**WILLASTON MEMORIAL HALL**

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 520090

**LETTINGS POLICY**

March 2024

**Introduction**

Willaston Memorial Hall is a registered charity managed by a Committee of Management comprising Trustees, the majority of whom are appointed by the prime users of the Hall. Under normal operational conditions the Committee meets every other month but special meetings can be called, preferably with seven days’ notice. The names of the current Trustees and the elected officers who manage the day to day affairs of the Hall can be found on the Hall’s website ([www.willastonmemorialhall.co.uk](http://www.willastonmemorialhall.co.uk/))

**Description of the Premises**

Willaston Memorial Hall is a stone-built single-story community building situated on the Green, Neston Road, Willaston. The building comprises an entrance hall, a committee room, a storage/boiler room, separate men’s, women’s and accessible toilets, a small storage room off the entrance hall, a separate kitchen with a serving hatch, the main hall, boiler/storage room (for furniture and other equipment) and a storage room for the Playgroup’s equipment. The Premises Licence stipulates that the maximum number of persons permitted to use the premises at any one time shall not exceed:

(a) For all purposes: 135 persons

(b) For dancing: 100 persons

(c) For functions utilising seating at tables: 100 persons

(d) For purposes combining (b) and (c) above: 80 persons

(e) For closely seated audience (moveable seating): 160 persons

The capacity of the committee room is 25. The Hall is available to hire for both private and public events and is licensed for the following activities (and similar entertainments) indoors: the performance of plays; the exhibition of films; indoor sporting events; boxing or wrestling entertainment; the performance of live music; and the performance of dance. It is also licensed for the playing of recorded music both indoors and outdoors. It does not hold a licence to serve alcohol, although users may apply for a temporary alcohol licence with the permission of the Trustees.

There is public car parking to the front of the building, with space for approximately 25 cars and further parking in a public car park at the rear of the Hall. There are emergency exits leading directly out of the building from the north and south sides of the Hall and there are disabled ramps at both the front and rear of the building.

The Hall is hired by a range of voluntary organisations, private individuals and statutory organisations for a variety of activities. A written agreement between the Memorial Hall and the hirer forms the basis of the hiring arrangement. The Hire Agreement and Conditions of Hire draw hirers’ attention to the health and safety and licensing obligations that the booking places upon them. Hirers are expected to meet the requirements of licensing conditions.

**Objectives**

In accordance with the terms of the Trust Deed relating to Willaston Memorial Hall, the Trustees have adopted the following objectives:

* To provide a facility which acts as a focal point for local people to meet and which is accessible to all sections of the community.
* To provide and maintain the Hall for the use of inhabitants of Willaston and surrounding area without distinction of political, racial, religious, sexual or other opinion, including its use for meetings, lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure time occupations with the object of improving the condition of the life of the community.
* When the Hall is not in use for community activities, to make it available for hire by private individuals and appropriate commercial organisations, in order to supplement income.
* To recognise and pay particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged people.
* To ensure that the building is well-maintained and well-managed.
* To adopt a fair rate of charges, recognising that sustainability is an essential feature of the hall and its charging policy.
* To monitor changes in social trends and the way in which the need for community facilities is developing.

**Eligibility and Priority for Hiring**

Local groups and organisations form the core of the users of the Hall and will usually be given priority in booking and using the Hall. Although they have a ‘commercial’ aspect, both the Pre-School and the Country Market are regarded in this category of local organisations.

When not in use by local groups or organisations, the Hall may be hired by individuals for private functions and by other hirers for events, including commercial events. The income from such hirings helps to ensure the sustainability of the Hall.

**Responsibilities of the Trustees**

The Trustees will:

* Consider all booking enquiries, acting with due diligence and working within the terms of the remit of Trust Deed for the Hall. Where the Trustees consider it necessary, direct reference will be made to the Charity Commission for guidance. Before a booking for a hire with a commercial purpose has been confirmed and a hire agreement signed, any competing booking for a community/charitable purpose will take precedence.
* Keep a record of all groups, organisations and individuals using the Hall, the frequency of use, nature of the activity and the beneficiaries of these activities.
* Listen to the views of the community by having the first fifteen minutes of each Committee of Management meeting open to the community generally. (This also fulfils the requirement, under the terms of the Premises Licence, for a Residents’ Liaison Group.)
* Adapt this policy to reflect the changing needs of the community.
* Make the Hall and its Committee Room a welcoming facility
* Continue to monitor and develop the facilities to reflect the interests of members in the community, including those with special needs.
* Ensure that the fabric of the Hall and its facilities and equipment are well-maintained, safe and fit for use.
* Maintain a high standard of cleanliness, hygiene and decoration throughout the facility.
* Charge reasonable prices, adopting a pricing policy which enables the Hall to remain competitive, while also providing for the future maintenance and development of facilities and delivering value for money to all users, including commercial hirers.
* Give at least one month’s notice of any changes to hire fees and provide an explanation of the need for the change.
* Deal with enquiries promptly and efficiently. All applications for hire will be processed and confirmed as soon as possible but generally within ten working days of their receipt. An online diary of bookings is maintained on the Hall’s dedicated website, although this should be used only as a guide to availability.
* Where invoices are required, issue them as soon as possible, generally within ten working days.
* Repay any security deposit which is to be refunded as soon as possible and within 28 days of the hire at the latest.
* Encourage high standards of behaviour in the people using to the Hall, recognising that there are residential properties in close proximity to the Hall.
* Recognising their responsibilities to the community they serve, keep this policy under review in order to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the community.

**Responsibilities of Hirers**

Hirers and prospective hirers of the Hall will:

* Where possible, direct booking enquiries via the dedicated bookings email address given on the Hall’s website ([www.willastonmemorialhall.co.uk](http://www.willastonmemorialhall.co.uk/)), or by telephoning the Booking Secretary.
* With the exception of regular hirers to whom invoices are issued periodically, pay a deposit of one third of the hire fee at the time of making the booking and the balance of the hire fee plus a security deposit at least ten days in advance of the hire, as required in the Hire Agreement and advised by the Booking Secretary.
* Consent to the use of their personal data as provided for in the Hall’s Data Protection Privacy Policy (available on the Hall’s website [www.willastonmemorialhall.co.uk](http://www.willastonmemorialhall.co.uk/))
* Comply with all the terms of the Hire Agreement, the Standard Conditions of Hire and any Special Conditions of Hire which shall be annexed to the Hire Agreement.
* Follow the advice and instructions relating to the use of the Hall which is detailed in the Information Sheet in the ‘Documents’ section of the Hall’s website and on the noticeboard in the Hall foyer.
* Leave the Hall in a clean and tidy condition after their hire, checking all the items on the checklist appended to the Information Sheet.
* Report any damage to the fabric of the building or equipment or any other issues to the Bookings Secretary, as soon as possible after the hire.

**Right to Refuse and Cancel Bookings and Retain Monies Paid**

The Trustees reserve the right to refuse any booking.

The Trustees reserve the right to cancel any Hire Agreement at any time, upon giving written notice to the hirer, in the event of:

* the Hall being required for use as a Polling Station.
* the Trustees reasonably considering that the hiring would lead to a breach of its Premises Licence or other legal or statutory requirements, or that unlawful or unsuitable activities would take place the Hall as a result of the hiring.
* the Hall becoming unfit for the use intended by the hirer.
* an emergency requiring use of the premises as shelter for the victims of disasters.

In the event that the Trustees cancel a Hire Agreement in one of the above circumstances, the hirer will be entitled to a refund of any hiring fee and deposits paid, but the Trustees will not be liable to the hirer for any resulting direct or indirect loss or damages whatsoever.

If the hirer wishes to cancel their booking, the Trustees will repay the hire fee (minus the one third deposit) and security deposit paid, provided that at least ten days’ notice is given by the hirer. If the hirer cancels their booking within ten days of the date of the event and the Trustees are unable to conclude a replacement booking, the Trustees reserve the right to retain the whole of the hire fee paid, but will repay the security deposit.

The Trustees reserve the right to retain all or part of the security deposit paid by a hirer, in the event that they consider that the Hall has not been left in an appropriate condition by the hirer after the hire.

**Review**

This Lettings Policy will be formally reviewed annually by the Management Committee.