

ST MARY'S CHURCH HOUSE HALL

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

DATE: 01/05/21

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to community halls including the St Mary's CHH, and the hall is designated as responsible under the Order; the Trustees/Committee from time to time appoint one or more "competent persons" to undertake the risk assessment: at the date of this assessment these are Stephen Bartlett, Monty Crook, and Ben Holland.

This Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Order and having regard to Government guidance on Fire Safety Risk Assessment in Small and Medium Places of Assembly. The guide describes **five steps to be taken when carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment:**

Step 1 - Identify fire hazards

Step 2 - Identify people at risk

Step 3 - Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Step 4 - Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Step 5 - Review

The Fire Risk Assessment follows this structure and has been carried out for each of the principal areas of usable space in the Hall, namely:

1. Entrance lobby
2. Main hall
3. Kitchen
4. Disabled, Ladies & Gents Toilets
5. Storerooms (table store, cleaner's store, sub-basement store)

For each of these areas an assessment has been carried out of sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen; fire detection; firefighting and precautionary equipment; escape routes and emergency lighting; and signs and notices.

The findings of this assessment are contained in the table at the end of this document, and the key points discussed in the following paragraphs.

1. Fire Hazards: Sources of Ignition, Fuel and Oxygen

The main **sources of ignition** are the various items of gas/electrical equipment located in the kitchen, viz. gas boiler, gas hob, cooker, microwave, water heaters and kettles. There are also hand dryers in each of the toilets. Other sources of ignition are electric sockets and lighting throughout the building and ventilation fans in each of the toilets.

Other principal **sources of fuel** are normally concentrated in the storerooms, principally fabric-covered foam chair seats/backs, tables, plus limited quantities of miscellaneous material stored by hall users. All of these items may be moved into the main hall when in use; some chairs and tables normally remain in situ in the hall. In addition, there is a sprung wooden floor laid on concrete, and there are blinds at each of the windows in the main hall.

The main **source of oxygen** is the natural airflow through doors, windows and other openings.

2. People at Risk

People who use the hall and may be at risk if there is a fire include:

- Hirers }
- Visitors } who may be unfamiliar with the hall layout
- Contractors }
- Volunteers
- Residents in Magna Housing Association flats above and adjacent
- Hall committee members / trustees
- Cleaner and caretaker
- Local organizations
- Children (particularly when used as a party venue)
- The elderly
- People with disabilities (mobility, hearing or vision impairment)

3. Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

3.1 *The risk of fire occurring*

It is considered that the risk of fire occurring is relatively low. The main sources of ignition comprise gas and electrical equipment located in the kitchen. Combustible materials are kept away from these sources, and they are maintained in a good state of repair. Portable appliances are 'PAT' tested where appropriate.

The hall's Hiring Agreement and Health and Safety Policy prohibit hirers and users from bringing into the hall any obvious fire hazards, highly flammable substances, explosives, fireworks, gas appliances and cylinders, and portable electrical appliances which have not been 'PAT' tested and certified.

3.2 *The risk to people*

An evaluation has been carried out of the actual risk to people identified in Step 2 in the event a fire did start and spread from those areas with the main sources of ignition, i.e. the kitchen and hall.

The hall is the ground floor part of a two storey building, with first floor flats above and flats in the three storey half of the building to the west. There are three main escape routes available, being the main entrance and two further external fire doors in the main hall, all of which are lit by emergency lighting and signed. The kitchen and each of the toilets have doors leading into the main hall and thence to the escape routes. The kitchen also has a rear door leading to a small enclosed outside play area with an exit gate to the rear of the building. Both storerooms have double doors accessing the main hall and the sub-basement has a single (fire) door to the main hall.

3.3 Removal/reduction of the hazards

The identified potential hazards comprise the range of gas/electrical equipment contained in the kitchen which is an essential part of the facilities available to the users of the hall. Removal would not be in the best interests of the hall or its users, and the potential hazards are reduced as far as possible through periodic inspection, cleaning and testing.

The tables, chairs and equipment belonging to regular users are essential to meet the needs of users, and they are generally kept in the storerooms away from potential sources of ignition. The chairs do have upholstered seating and blinds to the windows count as soft furnishings. No flammable liquids are kept in the hall.

The hall operates a “No Smoking” policy at all times throughout the hall and small paved area outside the main entrance.

Hirers are prohibited from using unauthorised heating appliances and smoke machines, and are not permitted to undertake or erect internal decorations of a combustible nature. No decorations may be put up near light fittings or electrical appliances.

Hirers are required to remove all rubbish and unwanted material at the end of each hiring, and there are no facilities in or adjacent to the hall for the storage of rubbish.

3.4 Removal/reduction of the risks to people

The fire risk to people has been minimised as far as reasonably practicable by ensuring that adequate fire precautions are in place. These include fire escape signs and emergency lighting to assist people in the event of fire and to allow them to escape safely.

There is no landline telephone on the premises; there is a public call box nearby close to the Woodman Inn in South Street (which was working at the time of writing). The Safety Rules within the Health & Safety Policy require that a competent individual is present throughout each hire period, that this person takes charge in case of fire and that has access to a working mobile phone at all times. The Health & Safety Policy forms part of the terms of the Conditions of Hire and all hirers agree to comply with its provisions.

A fire alarm system is in place incorporating an alarm control panel (sited in the entrance lobby) with smoke detectors on ceilings in the main hall (x2), kitchen (x1), and toilet vestibule (x1). There are manually operated “break glass” alarm points in the main hall (adjacent to the main entrance, at each fire exit door) and in the kitchen by the rear exit door. There are 2 alarm sirens in the main hall, one near the left hand fire exit and one adjacent to the toilet vestibule. The alarm system is regularly inspected and tested by an external contractor, and the certificate of inspection is in the Health, Safety & Compliance File in the committee room. The alarm system is also tested regularly by the caretaker.

The hall alarm system is (or action will be initiated to ensure that it is) linked to that of the adjacent flats of Magna Housing Association which actually owns the whole property.

There are three (water) fire extinguishers in the main hall (by entrance door and each fire exit door) and in the kitchen there is a powder extinguisher on a wall facing the cooker and fire blanket adjacent to the cooker, as indicated on the accompanying plan. These are inspected annually by an external contractor, and the certificate of inspection is in the Health, Safety & Compliance file on a shelf in the kitchen facing the doors. Visual inspection of extinguishers is also undertaken regularly by the caretaker.

There is a fire door on the entrance to the sub-basement store room and a fire extinguisher in the basement.

3.5 Escape Routes

There are three main escape routes available, all at ground floor level, and they are readily accessible from all parts of the building. All are independent of each other, comprise double doors, and each has emergency escape lighting above. **The escape routes are:**

- **via the main entrance**
- **via two external fire doors off the opposite end of the main hall.**

There is also an exit from the rear kitchen door and then across the outside plat area.

Escape routes are all unencumbered and are shown on the attached plan and listed in the accompanying table. All external doors lead to the outside and thence to the adjacent footpath and churchyard which provide an open space for safe and easy evacuation of the hall. **The Fire Assembly Point following evacuation of the hall is on the South Street pavement adjacent to St Mary's Church.**

Escape routes and exits together with the locations of firefighting equipment are indicated by appropriate signs throughout the building, as indicated on the attached plan and in the accompanying table. Fire exit signs are included on emergency lighting panels throughout the hall. Fire extinguishers have clearly displayed operating instructions on them.

3.6 Installation, testing and maintenance

All fire prevention and fire-fighting equipment is maintained in effective working order through periodic servicing and maintenance. Sources of risk are also checked on a regular basis.

Periodic visual checks are made of the gas hobs, electric cooker, microwave, boiler, emergency lighting, fire doors and lights, and the fire alarm is tested.

A biannual check is made of the fire alarm system, and a certificate of inspection obtained. An external contractor also checks fire extinguishers annually, and they are visually checked regularly as well. The electrical system is also checked on a regular basis and a safety certificate obtained.

4. Record, Plan, Inform, Instruct and Train

4.1 Significant findings and action taken

The main findings of the fire risk assessment including the actions taken to prevent fire occurring and to reduce the risk to people are contained in the preceding sections of this report.

4.2 Conditions of Hire

The hall's Hiring Agreement, which incorporates the Standard Conditions and the Health & Safety Policy, prohibits smoking anywhere on the premises, and requires that hirers or their designated Competent Individuals must instruct all session attendees how to exit the building in the event of fire. They must also ensure that all emergency exit doors are clear and unblocked as soon as the hall is to be used, and throughout the hiring, and to ensure that all persons at the hall can escape unimpeded through the fire exits and assemble on the South Street pavement adjacent to St Mary's Church.

4.3 Emergency Plan

The hall is in a modernised (1999) two-storey part of a three-storey building with a simple layout, clear and well signed fire exits and strategically located fire-fighting equipment. The Emergency Plan in the event of fire and a plan showing the location of fire safety measures will be found below.

4.4 Information & Instruction

All hirers are required to sign the St Mary's CHH Hiring Agreement, to accept its Standard Conditions of Hire and Emergency Plan, and to comply with its Health & Safety Policy and Instructions for hall users. These set out detailed requirements in terms of public safety compliance (including fire risk avoidance and management). Advice is provided to all hirers in respect of these requirements, as well as to hall cleaner, caretaker and contractors.

As noted above signs relating to firefighting and precautionary equipment, escape routes and emergency lighting are provided throughout the building.

5. Review

This fire risk assessment has been carried out for St Mary's CHH in conformity with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The assessment is kept under review particularly with regard to any potential new risks and the need to keep them under control, and also to ensure that the fire precautions are still working effectively.

This fire risk assessment is provided to all hirers, and is also available on the St Mary's CHH website.

The Next Full Review of Fire Risk Assessment is due by: 01/05/2022

**ST MARY'S CHURCH HOUSE HALL
FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT TABLE**

Location	Sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen	Fire- & precautionary equipment	Escape routes	Emergency lighting, signs/notices
1. Entrance lobby	Electric lighting and switches	Fire alarm control panel. Electrical control panel. Fire log book. Emergency lighting log book.	Via Main entrance to public footpath	Emergency lighting above main entrance
2. Main hall	Electric sockets. Lighting. Chairs, tables. Window blinds. Wooden floor. Users' equipment when out of store	2 Alarm sirens. 3x water extinguishers. 2x smoke detectors. 3x break glass fire alarm points. 1x internal fire door to basement store.	Via 2 double fire exit doors to (i) front footpath and (ii) rear of building via play area And by main lobby to footpath. Also via kitchen to rear door and play area.	Emergency lighting above fire doors and door to lobby. No smoking signs. Signs locating extinguishers, fire doors & assembly point routes
3. Kitchen	Gas hob, electric cooker, microwave & appliances. Gas boiler. Water boiler. Sockets & Lighting. Cupboards, waste bin, paper towels.	Power Extinguisher Fire blanket Smoke detector	Via rear door to play area and rear of building. And via main hall doors/fire exits to footpath	Fire exit and assembly point signs
4. Toilets	Lighting. Ventilation fans. Hand dryers.	None but smoke detector on ceiling of toilet vestibule and fire siren just outside in main hall.	Via door into front lobby and main entrance to footpath	No smoking signs
6. Store rooms (off hall)	Lighting; Switchgear. Tables & chairs. Cleaning materials. Hirers' equipment.	Fire door to sub-basement store Water fire extinguisher	Via main hall, then via fire exit doors or front lobby door to main entrance door to footpath.	

EMERGENCY PLAN

The Hirer is the "Responsible Person" and is designated the person in charge of the hall during your hire. You should make yourself entirely familiar with the layout of the hall, the emergency exit routes (which must be kept clear) and the fire protection measures. It is advisable to make a note of the name of each person attending your event (see Step 3-Roll Call).

IN CASE OF FIRE:

1.	Activate alarm (if not already sounding) by pushing any one of the 4 fire alarm break glass buttons [1 near main entrance door; 2 by emergency exits in main hall and 1 at kitchen rear exit door]
2.	Open the 2 external fire doors by pushing on the bars on the 2 doors in the main hall, push open the door from the rear play area and open and secure the main entrance doors.
3.	Alert all in the Hall to the incident, then instruct all persons to leave the Hall using the nearest available Fire Exit in an orderly manner without panicking and following the FIRE EXIT signs. Close all internal doors unless required to facilitate escape. If safe to do so, a designated person should check that the kitchen, all three toilets and main hall are vacated All should make their way to the Fire Assembly Point on the South Street pavement adjacent to St Mary's Church. Using your list of known attendees, take a Roll Call to identify any missing persons
4.	Call the Fire Service/Fire Brigade on 999 , however small the incident may appear to be, and give this address: ST MARY'S CHURCH HOUSE HALL, SOUTH STREET, BRIDPORT DT6 3NN There is no phone at the Hall nor a public call box nearby.
5.	Once the Hall is vacated, members of the public do not re-enter the building under any circumstances.
6.	On arrival of the Fire Service/Fire Brigade inform the Officer in Charge if a Roll Call has been taken and whether all persons are safe/there are missing persons and their last known position.
7.	Attempts to extinguish the outbreak of the fire with the fire-fighting equipment within the Hall should only be attempted if it is considered safe to do so. If in doubt vacate the building immediately.
8.	Report the incident to the Bookings Secretary or other Committee Member as soon as practicable.



For illustration only - not to scale