**WILLASTON MEMORIAL HALL**

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 520090

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

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/))

The Hall has no paid employees. Regular cleaning is undertaken by a self-employed cleaner and maintenance is dealt with by specialist companies, as required. This document has been produced in the interest of promoting the safe use of the Hall and its facilities.

**Description of 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, boiler/storage 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, a 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 area to the side and rear of the building is enclosed and mainly laid to artificial grass; access to this area is from the rear of the building and by a gate at the front.

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.

**Slips, trips and falls**

The interior is regularly maintained. Floor surfaces are in good condition and free from tripping hazards.

The entrance porch, corridor, kitchen and cloakroom are fully tiled and can become slippery when wet. Special mats are in place just near the main entrance and in front of the kitchen sink and these absorb the main wetness from footfall and spillage. These mats are changed on a regular basis by a specialist contractor. Users are encouraged to mop up any amounts of spillage wherever this may occur.

The main Hall floor is wood strip which provides a good surface free from imperfections and is unlikely to cause trips or falls.

Disabled access is provided at the front entrance via a ramp. Rear access is available into the garden area by one of two different doors. This allows access to the garden area only as access to the Village Green is via a large wooden gate which would be hard to manage by a sole disabled person in a wheelchair.

The Committee Room is carpeted wall to wall and care needs to be taken to ensure that the carpet is not allowed to come adrift from the fastening across the doorway into the room.

The front entrance is properly lit by sensor-activated lighting thus providing safe access to the Hall.

Contract cleaning is performed at least three times per week and checking the facility for cleanliness is part of the post-hire check. In addition, on weekdays the Pre-School accepts responsibility for any additional cleaning that may be required above and beyond that carried out by the contract cleaners.

**Asbestos**

An asbestos survey was carried out during the five year period 2003-2008 on the instruction of the Trustees. No asbestos was identified during that survey.

**Hazardous substances**

Within the Hall dangerous chemicals use is restricted to standard cleaning materials stored in typical domestic quantities. They are kept in cupboards secured with childproof locks in the kitchen area and in a locked store cupboard. No other special precautions are considered necessary.

**Work at height**

Work at height is restricted to use of domestic style and height stepladders primarily used by the Trustees for the purpose of accessing the interior lighting on the side walls. Hirers who wish to use the ladders, e.g. to hang decorations, are alerted to the safety considerations. Specialist contractors are considered to be familiar with the risks of using such ladders or provide their own ladders.

**Manual handling**

For most users of the Hall the heaviest manual handling operation is the movement of tables and/or chairs. Tables are secured with strapping on specialist trolleys to facilitate movement from the storage room into the main Hall. Chairs are stacked and stored in the old front entrance porch and a chair mover trolley is located in that area. Whilst care moving chair stacks is required, the trolley can be used to safely move six chairs at a time. Some chairs are also stored in the small storage room off the entrance hall. Hirers are advised also to use the chair mover trolley if using these chairs.

Further manual handling issues can arise in the kitchen when food, in particular soup, is prepared in large quantities. Dedicated electric soup heating urns are provided and this reduces the risk of accident in the kitchen. It is sensible to ensure that children are excluded from being in the kitchen unless absolutely necessary.

A minimum of two people are required for movement of the piano. Instructions concerning the moving of the piano and the safety considerations are contained in the information sheet provided to hirers and displayed on the main noticeboard. Trustees do NOT accept any liability for injury through inappropriate handling.

**Display screen equipment**

A large careen is provided at the far end of the hall. This is spring loaded and care is required when opening the screen or closing it to ensure that the pull chord is held at all times when opening or closing the screen.

 **Noise or vibration**

There are no specific noise or vibration issues at the hall other than use of the public address system. Microphones are in a locked safe and the system itself is already set up for optimal sound quality and volume..

**Electricity and Gas**

The electrical appliances and the gas boilers/central heating system are inspected on an annual basis by suitably-qualified contractors, thereby ensuring their safe operation. The electrical power supply system is checked every five years. Any required maintenance work is carried out by appropriate contractors. Changing of light bulbs is usually carried out by one of the Trustees who is familiar with the handling of the stepladder.

The Trustees inspect electrical plugs, leads and sockets for damage at least quarterly, taking remedial action where considered necessary.

The Pre-School accepts responsibility for ensuring that all electrical sockets are childproofed.

**Work Equipment**

Anything other than very simple maintenance work is carried out by suitably qualified contractors. No specialist equipment is kept on the premises, other than two stepladders.

**Building Maintenance Work**

Major comprehensive external refurbishment was carried out during the latter part of 2016. Work needed was identified by a suitably qualified buildings surveyor and then a specialist conservation architect project managed all the work which had been identified. All work was carried out by specialist contractors appropriate to the particular job and selection was handled by the project manager based upon tender price and reputation.

Specialist equipment is needed for any high level maintenance work either inside or out and appropriate scaffolding is erected or a “cherry picker” used by appropriate contractors.

**Fire Risk Assessment**

The Fire Risk Assessment for the premises has been carried out and is reviewed annually by the Management Committee.

The Hall is provided with two clearly marked fire exits. It is well provided with fire extinguishers which are professionally serviced on an annual basis.

The Hall is equipped with a fire alarm system which is professionally serviced annually in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. The fire alarm system is tested weekly.

Users of the Hall are encouraged, when possible, to take their rubbish away with them but suitable facilities are provided outside at the rear of the Hall.

**Central Heating system**

Gas boilers are serviced on an annual basis. Radiators and associated pipework in the main hall are covered to avoid burn risk. A volunteer takes responsibility for monitoring the operation of the boilers and central heating system on a day to day basis and for calling in professional help, if any issues arise.

**Radiation Hazard**

There is no known cause of radiation hazard inside the building or outside in areas for which the Trustees are responsible.

**Accidents**

An up-to-date first aid kit is maintained in the kitchen and kept alongside the refrigerator, together with an accident report book. All accidents must be logged and reported to a member of the Management Committee. It is incumbent upon the Trustees to fully investigate any more serious incident and to take corrective action when considered appropriate. Where necessary the Police and/or Health and Safety Executive will be informed in order that any appropriate investigations may be carried out.

The Management Committee does NOT provide qualified first aiders for events. A nominated Trustee is responsible for ensuring that supplies within the first aid box are both complete and in date.

**Safeguarding**

A separate Safeguarding Policy has been drawn up to cover the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults who use the Hall.

WMH is aware of the extent of drug use in society and will be alert to the possibility that drugs might brought into the Hall, even though this is strictly forbidden and illegal. Post-hire checks will be carried out to ensure that no drugs have been left in the Hall.

**Animals**

The presence of suitably identified Guide and Assistance Dogs in the Hall is accepted without notice.Anyone wishing to bring other animals, reptiles, insects etc. into the Hall must outline the circumstances and safety provisions adopted to the Management Committee for permission to be considered. Failure to do this risks forfeiture of any security deposit paid. This is of particular importance to anyone organising a children’s party where they are wanting to have entertainment involving the above.

**Summary**

Application of common sense is the biggest single action which can be taken to avoid / lessen the risk of accidents happening.

 **Review**

This Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee.