmail.com

What3Words: ///stocked.snowstorm.grain

13. COMMITTEE DECLARATION

The Pamphill Parish Hall Committee recognises its responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect everyone who uses the Hall from the risk of fire.

The Committee is committed to maintaining appropriate fire safety arrangements and to improving the safety and condition of the Hall within the resources available to it.

Fire safety will remain an important consideration when planning future maintenance, refurbishment and improvement work.