

VILLAGE HALLS HANDBOOK

For the Scottish Borders

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Produced by
THE BRIDGE



and the
Federations of Village and Community Halls

Village Halls Handbook

	Page
Introduction	2
SECTION ONE: Governance	
1.1 Legal structures	2
1.2 Charitable Status	4
1.3 Role of Committees and Office Bearers	7
SECTION TWO: Managing People	
2.1 Employment of Staff	9
2.2 Volunteers	9
2.3 HR Policies	9
SECTION THREE: Managing Money	
3.1 Annual Monitoring and Accounts	10
3.2 Water charges, rates and utilities	11
3.3 VAT and Charities	12
3.4 Fundraising	13
SECTION FOUR: Managing Resources	
4.1 Record-keeping	14
4.2 Insurance	15
4.3 Maintaining your Hall's Facilities: kitchen, disabled access etc	16
4.4 Defibrillators	17
4.5 Resilient Communities - Emergency Centres	18
4.6 Marketing your Hall	18
4.7 Celebrating the invaluable role of a rural community hall	19
SECTION FIVE: Working with users	
5.1 Booking Procedures: maximum occupancy; food safety clause	20
5.2 Hire Charges	21
5.3 Day Book and Hall Users Folder: statistics, instructions for use	22
5.4 Organising events	22
SECTION SIX: Legislation and Regulation	
6.1 Licences: liquor, entertainment, music, raffles, TV, film, marriage	23
6.2 Food Safety Management	27
6.3 Health & Safety: risk assessment, fire, asbestos, electrical safety	29
6.4 Oil tanks	32
6.5 Policies: equal opportunities, environment, health& safety, HR, PVG	32

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Introduction

This handbook has been prepared by staff from The Bridge and BAVS, who provide support to village and community halls throughout the Scottish Borders. It is available in hard copy from the offices below or on our websites: www.thebridge.scot and www.bavs.org.uk

The 95 village and community halls in the Scottish Borders are collected into four Federations of Village and Community Halls, all serviced by staff from the area office of The Bridge and BAVS. The Federations exist to provide support to the network of halls within their area; to co-ordinate local activities and to liaise with the local authority and other outside bodies on behalf of the halls.

For further information about anything in this handbook or about the running of village and community halls contact:

- **Berwickshire Federation of Village and Community Halls**
c/o Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service
55 Newtown Street, Duns. TD11 3AU
Tel: 01361 883137
Email: jenny.haines@bavs.org.uk
- **Central Borders Federation of Village and Community Halls**
c/o The Bridge - Central Borders
3 Roxburgh House Court, Roxburgh Street, Galashiels, TD1 1NY
Tel: 01896 755370
E-mail: central@thebridge.scot
- **Peeblesshire Federation of Village and Community Halls**
c/o The Bridge - Tweeddale
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As well as the sources of information credited within this handbook, information has also been extracted from the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations.

SECTION ONE: Governance

1.1 Legal Structures

There are several different ways in which a voluntary organisation can be set up. However, the most common structures for village halls for many years were as a Trust or Company Ltd by Guarantee. In April 2011, a new charitable legal structure conferring limited liability became available – a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This is considered a very appropriate structure for charitable organisations with property. Any organisation wishing to have charitable status or to become a SCIO must apply to the Office of the Charity Regulator (OSCR) (see Section 1.2 Charity Status).

- **Trusts**

Many village halls in the Scottish Borders were set up under a **Deed of Trust**. The most common model Deed of Trust for village halls in the Scottish Borders places the ownership of the property in trust with nominated individuals on behalf of the community, and appoints a management committee to manage the day-to-day operation of the Hall. Information on how the management committee is set up and managed (eg by representatives of user groups, elected individuals living within the area of benefit) is generally included in the Trust document, which is then viewed as the organisation's constitution. This legal structure does not provide limited liability, and Trustee Indemnity Insurance is recommended (see Section 4.2 Insurance). Generally, the Trustees themselves appoint new Trustees, or are identified by their position 'ex officio' (i.e. perhaps the local Councillor, Headteacher, Minister etc, or the Office Bearers of the Hall). It is important that the Trustees are aware of their responsibilities and accept them, especially any new individuals taking up the role. In particular, any capital projects will require the Trustees' approval.

- **Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)**

The SCIO legal structure was introduced in April 2011 and provides charity status as well as the benefits and legal protection of an incorporated body - a legal identity and limited liability for its members. It is regulated only by **OSCR** and is particularly relevant for organisations owning or leasing property or employing staff. OSCR publishes a comprehensive guide to becoming a SCIO. A SCIO must hold a Register of Members and a Register of Trustees, updated within 28 days of any change.

- **Company Limited by Guarantee**

Until SCIOs became available, new community facilities being set up were more likely to be formed as a company limited by guarantee – an incorporated body. A Hall with this legal structure has a legal identity and limited liability for the members, who will not be liable for the company's debts beyond the nominal amount that they guarantee to pay under the memorandum of association (usually £1). A company limited by guarantee is a two tier organisation with a membership from whom a board of directors is appointed. Regulated by **Companies House**, there are strict deadlines for submitting information, with financial penalties for non compliance. The governing document (similar to a constitution) is known as the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Charity status is recommended for tax relief; this is separate from the legal structure and is regulated by **OSCR**. Conversion from a charitable Company Ltd by Guarantee to a SCIO is a simple process.



Further information and support, including conversion to SCIO, is available in the area offices of The Bridge and BAVS.

1.2 Charitable Status

It is advisable for all village halls to have charitable status. The main advantages are:

- Tax relief on surpluses, bank interest, capital gains;
- Exemption from water charges;
- Far greater range of potential sources of funding as most grant-making trusts will only fund registered charities;
- Ability to receive donations under Gift Aid (if registered for this);
- Rates relief on any property owned or leased;
- VAT concessions (see Section 3.3 VAT and Charities)

Further information and support to apply for charity status can be provided through your local area office of The Bridge and BAVS.

The **Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)** is the body responsible for granting charitable status and regulating charities in Scotland. It can be contacted at: 2nd Floor, Quadrant House, 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee. DD1 4NY.



Tel 01382 220446 email: info@oscr.org.uk website: www.oscr.org.uk.

OSCR was set up under **The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005**, which has introduced a wide range of **Regulations**.

There are 16 charitable purposes identified by the Act. Village halls are likely to meet the ninth charitable purpose which is “the provision of recreational facilities” which are “available to the public at large” but they must also be able to prove that they are providing public benefit.

Charity Trustee Duties

Anyone involved in the management or control of a charity is classed as a **charity trustee** – i.e. Board members or Hall Management Committee members as well as Trustees identified in the Deed of Trust. A charity trustee must:

- *Act in the interest of the charity*: trustees should put the interests of their charity before their own interests or those of any other person or organisation.
- *Operate in a manner consistent with the charity’s purposes*: trustees should carry out their duties in accordance with their governing document.
- *Act with due care and diligence*: trustees should take such care of their charity’s affairs as is reasonable to expect of someone who is managing the affairs of another person.
- *Ensure that the charity complies with the provisions of the 2005 Act and other relevant legislation*.

Full information on the specific duties of a charity trustee is available on the OSCR website. Please note that the names of the charity trustees, and the date they were appointed, must be given in the annual report and accounts, submitted to OSCR annually.

Remuneration

Charity trustees cannot be paid for doing the work of a trustee but they can receive out of pocket expenses for reasonable expenditure incurred.



However, they can be **remunerated** (in money or in kind) if certain conditions set out in the Act are met. If in doubt, seek advice.

The conditions which allow remuneration are:

- the maximum amount of the remuneration is set out in a written agreement;
- the maximum amount of the remuneration is reasonable in the circumstances;
- the charity trustees are satisfied, before entering the agreement, that it is in the interest of the charity for that person to provide those services for that amount;
- immediately after entering into the agreement, **less than half** of the total number of charity trustees are directly or indirectly remunerated;
- the charity's governing document does not prohibit the remuneration of charity trustees.

Common examples of remuneration:

- When a treasurer is paid an honorarium. This should only be paid for any work that is over and above what would normally be expected of a trustee eg if there is an element of book-keeping as well as overseeing the finances of the organisation.
- When a Hall committee member or someone closely related to them provides a service such as cleaning, or electrical/plumbing services.

Examples of good practice:

- Adopt a charity trustee remuneration policy and procedures which ensure any remuneration complies with the conditions set out in the Act;
- Establish a register of trustees' interests;
- Consult professional bodies before agreeing remuneration;
- Obtain at least two separate quotes for services;
- Clearly minute the decision that remuneration of a particular charity trustee is in the charity's interest.

Trustee Indemnity Insurance

Charities are permitted to use charity funds to provide all their charity trustees with indemnity insurance.

Disqualification from being a Charity Trustee

A person is not allowed to be a charity trustee if he/she:

- Has been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty
- Has been convicted of an offence under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- Is an undischarged bankrupt
- Has been removed/disqualified from being in management of a charity under legislation.

Changes to a charity's constitution

Check your governing document to make sure that you are operating in line with its terms.



If the proposed changes are allowed by the constitution/governing document, they will either require the *prior consent* of OSCR or to be *notified* to OSCR within 3 months.

Changes requiring **prior consent**:

- Changes to the name of the charity
- Amending its charitable purposes
- Amalgamating with another body
- Winding up or dissolving.

Changes requiring to be **notified**:

- Changes to the constitution/governing document other than the name or charitable purposes;
- Contact details for the charity
- Any other changes to details recorded in the Charity Register
- Changes that have required and been granted consent, once they have been made.

Charity Reorganisation Scheme

If a charity wishes to do anything that is not allowed/covered by the constitution/Deed of Trust, and there is no power to amend it, then a **charity reorganisation scheme** will be necessary (available via OSCR) to make the required changes.

For example, if you are thinking of becoming a SCIO, you must have the right to wind up your organisation and transfer it to the new legal structure. If it only allows you to sell the hall, you will have to go through the re-organisation process to change the terms of your Deed of Trust/constitution or to be given the power to transfer the property and undertakings of your current organisation to a SCIO set up to receive it.



Contact your local office of The Bridge or BAVS for support.

References to charity status

Charities must state the following information on documents issued or signed on their behalf:

- the charity's name, as entered in the Register
- any other name by which the charity is commonly known
- the words "Scottish charity" or "registered Scottish charity" and the Scottish Charity Number allocated to it at the time of registration.

The Regulations apply to all external documents and communications, as follows:

- business letters or emails;
- printed advertisements, public notices or official published documents;
- documents which request the donation of money or property;
- orders for goods; invoices and receipts;
- annual accounts;
- promotional material aimed at raising the charity's profile;
- legal documents;
- bills of exchange (not including cheques, although this may be introduced shortly).

1.3 Role of committees and office bearers

Whether or not the Village Hall is a charity, it is good practice for committee members to follow their guidelines. Under the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, all those who are responsible for the general control and management of a charity ie committee members or board of directors must:

- act in the interests of the charity;
- ensure that the charity does what it was set up to do;
- act with care and diligence that it is reasonable to expect of someone who is managing the affairs of another person;
- where there could be a conflict of interest, put the interests of the charity before those of the conflicting party eg the organisation which they represent or, if this is not possible, take no part in the discussion or decision making.



This last clause is particularly relevant for village hall committees, where people are often nominated by user groups to represent that group. However, while attending village hall committee meetings, they must put the interests of the village hall first.

In general, the Hall committee has responsibility to ensure that:

- the organisation works within the terms of its governing document ie the constitution;
- the financial affairs of the hall are in order;
- the fabric of the hall is maintained;
- the hall and users are properly insured;
- all appropriate licences are in place;
- all necessary policies and procedures are in place;
- the organisation acts as a responsible employer (if appropriate);
- new activities and projects are developed in keeping with the wishes of the local community.

Role of Chairman:

Prior to meetings, the chairman should:

- liaise with the secretary and others to draw up the agenda;
- be well prepared on the topics to be discussed;
- be aware of the impact of the governing document on any agenda items;
- ensure that any actions delegated at the previous meeting have been carried out.

At the meeting the chairman should:

- ensure that the meeting starts on time;
- introduce any new members and make sure that they feel welcome;
- encourage all members to participate;
- ensure that all discussion is relevant;
- ensure that any voting is according to the rules or standing orders;
- end all agenda items by drawing discussion to a conclusion, ensuring that decisions have been made and minuted, and that everyone knows what action will be taken and by whom.



Between meetings, the chairman will often be seen as the public face of the organisation and therefore needs to be clear about the remit of the organisation and the important issues of the moment. The chairman will sometimes be required to make emergency decisions between meetings but this should be done in consultation with other committee members and such decisions should be ratified and minuted at the next appropriate meeting.

Role of Secretary:

The secretary is responsible for the administration of the organisation such as:

- keeping an up-to-date register of members (or knowing who is eligible to vote);
- keeping an up to date record of Trustees/committee members, including dates of resignation/new members joining the committee;
- keeping the minute book and all other relevant papers;
- the organisation of all meetings;
- dealing with correspondence.

Prior to meetings, the secretary should:

- ensure that the venue is booked;
- notify all those eligible to attend of the date, time and place of the meeting;
- draw up the agenda in consultation with the chairman and others and distribute with the calling notice.

At the meeting, the secretary should take the minutes of the meeting, which should include:

- the date of the next meeting;
- a record of those present and a note of any apologies;
- the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting;
- a record of the financial information reported;
- an accurate record of any decisions taken and who is responsible for any actions resulting from those decisions;

After the meeting the secretary should:

- draft the minutes for approval by the chairman of the meeting prior to circulation to the members;
- write letters, obtain information and take any other action as decided by the committee.

Role of the Treasurer:

The treasurer does NOT have sole responsibility for the financial affairs of the organisation. The management committee has *collective* responsibility, but it is the treasurer's role to provide information to other committee members in such a way that they can understand the financial position and make reasoned decisions when necessary. Most of the treasurer's work will be done outwith committee meetings and will involve:

- keeping accurate records of all financial transactions;
- signing cheques (though never as sole signatory);
- ensuring that bills are paid on time (and salaries, if employing staff);
- monitoring cash flow and reconciling bank statements;
- preparing and submitting reports to the committee in an agreed format and advising on the use of resources;
- preparing accounts in the format required by charity law, arranging to have them examined or audited as appropriate;
- sending accounts and annual returns to regulatory bodies (OSCR/Companies House);
- assisting with funding applications.

Documents



All those involved in the management of the hall should have a copy of the constitution, the latest annual accounts, and minutes of committee meetings.

Originals of the constitution/Deed of Trust should be kept in a safe place, known to everyone.

SECTION TWO: Managing people

2.1 Employment of Staff

Some village halls employ a part-time cleaner or caretaker. If directly employed, part-time staff have the right to be treated no less favourably than full-time staff and hall committees need to be aware of their obligations. There is a wealth of information on the HM Revenue and Customs website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs and the ACAS website: www.acas.org.uk or they can be contacted by phone.



HMRC helpline: 0843 178 4229
ACAS helpline: 0800 470 0619

General points:

- Employers Liability Insurance must be in place.
- Policies must be in place for managing staff (equal opportunities, health & safety).
- The members of the management committee are the employers and are personally liable for ensuring that employment law is adhered to. This includes payment of the minimum wage, equal pay for men and women, holiday and sick pay, anti-discrimination, protecting vulnerable groups checks, staff records, accident reporting.
- If the employment with the hall is the employee's main or only source of income, it is up to the management committee to deal with national insurance and tax.
- When taking on an employee for the first time, the management committee has to register with HMRC and it will then be sent an Employer's Pack which will give all the information necessary to deal with tax, national insurance etc.
- If someone is self-employed, the organisation must ensure that they are going to make their own arrangements for income tax and national insurance; there are rules governing self-employment – see: www.gov.uk/government/collections/employed-or-self-employed.
- All employees must have a written contract, which forms the basis of the employment relationship. This should include a written job description to avoid any misunderstandings.
- A committee member can be employed by the hall committee eg as caretaker but this role must be seen as separate from their role as committee member and they must only be paid for the time spent on caretaking duties.



If the Hall is a charity, check that the constitution allows employees to be committee members (charity trustees). If not, the individual could be self-employed and contracted for this role, subject to the rules around self-employment.

2.2 Volunteers

It is good practice to have written role descriptions for your volunteers, whether they are committee members or others who carry out regular tasks for the operation of the Hall.

2.3 Human Resources Policies

Human Resources and other policies are required if you employ staff. Model policies are available at your local office of The Bridge or BAVS. (See Section 6.5 Policies)

SECTION THREE: Managing Money

Whether or not your Hall is a charity, it is likely that the Constitution/Deed of Trust requires the accounts to be independently examined on an annual basis. It is also a general requirement of funding applications.

3.1 Annual Monitoring and Accounts

Charities are required to complete an Annual Monitoring Return, which is submitted to OSCR along with their annual accounts – a simple online process is available.

Unincorporated charities and SCIOs with an annual gross income of less than £250,000 can produce Receipts and Payments Accounts. Companies Ltd by Guarantee must prepare Fully Accrued Accounts, in accordance with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (the 2005 Charities SORP).

 If grant income for hall improvements for an unincorporated body takes the annual income above the £250,000 limit, the annual accounts for that year must be prepared on a Fully Accrued basis.

Accounts must be examined by an independent examiner or audited by an auditor, depending on the level of turnover (there are restrictions on eligibility of examiners for accrued accounts). The following table gives details:

Gross income	Format of accounts	External scrutiny of accounts
Less than £250,000	Non-company charities and SCIOs: receipts & payments accounts	Independent examination by a person with requisite skills
	Charitable companies: Fully accrued accounts	Independent examination by a qualified person
£250,000 to £499,999	Fully accrued accounts	Independent examination by a qualified person
£500,000 and over	Fully accrued accounts	Audit

 The accounts must then be sent to OSCR within **9 months** of the end of the financial year, along with a report of the year's activities and the annual monitoring return. Charities can register to provide their accounts via OSCR online.

 Hall Committees that are charities should ensure that their constitution allows them to have their accounts independently examined. If the governing document requires the accounts to be audited, this must be carried out by a registered auditor.

Charities should consider whether this is appropriate and if not, the constitution should be amended (in accordance with the terms of the constitution). The change should be notified to OSCR within 3 months. (see Section 1.2 Charity Reorganisation Schemes if the constitution cannot be amended).

Fuller information on charity law and accounts is on the OSCR website www.oscr.org.uk Failure to submit the annual monitoring return and accounts by the deadline could result in the Charity being struck off the Charity Register.

Who can be an Independent Examiner?

OSCR's advice is as follows:

The independent examination of receipts & payments accounts must be carried out by someone independent of the management and administration of the charity and whom the charity trustees believe has the required skills and experience to carry out a competent examination of the accounts.

In deciding who might have the required skills, the charity trustees should take into consideration the degree of complexity of the accounts. The more complex the accounts are, the higher the level of experience and knowledge likely to be required by the independent examiner.

The types of people whom charity trustees could consider as having the required skills and experience might include:

- full or associate members of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners;
- qualified accountants currently in employment;
- retired accountants;
- other people familiar with financial matters who can demonstrate familiarity with the current reporting requirements for Scottish charities.

Where fully accrued accounts are prepared, the examiner should be someone who is professionally qualified to undertake the role.



Your local office of The Bridge or BAVS has templates for village hall book-keeping and preparation of annual accounts. We may be able to assist with the independent examination of Receipts and Payments Accounts.

3.2 Rates and Utilities

Water, drainage and sewerage charges



Exemption from water charges is currently available to registered Scottish charities such as village halls.

To be eligible for exemption the charity cannot:

- Have a gross annual income of over £300,000;
- Hold a permanent alcohol licence to sell alcohol at the premises;
- Be a charity shop, or other retailing premises, including a café or canteen which are open to the public;
- Be a Local Authority or an Arms-Length External Organisation (ALEO) which are organisations that can be used by councils to deliver services.



For more information, guidance notes and an online application form, see the website: www.business-stream.co.uk/get-in-touch/charity-exemption-scheme.

There are a range of other registered providers for water charges; all can manage the water charges exemption scheme.



Remember, you need to apply **annually** for your exemption before 31 March to ensure you avoid any water and waste water charges from 1 April.

Private water supplies

No relief is available for any charges made by a private supplier. If the Hall is served by a private water supply, it is the responsibility of the hall committee to inform Scottish Borders Council if the hall is being used for public functions that require the use of water e.g. coffee mornings. A risk assessment will then be carried out and the water will then be tested on an annual basis. Scottish Borders Council currently provides this testing service free of charge for village halls.



There are small grants available from SBC if the water supply needs to be improved. Contact Environmental Health in your local Council office or follow the link from the Council's website <http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/>

Rates

Village halls that are registered charities are entitled to 80% mandatory rates relief. Halls within Scottish Borders Council area receive a further 20% discretionary relief.

Utilities



Make sure you get the best, most competitive rates for your hall. Check charges regularly for best prices – you can do this in different ways:

Electricity/gas supplies

- Use a broker that specialises in Non-profit organisations, such as UtilityAid www.utilityaid.co.uk
- Use comparison websites for business such as Uswitch: <http://www.uswitch.com/business-energy>
- Contact your existing energy supplier to discuss alternative contract terms.

Heating Oil/Calor Gas

- Check the cost per litre with more than one supplier before you order;
- Investigate options for cheaper rates via membership of local bulk purchase schemes.

Insurance



Compare policies and premiums from a range of companies to make sure you have the right insurance for your hall at the right price. Further information is in [Section 4.2 Insurance.](#)

3.3 VAT and charities

The following concessions can apply to village halls, which are registered charities:

Zero rated:

- The construction of new community buildings subject to certain conditions being met
- Renovation of existing buildings to provide facilities for people with disabilities (this cost element only)
- Advertising and publicity.

Reduced rate:

- Installation of energy saving material e.g. central heating or insulation
- Provision of fuel and power, which also excludes organisations from paying the climate change levy.



Anything to do with VAT is complicated and it is worth checking before making any assumptions by contacting: www.gov.uk/vat-charities

3.4 Fundraising



We have not included details of funders in this Handbook as grant programmes and criteria change frequently. Your local office of The Bridge or BAVS can assist with identifying appropriate grant funds for your project, making a good application and managing grant funding, as well as other methods of fundraising, including 100 clubs. Information on licences for raffles etc is in [Section 6.1 Licences](#).

Making a good funding application

However there are a few golden rules for making a good application.

Be clear about your project!

- Who you are
- What you want to do
- Why it is needed and who will benefit (remember to consult your community)
- How you will make the project a success (and prove it to funders)
- How much it will cost in total
- What will happen in the longer term

Your local office of The Bridge or BAVS can provide a workshop on making a good application.

100 Club Rules

Many organisations have found that a local private lottery, with a percentage of the income used to fund small cash prizes monthly, is a good way to raise funds. This type of lottery is known as a 100 Club. It is run separately to the organisation, with its own members being those that subscribe on a monthly/annual basis to the draw. The income generated over and above the prizes is donated to the charity that has organised the club.

Because this is classed as a private lottery (members only) it does not require a licence. However, it must operate under a set of rules; model 100 Club Rules are available via your local office of The Bridge or BAVS.

Fundraising events

Holding an event in the hall that will generate funds as well as bring the community together is an excellent way to raise funds and fulfil your charitable objects at the same time. However, you should consider the outgoings as well and plan ahead to maximise your income – and the enjoyment of those attending! Further information is given in [Section 5.4 Organising Events](#).

If you have a raffle that is available for longer than the duration of the event, you will need a lottery licence. If you have a bar, you will need an occasional liquor licence. Other licences likely to be required are music licences and public entertainment licences. [See Section 6.1 Licences](#). Some of these are paid annually and cover all events throughout the year.

SECTION FOUR: Managing Resources

Your Hall is a valuable community asset and should be maintained in good condition to safeguard it for future generations. Regular checks and dealing with things as they arise will keep the premises safe for your Hall users and help to keep costs down in the longer term. Having the paperwork in good order can simplify everything!

4.1 Record-keeping

Dispositions, leases, permissions and wayleaves



Whether your Hall is owned or leased, make sure you know where the original title deeds/disposition/lease is kept, and make sure a copy is easily available to refer to. If you can't find it, check with local solicitors, or the local farmer's safe! There should be a registered copy at the Registers of Scotland, who can provide copies for a small charge, but it helps if you have the date of the disposition/deed for them to locate it, otherwise an additional search charge is made.



You can call the Registers of Scotland's Edinburgh office on 0800 169 9391. See their website for further info: www.ros.gov.uk

If you have any of the following, keep them safely with the copy deeds:

- site plans, plans showing drainage/sewerage or heating/lighting, or architects plans of the building
- copies of planning permission or building warrants for renovations.
- details of the maximum capacity of the hall for various uses –
See Section 5.1 Working with Users

Archived documents

The following documents should be held in an archive for at least six years and potentially longer depending on the terms and conditions of any grant funds received.

- annual report and accounts (examined).
- AGM Minutes

Bear in mind that your hall is part of the heritage of your community, and keep extracts of minutes relating to important events for posterity!

Hall maintenance checks

Appoint a responsible person to carry out a walk-round risk assessment check on a regular basis. Keep records of when the following were carried out:

- risk assessment checks
- emergency lighting checks
- fire safety equipment checks
- servicing of boilers, heaters etc
- checks of kitchen equipment (Portable Appliances - PAT Testing)
- Electrical Installation Check Record – every 5 years.

Risk Assessment checks can be carried out by a competent individual; all others require a trained/certified professional.

Copies of surveys carried out on the building (asbestos, electrical testing etc) should be kept where they can be easily accessed. Further details on this topic are in **Section 6.3 Health and Safety**.



Make sure that all committee members and regular users know where to turn off the water and the electricity in the event of an emergency. Have the contact details for office bearers, emergency plumbers, electricians and roofers on hand for when **a quick response is needed**

4.2 Insurance

It is the responsibility of the management committee to ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover. This could include amongst others:

- Buildings insurance – the sum insured should cover the cost of demolition and site clearance plus rebuilding.
- Contents insurance – this should be regularly updated – keep an inventory.
- Public liability insurance – this covers injury, loss or damage caused to any person as a result of the organisation's negligence.
- Hirer's public liability insurance – this allows the hall committee to hold public liability cover, which extends to cover the public liability of all those who hire the hall. It is intended for occasional use by not-for-profit groups. If a group is hiring the hall regularly, they would be expected to have their own public liability insurance.
- Employer's liability insurance – it is a legal requirement to have this insurance if you have paid staff. It can also cover volunteers (check your policy includes them).
- Personal accident insurance – this is optional and provides cover in the event of personal injury arising from an accident or assault where the hall committee is not legally held liable.
- Trustee indemnity insurance – when trustees are personally liable (as is the case unless a hall is set up as incorporated body) this type of insurance gives some protection, although not if the trustees have been negligent.



There are a number of insurance companies that have specific insurance policies for voluntary organisations including village halls. Included amongst them are:

Allied Westminster

<http://www.villageguard.com/>

☎01937 845245 (currently offer a free valuation service for your Hall).

AON

<https://insurance.aon.co.uk>

☎0131 456 3000

Keegan and Pennykid Insurance Brokers Ltd

www.keegan-pennykid.com

☎0131 225 6005

Norris & Fisher Insurance Brokers Ltd

www.villagehallinsurance.co.uk/

☎023 8026 9009 (currently offer a free valuation service for your Hall)

Zurich Community Group Insurance

www.zurich.co.uk/en/charity-insurance/ppc/community-groups

☎0800 917 9420

This is by no means a definitive list and does not indicate an endorsement of any of the above companies.

4.3 Maintaining your Hall's Facilities

The Kitchen



Food Safety Management regulations now require specific sinks, hand-washing facilities, and non-permeable surfaces etc if your kitchen is used for food preparation on a regular basis. (see Section 6.2 Food Safety Management)

Disabled Access and Toilets

Since 2004, managers of village halls have been required to take reasonable steps to adapt premises so that people with disabilities do not find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to use the service.

All entrances/fire exits should be ramped if necessary to permit easy access by those in wheelchairs, with disabled parking spaces provided. It also makes life easier for those with children in pushchairs! A toilet accessible by the disabled is a necessity, with legislation requiring public facilities to treat people equally. It is also good practice to install a wall-mounted baby changer in the disabled toilet. There should be signs in Braille, colour changes for corridors and hearing loops etc assist people with sensory impairment.

If any work is carried out to a hall, Building Regulations will also require any necessary changes to make it accessible.

The Roof and Windows



Hall committees who are responsible for the external fabric of the Hall should set up a maintenance reserve fund for repairs to the roof, and its eventual replacement, together with the windows.

Access and Car Parking



Hall committees who are responsible for an access road to the Hall (possibly shared responsibility) should set up a maintenance reserve fund for repairs to the road, and its eventual replacement; this also includes car parking areas for which the Hall is responsible.

Frost protection

Measures should be put into place to ensure that the hall is protected from our increasingly harsh winters. Frost protection heaters should ideally be of a different circuit so that they cannot be turned off accidentally.

Energy Efficiency

Insulation, insulation, insulation!!

A number of halls have had energy efficiency reports carried out. The improvement with the most impact for the least cost is to increase the levels of insulation in the hall, together with double glazing and draught-proofing (including the doors!)

Other items include run-back timers for heaters – to stop them being left on in error – and energy efficient lighting (low energy light bulbs or low energy fluorescent fittings).

Many halls have electric heating; this can be very cost effective where a hall is used at intervals. Infra red heaters heat the person, and have an almost instant impact.

The air-to-air heat exchange system is a relatively new form of electric heating that provides four times the energy used to generate it.

There are now a number of examples of different approaches to energy efficiency within Scottish Borders village halls. They are happy to show others what they have done.



Contact The Bridge or BAVS and we will put you in touch with relevant Village Hall committees.

Micro generation

Micro generation is the term used for systems such as small wind or water turbines and photo-voltaic panels that generate electricity for the hall and feed in excess power to the grid. Subsidies for many of these systems have now (or will soon) come to an end. However all energy used by the premises is free; it is now possible to have very efficient lithium-ion battery packs to store solar-generated energy for use in the evenings. Grants are available if the system does not attract on-going government subsidies.



More information on renewable energy generation is available from Community Energy Scotland - see their website www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk or contact Business Energy Scotland <https://businessenergyscotland.org/> for a resource efficiency audit of your Hall with recommendations for improvements.

4.4 Defibrillators

Many village halls now have defibrillators – or more correctly AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) on the outside of their Halls, protected from the elements with a cabinet. All currently available AEDs perform regular selfchecks and if a problem is detected it will be indicated. In most cases, they show this by a warning sign or light visible on front of the machine. The AED should be checked regularly and frequently (ideally weekly) for such a warning, and for appropriate action to be taken when necessary. If this task is delegated to individuals, allowance must be made to ensure that the checks are not neglected during absence on holidays, etc.

The crucial factor in the resuscitation of someone from vascular failure is to provide a shock from an AED with the minimum delay. Time should not be wasted if trained staff are not immediately available. Untrained people have used devices successfully to save a life and lack of training (or recent refresher training) should not be a barrier. Provided someone is prepared to use the AED, they should not be inhibited from doing so. There are advantages, however, of having a core number of appropriately trained personnel: training people to use an AED can be achieved quickly without major cost.

Providers of training include the Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Heartstart and various registered charity organisations within the Scottish Borders. Choice of training provider will depend on what is available locally, the numbers being trained and the pre-existing level of expertise of the trainees. Increasingly, online or distance learning programmes are being offered and may be used widely in the future, particularly for refresher training. The British Heart Foundation has produced an Interactive CD that allows Community groups to self-teach and all local Fire and Rescue Stations are available throughout the Scottish Borders to facilitate this training.

4.5 Resilient Communities – Emergency Centres

Most of our small rural communities have now joined the Resilient Communities programme, often through Community Council links. They comprise volunteers who work with the local authority and emergency services at times of crisis – either through bad weather, or a missing person. Your Hall may be involved, having perhaps agreed to house the emergency sheds with snow shovels and sandbags for use by the community.

Many Halls have also been designated as Emergency Centres – a place where the community can come together for warmth and food if cut off from the outside world in bad weather, or as the base for emergency services in a crisis.

Hall committees should consider whether they might require a generator for electric lights or to start oil-fired heating systems during an extended power cut.

4.6 Marketing your Hall

Website

Village and community halls can provide information about their hall and activities/events by having their own website. There are now a number of options for free websites.

Facebook

Social media is a great way to market your hall to people of all ages. Set up a specific Facebook page for your Hall to publicise events.

Cultural directories

Through their Borders Live Touring project, Live Borders aims to bring cultural event to rural areas, working with village halls. If your Hall would like to get involved, see



this link for more information: www.liveborders.org.uk/culture/creative/borders-live-touring or email: borderslivetouring@liveborders1.org.uk

What's On Guide

Live Borders also produce a regular What's On guide – see this link to find out how your event can be publicised – free of charge. www.liveborders.org.uk/book/whats-on/

E-Bulletins

Include a space for email addresses on any contact form and ask if people are happy to receive updates. You can't pass the email address on to anyone else (General Data Protection Regulations - GDPR), but it's a great way to keep your friends and supporters in direct touch with anything new coming up. Make sure you use the **blind copy** function to keep individual email addresses private. Be specific re on what basis you will contact them. Have a policy to cover use of personal information.

Press releases

Use the District News pages in local newspapers to highlight an event the week before it happens. Take photographs and write up an account of any activities – looking for an angle that will make the newspaper interested in carrying the article.

Top tips for promoting your Hall or event

- Decide who your audience is
- Put yourself in their shoes – why should they be interested?
- Decide on your goal – attract more use/more volunteers or raise money?
- Use **you** and a conversational tone – more friendly!
- Simple is best – short words/sentences, clean layout, one font only
- Get to the point. Big, important point first, detail later
- Use **who, when, where, what, why, how**
- Strong visuals have a lot of impact
- Use plenty of white space – more attractive
- Call to action: **Just ring!**
- Use questions: **Interested in...?**
- Use active verbs, not passive
- Don't overdo the detail – stick to the cream!
- Be enthusiastic – love what you do!!

4.7 Celebrating the invaluable role of a rural community hall

Don't forget to tell people about all the activities and events that happen in your Hall and to celebrate the difference that you make in your community. If the Hall didn't exist how many people would miss out on being part of the wide range of opportunities to get together with their neighbours and enjoy rural life together. It doesn't matter what age you are, being socially isolated through lack of transport or somewhere to go at minimal cost can have a hugely detrimental effect on a person's health and well-being.

Please remember to tell The Bridge and BAVS about all the activities that happen in your Hall – we can help you to publicise them, and to consult with your communities about new activities that would be welcomed and well attended.

SECTION FIVE: Working with Users

5.1 Booking Procedures

Hall should have a clear policy on bookings, which has been agreed by the management committee. If the hall has charitable status, it is important to ensure that the “public benefit test” can be met (**see Section 1.2 Charity Status**). Occasional use for commercial activity or private parties should not infringe a hall’s charitable status but priority should be given to groups/activities for the local community. Take care if you are contacted by an unknown organisation – **make sure you know who they are.**

It is very important that a simple, efficient booking procedure is in place to avoid the possibility of double booking. One person should be responsible for bookings and this may be a committee member or, if appropriate, the caretaker. A practical system has to be in place for opening and closing the hall.



Anyone booking the hall should be made aware of the conditions of hire, which could include:

- supervision during lets – a “responsible person” should be present throughout the let and where there is a Public Entertainment Licence that person should be over 21 years of age;
- who is responsible for licences;
- information on any policies in place ;
- responsibility for insurance;
- responsibility for health and safety including food hygiene (see below) and electrical testing;
- arrangements for cleaning and tidying;
- arrangements for dealing with any damage caused;
- how payment is to be made including return of any deposit;
- what happens in the event of cancellation;
- the hall committee’s right to refuse a booking;
- the maximum number of people who can be in the hall at any time.

Maximum occupancy

The recommended maximum occupancy of your hall is based on the size of your hall. This information is contained in the Fire Law Scotland guidance for Places of



Entertainment and Assembly www.firelawscotland.org/ which gives a great deal of important advice and is recommended reading.

This calculation method should not be used in isolation because it takes no account of existing means of escape and other fire safety measures. In practice, the number of persons who can safely use rooms, areas or spaces will often be less than that calculated because of the impact of the fire safety measures provided.

Occupancy load factors of a room or space by use of premises

The occupancy capacity of a room or space without fixed seating is obtained by dividing the area (in square metres) by the relevant occupancy load factor from the following table. The occupancy capacity of a building or storey which is divided into rooms or spaces is the sum of the occupancy capacities of all the rooms or spaces. Where a room or space is likely to be put to more than one use, the largest relevant occupancy capacity should be used.

Description of room or space	Occupancy load factor
Standing spectators' area	0.3
Assembly hall, public bar, bingo hall, theatre, cinema	0.5
Dance floor, concourse, queuing area	0.7
Committee room, dining room, lounge, reading room, conference room	1
Exhibition hall	1.5

Food safety management



It is recommended that a statement on food safety management is included in the Booking Form, as follows. Further information is contained in [Section 6.2 Food Safety Management](#).

“The following statement, provided by a food safety officer with Scottish Borders Council, is included in the conditions of hire to ensure that food safety regulations are met:

1. Hirers are required to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006 and any subsequent related regulations.
2. Hirers are expected to familiarise themselves with the facilities available and to ensure that they are adequate for the purpose intended.
3. Hirers will be required to remove all waste from the environs of the facility and where necessary make special arrangements for its removal with a licensed contractor before final vacation of the premises.
4. Hirers must :-
 - Have a documented food safety management system
 - Have trained staff on duty ie they have undergone a food safety course equivalent to the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) Elementary Certificate in Food Hygiene, courses for which are run by SBC
 - Ensure that food has been prepared in such a way that it will not result in any civil action being raised.”

5.2 Hire Charges

It is impossible to suggest any standard scale of hiring charges as circumstances vary greatly from hall to hall. Halls are asked to notify their local Federation when changes are made to charges so that this information can be shared locally to try to ensure some uniformity.

A management committee should, ideally, set its charges to cover the annual running costs and rely on special fundraising events only for building-up a fund for larger maintenance items and improvements. Some committees may prefer a policy of keeping letting charges low but ask for local organisations and others to give full support to big annual activities such as fetes, barbeques and galas to raise funds for running expenses. In some areas all the organisations using the premises regularly are asked to hold a special event once a year to raise funds for the hall.

Whatever method is chosen, it is essential that a management committee prepares a budget to cover annual expenses. Things like insurance, licences, heating and lighting, caretaking, and minor repairs need to be taken into account.

The total expenditure could then be divided by an estimate of the annual total of hours used on a regular basis, to arrive at an hourly rate.

You could also consider:

- Lower rates for long term bookings, rehearsal and preparation time and off-peak use
- Higher rates for those not living in the area of benefit and for certain types of activity such as party political meetings, private functions and commercial use.
- Reduced charges should be limited strictly to those organisations that are unable to afford the full rates and not because a club has a strong voice on the committee.
- An all-inclusive charge is simpler, but some halls prefer to make a basic charge for specific accommodation such as the main hall with extra payments for heating and lighting, use of the kitchen, microphone, piano etc.

 Remember that a charity has to show it is meeting its charitable aims, and that it is of public benefit to a specific community. Many Halls have three rates of hire: full commercial rate; small discount for charities and individual (non-commercial) hirers not resident in the community area of benefit; larger discount for local user groups and individual (non-commercial) hirers who are resident in the community.

5.3 Day book and Hall Users Folder

It is a good idea to keep a record of hall bookings by groups and individuals and how many people used the hall for each booking. These statistics are very useful for reports, planning ahead and when making funding applications, to show how – and how much - the hall is used. One way of doing this is a daybook, which is completed by the hall users. It can also act as a check for the Treasurer when preparing invoices.

The daybook should also contain instructions for closing down the hall after a let – where there is no Hall Keeper, it is important that every hall user turns off equipment, heating, lights etc and locks up, leaving the Hall as they would like to find it. Alternatively this sheet can be laminated and put up in a prominent place within the Hall.

 All halls should provide a ring binder/folder with instructions for using equipment such as cookers, water boilers etc. It may be preferable to provide copies rather than originals, so they can be refreshed if they get dirty or go missing!

5.4 Organising Community Events

If you are planning a major community event, you can refer to the event planning guide - Eventful - that was prepared by the Scottish Borders Events Forum some years ago.

You can download information by section at:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20003/events_and_venues/561/planning_an_event

 The guide contains a great deal of useful advice and has templates for risk assessments as well as checklists to make sure everything has been covered.

SECTION SIX: Legislation and Regulation

6.1 Licences

Liquor Licence



Under the terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 it is lawful to sell/supply alcohol in unlicensed premises through the granting of an Occasional Licence by the Licensing Board.

What is an Occasional Licence and who can apply?

An occasional licence authorises the sale of alcohol on premises that are not licensed premises. An application can be made by

- The holder of a premises licence
- The holder of a personal licence
- A representative of any voluntary organisation (this includes a members' club or a village hall)

How do I apply?

The application forms for occasional licences now include more detailed information on the actual licence, particularly in relation to the admission of children and young persons.

Once an application for specific premises has been approved, it is relatively easy to just check information and change the date/time etc for future applications.



An application form and guidance notes for completion is available for download on the Scottish Borders Council website:

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory_record/22336/occasional_licence/category/105/liquor_licences

How long does an Occasional Licence last?

An occasional licence can only last up to a maximum of 14 days per "occasion".

The holders of a premises licence or a personal licence may make unlimited applications.

There are restrictions on the number of applications a voluntary organisation/members club can make. In any period of 12 months -

- Not more than 4 occasional licences each having effect for a period of 4 days or more; and
- Not more than 12 occasional licences each having effect for a period of less than 4 days.

Provided that, in any period of 12 months, the total number of days on which occasional licences issued in respect of the voluntary organisation/registered club have effect does not exceed 56 days.

What type of event needs a Licence?

Activities such as dances, discos, dinner dances, wedding receptions, parties (where a disco or band is provided) or beer tents at a larger event such as a gala or music festival, are generally acceptable for granting an occasional licence. This list is not exhaustive.

In respect of applications made by voluntary organisations/members clubs, there is a condition which stipulates that 'where a voluntary organisation is the holder of an occasional licence, alcohol can only be sold where the event is connected with the voluntary organisation's activities.' As with all licence conditions, breach of the condition could lead to criminal proceedings.

Applications for fund-raising dances and other events connected to the activities of a voluntary organisation/registered club will be regarded by the Board as a competent type of application.

Tap water fit for drinking must be provided free of charge on request and other non-alcoholic drinks must be available for purchase at a reasonable price.

When should I apply for a Licence?



Applications must be lodged no later than **six weeks before** the event, and earlier than that if possible, particularly if it is anticipated that the application will attract objections or representations. Where there are no objections and/or adverse representations, it is anticipated that applications will be processed and issued within 28 days.

How much does it cost?

The application fee for an occasional licence is £10. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to 'Scottish Borders Council'. The application fee is not refundable if the application is refused, cannot be processed in time, or if the event is subsequently cancelled after a licence has been issued.

Will I need to submit anything else with my application?

All applicants must submit a document listing how they will comply with the 5 licensing objectives during the event.

Where an admission fee is charged for the event, or where people are asked for a donation to gain entry, the event will also require a public entertainment licence under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, unless there is a public entertainment licence already in place for the premises where the event is to be held.

Note on Stewarding

Organisers of events should note that from 1st November 2007, when the relevant provisions of the Private Security Industry Act 2001 came into force, there is mandatory licensing of the private security industry. This means that it is an offence to employ unlicensed door stewards or "bouncers" at events.

However, **volunteers** who carry out these roles are **exempt** from the requirements of the Act but organisers may wish to take independent advice on the legality of their security arrangements at events.

Where Can I Get Further Information on Licensing?



Further information is available from the Scottish Borders Council Licensing Unit at Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA. Telephone: 01835 826662

Email: liquorandlicensing@scotborders.gov.uk Information can also be obtained from Scottish Borders Council's website at - www.scotborders.gov.uk

Public Entertainment Licence:

If an entry fee is charged for entertainment in a village hall to support Hall fundraising, the Hall committee must apply for a public entertainment licence. The local authority is entitled to restrict the use of the premises to a specific kind of entertainment or recreation, to limit the number of persons to be admitted and to fix the days and times when the premises may be used for entertainment or recreation. The current fee for a non-commercial licence for a village hall is £56 for one year, or £164 for three years. Other non-commercial organisations using an unlicensed hall to raise funds for their own organisations must apply for a temporary licence at a cost of £40. Contact the SBC Licensing Unit at the address above.



The Music Licence:

PPL and **PRS for Music** exist to enable more efficient approval for the playing of music in a public place. Both organisations are run on a not-for-profit basis and the money they collect goes back to the performers and music creators respectively. PPL collects royalties on behalf of music performers and record companies while PRS for Music collects royalties on behalf of the songwriters and publishers. **PRS for Music now administers a joint licence.**



Small charity/community organisations using your hall will be covered under the hall's licence but anybody earning a commercial income (eg aerobics or antiques fairs) will not and **must** have a licence in their own name. It is the responsibility of the hall committee to ensure that the person or organisation has a relevant licence in place as you can be held liable under law for any unlicensed usage in your building.

Village Halls require a music licence if musical performances take place in the hall ie "live music by performers in person at concerts, recitals and other events; background music by radio; television; tape, record, disc players; jukeboxes; music at discotheque or karaoke session; film and video shows; aerobatics; keep fit and dance classes" (from PPL/PRS website). The CB Tariff for community buildings is based on 1% of the annual income from lets, with a minimum charge of £52 plus VAT for each of PPL and PRS for Music – ie £104 plus VAT per annum. See <https://pplprs.co.uk/>



Small Lottery Licence:

If tickets for a raffle are sold only at the event where the raffle is drawn, no licence is required. The value of prizes purchased should not exceed £250 but there is no limit to the value of donated prizes. Where tickets are sold in advance of the event, the organisation running the raffle must obtain a small lottery licence. Members of The Bridge can make use of the umbrella lottery licence held by The Bridge. Contact the Peebles office.

Alternatively, the first application for a small lottery licence costs £40 per calendar year, with a renewal fee of £20 in subsequent years. A return of the amounts raised and any expenses, prizes etc from ticket sales must be made to Scottish Borders Council after each draw is held, or to The Bridge if under their scheme. Contact The Bridge, or the SBC Licensing Unit at the address above.



TV Licence:

Use of a television in receipt of a broadcast signal in a village hall requires a normal TV licence. Apply via PayPoint locations or online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk. It costs £154.50 for colour and £52 for a black and white TV Licence.

Community Cinema Licences

The following information is provided by the British Federation of Film Societies, now trading as Cinema for All.



For further information and a toolkit to start up your own community cinema, contact them on info@cinemaforall.org.uk Tel: 01142 210314 or see their website <http://cinemaforall.org.uk/>

No matter what kind of film screening organisation you plan to run, if you are going to show a film to an audience you must have a licence from the distributor who owns the rights to show the film. This may mean hiring a copy of the film from the distributor or their agent on terms that include payment for the licence.

In general, community cinemas have the choice of two ways of screening films. This is dictated by the way the film rental market works:

- a '**commercial**' licence allows members and the general public to attend the film screening. Payment can either be taken in advance of the screening or on the door. This licence allows a free hand in advertising films screened under it and is paid for by a percentage of the total ticket income OR a minimum amount - the 'minimum guarantee' (ranging from £80-£100 for DVD hire for one event) - whichever is the greater. The amount paid is dependent on the size of the audience. After a screening using this licence type you will be required to complete a 'return' to the distributor that lists how many people attended and ticket income.

- a '**non-commercial**' licence allows **members only** to attend the film screening. Usually this licence does not allow tickets to be paid for in advance or on the door, or permit any advertising of the film screening outside of the membership scheme. A **Public Video Screening Licence** may be paid for by audience member subscriptions collected at the start of each season or year. You can use your own DVD so this can be a very light-touch approach to running a Film Club. The cost of a PVSL licence can be less than £100 per year and a full price list is available on www.filmbank.co.uk or www.themplc.co.uk (The Motion Picture Licensing Company).



Don't forget that films have music, so you will need a Music Licence too! See information above.

You will also need a good sound system, a screen, and projection equipment. This could be the subject of a grant funding application, but you will need to do sufficient community consultation to prove that there is a demand.

Civil Marriage Licence:



Where a village hall is the venue for a civil marriage, a licence will be required. Contact the Scottish Borders Council Licensing Unit at the address above.

6.2 Food Safety Management

The following information was supplied by a food safety officer with Scottish Borders Council.



Under the current regulations, **anywhere that food is prepared and served** is regarded as a business. This means that village halls and church halls have to comply with the regulations in the same way as any other food premises.

The golden rule is that all food served, for reward or not, including prizes must be safe and uncontaminated. Posters relating to Food Allergies must be displayed.

The food hygiene regulations now talk about the Food Business Operator and place responsibilities on them. Premises where food is prepared only have to comply by virtue of the use and facilities that the Food Business provides or needs. This means that Village and community halls do not need to be registered with Environmental Health unless they organise food use events on an ongoing basis. The limited use by several Food Business Operators would not trigger the need for registration.

However, village halls must ensure that the structure of the premises is fit for purpose (see below and **Section 4.3 Maintaining your Hall's Facilities**) and that the practices used protect against harm.

Structure:

- Twin sinks are necessary or you may have a dishwasher plus a sink. Dishes are washed in a hand hot solution of detergent containing a bactericidal agent in one sink and the chemicals washed off in hand hot water in the other sink. Dishes should be air dried – don't use dishtowels. Sinks must be capable of washing the largest piece of equipment in the kitchen.
- Separate sink required for washing hands. This must be in the kitchen: hand-washing sinks in the toilets do not count. Paper towels are recommended and soap must be provided.
- Walls, ceilings and floors must be easily cleaned and covered in an appropriate finish eg tiled splashbacks behind cookers, worksurfaces and sinks, a washable finish on walls above the splashbacks and emulsion paint on ceilings. There should be no carpeting on the floors. Woodwork should be painted with gloss paint (three coats of gloss paint) or varnish (yacht varnish recommended as most hard wearing).
- Worksurfaces, particularly food contact surfaces, should be smooth and impervious and able to be washed and disinfected. Avoid wooden edges to the worksurfaces.
- Opening windows should be screened to prevent flies getting in (and doors if likely to be left open).
- Sinks and wash-hand basins must have hot and cold water of drinkable quality with private supplies tested annually.
- Ventilation and lighting have to be adequate with fluorescent lights recommended. Diffusers should be fitted to prevent any glass breakage falling into food.
- No plants should be in the kitchen.
- No pets should be allowed in the kitchen.
- Toilets must not open directly off the kitchen.

- It would be a good idea to provide somewhere for outdoor clothes so that people do not leave them on working surfaces or tables.
- A first aid kit must be provided equipped with waterproof, germproof detectable dressings.
- A lidded, preferably lined waste bin must be supplied. It would be advised that in order to minimise cross contamination, the bin be foot operated.
- Laundry work must not be carried out in the kitchen during food handling operations.

Practices:

- The Hall management are responsible for the formulation and operation of a documented Food Safety Management System in respect of any food prepared and served by the hall committee and people working for the committee.
- People in the kitchen should wear some form of protective clothing eg apron or overall.
- Common sense personal hygiene rules should be followed eg wash hands frequently and particularly when handling food.
- Food can be kept at room temperature safely for up to 4 hours. A fridge is not essential (in fact it can cause problems in that it has to be regularly cleaned). High risk foods can be kept in a cool box with ice packs.
- It is best to prepare food in the hall kitchen rather than at home as it then being done under control. However, as long as food is only being prepared on an occasional, irregular basis in home kitchens, the regulations do not apply. It is best to stick to low risk foods eg home baking, if preparing at home. Dairy products are high risk and buttering of scones etc should be done in the hall.
- If a hall organises a social event with various people providing food, it is better for the food to be prepared in the hall. Otherwise the committee is responsible for the preparation of food over which they have had no control. Alternatively, all those providing food should be asked to sign to confirm that the food has been prepared properly.
- At coffee mornings etc. food should not be on open display – it should be protected from contamination by being covered. Tongs should always be used to move scones etc
- The following is a list of food handling equipment that should be available in any hall:
 - Colour coded chopping boards with a key to indicate which board is to be used for which activity
 - Separate knives and utensils for use with raw and ready to eat food (these may also be colour coded in the same coding as the boards)
 - Supply of paper towels and/or a roll of paper towelling
 - Tongs and cake slices for handling and service of foods
 - Paper napkins which may be used for the preparation and service of filled rolls, buttered scones etc
 - As an alternative to holding rolls or scones in a paper napkin, protective gloves may be worn. (Be aware that money is very dirty and should not be handled in a gloved hand which is then going to be used for food preparation without changing the glove)
 - A probe thermometer which should be kept in a lidded box when not in use
 - Supply of lidded containers into which opened bags/packets of dry goods (eg tea, sugar, biscuits etc) may be placed.

If a hall is being hired by another organisation or individual, the food safety management system is the responsibility of those hiring the hall. The hall committee is advised that it would be wise for them to include specific clauses in the booking form. See Section 5.1 Booking Procedures.

- If food is being prepared in a hall, there must be a trained person on duty – either provided by the hall committee if they are responsible for the catering or provided by the organisation to which the hall has been let. Ideally halls/organisations should have a pool of people trained.
- If cookery demonstrations are being carried out in the hall, the person doing the demonstrating should have a food handling qualification.



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) Elementary Certificate in Food Hygiene is recommended for anyone involved in food-related events and activities.

6.3 Health and Safety Legislation

Voluntary groups and charities which do not have paid employees still have a general duty of care towards their members, and should strive to apply the principles of the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.

Risk assessment

To begin, conduct a risk assessment or audit of your activities, how you do them, of the equipment you use and the surroundings in which you carry them out. According to the advice of the Health and Safety Executive this assessment should include:

- Looking for the hazards, e.g. everyday things like the storage of cleaning materials or tools, or safe installation of electrical equipment;
- deciding who might be harmed and how, e.g. volunteers who may not be fully skilled, irregular visitors, children, etc;
- evaluating the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate, e.g. consider the likelihood of the hazard, is it controllable, could it be eliminated. Do you share your facilities and if so how does that affect your measures in risk reduction?
- recording your findings;
- reviewing and revising your risk assessment to take account of changing circumstances; test your precautions and keep new members informed.



For further reading see this simple guide to Risk Assessment, available free from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

First Aid and Accident Reporting

It is good practice to provide a First Aid kit within the Hall, and this then helps to meet the food safety management guidelines.

Employers and those in control of halls that house playgroups or keep fit classes etc are required to report work-related accidents under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). You should keep an Accident Book on the premises and hirers should be asked to complete them and report any accidents to the Management Committee.



Further information is available on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/

Fire Safety

The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the members of the management committee of a village hall to take steps to prevent fire and to mitigate the detrimental effects of any fire which occurs. A wide range of sector specific guidance is available on the web at <http://www.firelawscotland.org/>.



Hall committees need to carry out a risk assessment which identifies the people at risk and the fire hazards in the building. They then need to look at the fire safety measures necessary to:

- reduce the likelihood of fire
- detect fire and give warning of it
- provide a means of escape
- fight any fire if appropriate – the local fire officer recommends the provision of fire extinguishers but the onus is then on the hall committee to ensure that users of the hall know how to use them.

There must be a written record of the risk assessment and all users should be made aware of what to do in the event of a fire.

Further information is available from the local offices of Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, whose staff are willing to discuss any concerns or to visit the hall if required.

Asbestos

Asbestos containing materials may be found in buildings built or refurbished before 1985 or, in the case of asbestos cement, it was used until 1999. The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires village hall committees to:

- Take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in the village hall, and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in;
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- Make, and keep up-to-date, a record of the location and condition of the asbestos containing materials – or materials which are presumed to contain asbestos;
- Assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the materials identified;
- Prepare a plan that sets out in detail how the risks from these materials will be managed;
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action;
- Periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it so that the plan remains relevant and up-to-date; and
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them.

If any material containing asbestos is found and it is in good condition, it is usually safer to leave it in place and monitor it. If any work is to be carried out which is likely to disturb the material, the contractor must be informed. If the material is in a poor condition, it must be repaired, sealed, enclosed or removed. This should only be done by specialists.



The Health and Safety Executive publishes a checklist to Managing Asbestos in Premises which can be downloaded from www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos and a copy is enclosed.

Electrical safety

Hall committees are responsible for ensuring that all electrical equipment and fittings in the hall are safe. There is no legal requirement to have portable appliance testing carried out (PAT testing), but halls may consider this to be good practice. Many insurance companies require a certificated electrical safety inspection (EICR) to be carried out every 5 years.

The Health and Safety Executive produces a booklet on maintaining portable electrical equipment in offices and other low-risk environments, which gives common sense advice. You can download it from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf



Halls may also wish to make it a condition of hire that any electrical equipment brought into the hall can be shown to have been inspected or tested as appropriate.

Energy performance certificate

Large public buildings occupied by statutory bodies must have a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) which shows the energy efficiency of the building. There is no requirement for a village or community hall to have this certificate.

Legionella – assessing the risk

Legionella bacteria are common in natural water courses such as rivers and ponds. Since legionella are widespread in the environment, they may contaminate and grow in other water systems such as cooling towers and hot and cold water services. They survive low temperatures and thrive at temperatures between 20-45°C if the conditions are right, eg if a supply of nutrients is present such as rust, sludge, scale, algae and other bacteria. They are killed by temperatures above 60°C.



You need to find out if your water systems (including the equipment associated with the system such as pumps, heat exchangers, showers etc) are likely to create a risk.

Ask yourself the following:

- Are conditions present which will encourage bacteria to multiply? For example, is the water temperature between 20-45°C? Is hot water supplied from a tank?
- Is it possible that water droplets will be produced and, if so, could they be dispersed over a wide area?
- Is it likely that anyone particularly susceptible will come into contact with the contaminated water droplets?

If you decide that the risks are insignificant, your assessment is complete. You should record who the assessment was done by and when, and what the result was. You need take no further action other than to review the assessment periodically in case anything changes in your system.



If you think there is a possible risk, you should review a course of action by looking at the information on the Health & Safety Executive website at this link:

<https://hse.gov.uk/legionnaires>

6.4 Oil tanks

The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) cover the safe storage of heating oil.



All oil tanks at village halls must be bunded or have an impermeable secondary containment bund so that oil cannot leak into a water supply. Full information is available on the SEPA website. www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/water/pollution-control/oil-storage-in-scotland/

6.5 Policies

Complaints

It is good practice to have a statement on procedures for dealing with complaints. This means a hall committee can be sure they are dealing with such matters consistently.

Equal Opportunities

The purpose of an Equal Opportunities Policy is to ensure that all members of the community, who wish to do so, are able to participate in the activities that take place within the hall and to be involved in the management of the hall. As well as being good practice, many major funders will have the requirement for such a policy to be in place as a condition of funding. A policy should include:

- Statement of intent: this is a public statement that the organisation is opposed to discrimination in any form.
- Objectives: this sets out what you want to achieve eg to ensure that meetings, events and hall activities are open to all members of the community.
- Implementation: how will you do this? Eg by making the building accessible to those with disabilities, by giving everyone the opportunity to be involved in the management of the hall, by ensuring that hall events are well publicised and in a format accessible to all.
- Monitoring and review: Provision should be made for the policy to be reviewed at least annually to see whether you are meeting your objectives.

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on a service provider such as a village hall to make **reasonable adjustments** to enable it to provide a service to a person with a disability that is provided to non-disabled people.



This means providing access/adaptations not only for people using wheelchairs but also for people with hearing difficulties or sight problems. Full information is available on the website: www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Environment

Funders are increasingly asking for organisations to show that they are considering the effect on the environment in the running of their organisations. Scottish Borders Council requires halls to show that they have given consideration to this in the reporting back on the spending of the local authority grant. Points to consider when drawing up a policy are:

- energy consumption
- waste minimisation
- water usage
- recycling
- purchasing.

As with the equal opportunities policy, this could be divided into the four sections listed above.

Draft policies have not been included in this handbook as they will vary from hall to hall depending on the situation and the use made of the hall. However, examples can be provided in each of the area offices of The Bridge or BAVS.

Health and Safety

Your policy should include details of the risk assessments and other actions to be taken on a regular basis. A checklist for halls is on the Health & Safety Executive website:



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/assets/docs/village-hall.pdf>

Human Resources

If you employ staff directly rather than under a self-employed contract, you must have a number of policies in place covering their employment, grievance procedures, maternity pay, holiday pay etc.



Contact your local office of The Bridge or BAVS for model policies and help in adapting them to your needs.

Safeguarding – The PVG Scheme

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. It helps make sure people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults, can't do 'regulated work' with these vulnerable groups.

How the scheme works: When someone applies to join the PVG Scheme, Disclosure Scotland carries out criminal record checks and shares the results with individuals and organisations.

If your Hall is directly involved in the running of youth clubs or clubs for vulnerable adults, you should ensure that you have this policy and that you are registered for carrying out



disclosures. PVG checks for volunteers are free through Volunteer Scotland – contact them on 01786 849777, email disclosures@volunteerscotland.org.uk or see this website: <https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/contact-disclosure-services/>

If your Hall is hired by a group for activities involving children/young people or vulnerable adults, you should check that the group organising the activity has the appropriate policies and checks in place.