



# Trustee handbook



## **WEST HADDON VILLAGE HALL**

Registered charity 304451

# About charity trustees

## General

West Haddon Village Hall is a charity and committee members are automatically trustees. Trustees have overall control of a charity and are responsible for making sure it is doing what it was set up to do. In the case of West Haddon Village Hall, this is to provide “a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of West Haddon in the County of Northampton ... without distinction of sex or of political religious or other opinions and in particular for use for meetings lectures and classes and for other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.”

## Eligibility

There are rules about who can and cannot be a trustee. The disqualifications are set out in detail at [www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rule-changes-guidance-for-charities](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rule-changes-guidance-for-charities)

The reasons for disqualification are shown in the disqualifying reasons table and include:

- being bankrupt or having an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA)
- having an unspent conviction for certain offences (including any that involve dishonesty or deception)
- being on the sex offenders’ register.

## **Main duties**

- Ensure the Village Hall is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with the Trust Deed and the law
- Act in the Village Hall's best interests
- Manage the Village Hall's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the Village Hall is accountable

The Village Hall is an unincorporated charity, which means it cannot own land. West Haddon Parish Council is the custodian body for legal purposes (such as planning applications) and acts on the advice of the Village Hall trustees.

Trustees are not expected to be perfect. They are expected to do their best to comply with their duties. Charity law generally protects trustees who have acted honestly and reasonably.

## **Organisation**

The full committee, of all trustees (currently 11), meets quarterly, with an AGM in the summer to elect officers for the next 12 months. The full committee takes those decisions which will affect hall users.

Officers meet approximately monthly to deal with ongoing management of the hall and monitor projects and repairs. Officer roles are set out on the next few pages. Officers act with delegated authority from the full committee, and must keep the committee informed of their actions.

Sometimes the committee sets up sub committees or working groups to look at specific issues such as refurbishment. The committee also holds some discussions by email, between meetings, to agree minor or urgent actions quickly. The committee then reviews and documents these decisions at the next committee meeting.

# Officer roles

## Chair

- approves and manages the agenda for committee and officer meetings
- ensures the agenda meets the requirements of the organisations attending
- ensures meetings are timely and effective, and facilitates discussions in the meetings
- holds the casting vote in the event of a tied vote
- changes the key safe code monthly and emails the new code to regular users
- is one of the points of contact for hall affairs.

## Secretary

- drafts agendas and minutes for all committee meetings and the AGM
- liaises with village groups regarding appointment of trustees
- prepares notes for the officers monthly meetings
- maintains document number register for our documents/policies
- updates the Charity Commission website with trustees and financial information
- circulates information received from ACRE
- arranges meetings for hire charges review
- provides other documentation as appropriate eg risk assessment, Covid secure rules
- co-ordinates improvement projects eg car park revamp, committee room improvement.

## Bookings secretary

- answers all queries (phone/email) regarding hiring the Village Hall and its facilities
- runs the booking system for hirers and maintains hall calendar
- responds to any hirer queries during their period of hire
- helps with publicity for bookings (Facebook posts, posters, etc)
- maintain records and produces reports for the committee
- liaises with the contract cleaner as and when required
- is the public 'face' of the Village Hall.

## Treasurer

- receives completed booking forms and generates invoices and receipts based on these
- arranges payment of bills
- keeps financial records and reconciles them to the bank accounts
- provides financial information to officers and committee
- prepares the annual accounts
- arranges for audit of annual accounts.

## Non-officer roles

### Data protection officer

- first point of contact for any data protection breach
- ensures data protection policy and practice complies with current law.

### Webmaster

- maintains the village hall website.

# What does a trustee actually do?

- Share information from your organisation with the committee—either by email (for something quick/urgent, eg window handle needs fixing) or at a meeting (for something which needs discussion, eg we think the hall needs new curtains).
- So, following on from this—ask the Secretary to add items to the committee meeting agenda.
- Read the meeting paperwork promptly, so you have time to check any points with your organisation beforehand if necessary.
- Attend the quarterly committee meetings. You are doing two things simultaneously during discussions:
  - Making sure committee members are aware of how the committee's decisions will affect your organisation's use of the hall
  - Acting in the best interests of the Village Hall overall, even if this conflicts with the best interests of your organisation.

So, for example, when considering the hire rates for the hall, your organisation, if it is small and does not have many resources, might want a rate of £2.50 an hour. You would make that point during the discussion, so every one can take it into account. But if the figures showed that the minimum hall rate needs to be £3.50 to cover the hall's running costs, you would vote for the higher rate, because that is in the best interests of the Village Hall.

- Once the committee has made a decision, all trustees must comply with it, even those who disagree.
- After the meeting, check your emails for the draft committee meeting minutes and respond quickly with any amendments.
- Share information from the committee meetings with those who need to know in your organisation.
- Between meetings, keep an eye on your emails and respond promptly if you are asked for your view on something.

## More information

The Village Hall website [www.whvh.org.uk](http://www.whvh.org.uk) has information about hiring the hall, and a booking enquiry portal. We need more photos of the hall in use so do bear this in mind during your organisation's activities, and send photos to [webmaster@whvh.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@whvh.org.uk).

The Village Hall is a member of Northamptonshire ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) which provides us with updates and advice: [www.northantsacre.org.uk](http://www.northantsacre.org.uk).

The Village Hall is currently insured by Allied Westminster, a specialist insurer for village halls, for buildings, contents owned by the Village Hall, and trustee indemnity. Trustees are not individually liable for Village Hall losses.

The committee asks all users to clean up after themselves, as this keeps costs down. We also use a contract cleaner who cleans the hall more thoroughly once a week, and does any additional cleaning required.

There is lots of information on being a charity trustee on the Charity Commission website [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission).

Past minute books and the original trust deed are kept in the county records office [www.westnorthants.gov.uk/culture-and-tourism/northamptonshire-archives](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/culture-and-tourism/northamptonshire-archives). The Secretary has a copy of the trust deed and keeps our more recent minutes.

The Village Hall has a personal data policy which is available to download from its website.

# Your time as a trustee

The Village Hall is a focal point for the community, and it cannot operate without trustees to plan and oversee its management. So whether you are a trustee of the Village Hall for 5 months or 50 years, your contribution to village life is vitally important. And what you as an individual get out of being a trustee depends upon the effort you put into it!

- Take every opportunity you can to encourage people to use the Village Hall for their events.
- Consider standing for election as an officer, or volunteering for sub-committee work.
- We all have busy lives, but please do set aside time to prepare for and attend meetings.

When you decide to stop being a trustee is up to you, and the organisation which appointed you. Please let the Secretary know, and pass on contact details of your replacement.

## Contact information

West Haddon Village Hall, The Green, West Haddon, NN6 7AN  
Correspondence to the Secretary  
Invoices and payments to the Treasurer

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