

St Mary's Church Hall, Iffley
FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW 2022

Responsibilities: the Parochial Church Council has overall responsibility for good practice, implementation of which it delegates to the Hall Committee, which acts as competent persons for this purpose. Responsibilities include considering hazards and risk, implementing preventive measures and informing users. Procedures are based on a policy as follows:

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

It is the policy of the Hall Committee to:

- **Identify hazards and avoid risks wherever possible**
- **Evaluate and minimise those risks which are unavoidable**
- **Use and maintain reasonable preventive measures both technical and procedural**
- **Place appropriate obligations on hirers and other users of the Hall**
- **Keep arrangements under regular review**

Hazards: sources of ignition include gas (heating), electricity (hot water, lighting and cooking), naked flames and fireworks.

Sources of fuel include: upholstery, paper, cardboard, timber, curtains, dry waste and thatch. The property is old, but well maintained.

Those at risk are users of the premises including small children, elderly people, those with disabilities as well as fully able ambulant young people and adults.

FIRE SAFETY: PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Open Flames and Flammable Materials: smoking, fireworks and candles are not permitted, excepting only children's birthday cake candles under close adult supervision: any variation of this rule must be by specific written consent of the Hall Committee. Cleaning chemicals are kept in a locked store. Flame retardant materials are used for curtains and upholstery. Regular Hall users are required to keep any equipment stored tidily and all users should avoid the accretion of flammable materials. Members of the Hall Committee frequently check the premises and act to eliminate bad practice. Portable appliances are PAT tested annually; lights are regularly re-lamped; other appliances are reviewed.¹

A wired-in Detection and Warning System is maintained by bi-annual contractor inspection and testing. Smoke detectors are installed in all areas, with a heat detector in the kitchen and break glass points at the exits.

Fire-fighting Equipment, in the form of five extinguishers and a fire blanket, is provided. The blanket and a CO2 extinguisher are located in the Kitchen. A water extinguisher is placed next to the south door and a water extinguisher beside the rear double doors to the

¹ Wall-mounted heater removed August 2014. Kettle replaced October 2014.

garden. A CO2 extinguisher and a foam extinguisher are located at the head of the stairs to the upstairs room above the Committee Room. These are maintained through an annual inspection via specialist contractor. The proper location of the extinguishers is checked monthly.

Prevention of Overcrowding: limits are placed on the number of persons who may attend standing (125) and seated (100) events and a notice is placed at the principal entrance.

Escape Routes: there are 3 principal exits to the front east side of the building providing direct egress to the public pavement and a quiet village road. Travel distances within the premises are short and mostly level going, except from the 1st floor room where a short flight of stairs is provided. All users have a key to the principal entrance which is kept unlocked during occupation of the Hall. The central exit door is not locked and opens by using the push bar. A key to the third 'Committee Room' exit is kept in a glass-fronted box on the inside of the door. Rear doors are to a confined exterior space only: these are secondary exits to the yard and garden area from which there is no direct egress to a further place of safety. An identified hazard is the discovery of a fire in the building when some users are in the garden/yard: the route to a place of safety is via the building. However, the risk is mitigated by there being two routes to a place of safety (i) through the double doors and out via the south or middle doors and (ii) via the door at the head of the rear access ramp and out via the north or Committee Room door.²

User Obligations:

Appoint one person among the hirers to act as Fire Warden for the duration of the event and to:

- Identify the three fire doors and the place of assembly (church gateway) to all participants, including arrangements for exiting via the Committee Room door
- Place the emergency torch by the middle door (not necessary during daylight events)
- Phone the Fire & Rescue Service (999) on a mobile phone in case of fire evacuation
- Help evacuate the Hall with particular attention to persons with disabilities
- Check the toilet areas and upstairs room to ensure all have left the building
- If possible, close all windows and doors to slow the spread of fire and smoke.

Users are informed of their obligations (and bound by them) through their inclusion in the Hall's Conditions of Hire. Regular users are asked to provide annual confirmation of their adherence to the requirements of the Hall Committee's Fire Safety Policy. A copy of this Fire Safety Policy and the Preventative Measures is kept on the main notice board in the Church Hall. A separate notice listing the user obligations is mounted on the wall adjacent to the main (south) door. A schematic plan of the premises is provided below:

² Arrangements discussed during an advisory fire safety inspection on 24 November 2014 by Fire Officer Ian Dukes, Oxfordshire County Fire & Rescue Service. Although garden evacuation via the building was identified as a hazard, the risk of this hazard (evacuation from garden) is deemed to be low or very low. Moreover, there are two exit routes from the garden via the building and the alarm is audible in the rear area. Modification of the door at the head of the ramp to permit travel in both directions was completed in December 2014.

This document, originally approved on 27 January 2015, was reviewed and approved at the Church Hall Committee's meeting on 9 December 2022, for recommendation to the Parochial Church Council.

John Harris
Chairman
Iffley Church Hall Committee
9 December 2022

Layout Sketch Plan
 St Mary's Church Hall, Church Way, Ifley, OXFORD OX4 4EG

ENCLOSED REAR GARDEN/COURTYARD

