

## Preamble

This policy applies to all users of the hall, whether they be trustees, volunteers, contractors or hirers. Hirers in particular are expected to take note since, during their occupancy of the hall, it is likely that no trustees will be present. This means that they will have to assume responsibility for all aspects of fire safety for the duration(s) of their hire(s) themselves: in the terms used by the applicable legislation, they will have to appoint their own “Responsible Person(s)”. Even if they have used the hall before, hirers need to be aware that the situation has altered because of the new legislation coming into effect, and that they may have to change the way they manage their events.

## Version and modification history

This is version 1 of the policy, approved on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and subject to review annually or earlier if circumstances dictate.

## Policy

### 1. Overview

The trustees of Clapham-cum-Newby Village Hall recognize their responsibility for fire safety in and within the vicinity of the hall. They are aware of their obligations under relevant legislation (see below) and will do all in their power to ensure the safety of those using the hall. Accordingly, they are adopting the policy and procedures outlined here and have separated them out of the more general Health and Safety Policy to make them more apparent. Hirers must make themselves familiar with this policy and the procedures detailed herein – indeed it is a condition of hire that they do so. The trustees deem the topic to be of sufficient importance that they will include it as an agenda item for all committee meetings: reviewing progress and incidents, identifying challenges, and making changes as necessary.

### 2. Legislation

The government has introduced new legislation in recent years to improve fire safety in public buildings. For village halls, such as ours, implementation is beginning in 2025. Specifically, (and quoting gov.uk) *Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) makes a number of amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) to improve fire safety in all buildings regulated by the FSO. These improvements form Phase 3 of the Home Office’s fire safety reform program, building on Phase 1 (the Fire Safety Act 2021) and Phase 2 (The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022). Phase 3 further strengthens fire safety on all FSO regulated premises by (a) improving co-operation and coordination between Responsible Persons, (2) increasing requirements in relation to recording and sharing of fire safety information, thus creating a continual record through out a building’s lifespan, and (c) making it easier for enforcement authorities to take action against non-compliance.*

### **3. Fire Safety Logbook**

The committee will provide a Fire Safety Logbook which will be kept in the entrance lobby. Its purpose is to provide the “continuous record” required by the legislation. It must be used to document all fire safety related activities, including (but not limited to) fire safety equipment checks, fire alarm tests, fire safety inspections, fire drills, alarm activations (including any “false alarms”) etc. It must also be used to record hirer’s appointed Fire Safety Managers as and when they assume, and relinquish, their duties as “Responsible Persons”.

### **4. Responsible Persons**

The trustees have appointed Andy Scott, Bookings Secretary, and Rick Newton, Caretaker, to be the Responsible Persons to cover all times when the hall is not let out to hirers. Their duties are as outlined in Appendix 1.

When the hall is let out to hirers then they must appoint their own Fire Safety Manager. This individual will need to be named on the booking form and will become the Responsible Person when they arrive and sign-on in the Fire Safety Logbook at the start of the hire. They will remain in charge of fire safety until the end of the hire when they sign back out. During their time on duty, their responsibilities will be as detailed in Appendix 2.

Responsible Persons must be aware that the enforcement authorities (North Yorkshire Council and the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service) have the right to request an inspection of the building at any time. They must not impede any such request and must ensure that their party follows any instructions given.

The committee reserves the right to decline booking requests if it believes that the hirer is not paying proper heed to fire safety matters, or to summarily cancel a booking if it is discovered that fire safety measures are being ignored.

### **5. Risk Assessment**

The trustees have commissioned an independent fire risk assessment by a certified professional inspector. They will repeat these assessments every five years or if a material change to the property occurs in the interim. An abbreviated and annotated copy of the assessment is included as Appendix 3, but this is a working document as the committee will take continuous action to detect and mitigate any risks as and when they are identified.

A key finding of the assessment was that the most likely source of a fire would be the kitchen/supper room area (hot kitchen equipment, electrical supply fuseboard, proximity of boiler room). The rooms are thus to be considered as a “building within a building” and the doors between these rooms and the remainder of the building are to be fire doors (self-closing and fire-resistant, to impede the spread of any fire) as well as internal fire exit doors (used to evacuate the area). Accordingly, the doors must be kept closed when not in use and must not be impeded in any way.

## ***6. Fire Safety Equipment and Measures***

Several categories of fire safety equipment are deployed in the building.

- There is a fire alarm system, equipped with smoke detectors and manual “break-glass” actuators.
- There is emergency lighting for if the power fails or is interrupted as a result of an alarm activation.
- There are internal fire doors to the supper room/kitchen area (see above).
- There are three fire escape doors from the building to the outside – the main entrance door, the “push-bar” fire escape door from the main hall and the “push bar” fire escape from the toilets corridor.

In addition, there is a fire-blanket for the suppression of pan-fires in the kitchen, and there are fire extinguishers in each of the major rooms. However, the emphasis should be on evacuating the building rather than trying to extinguish fires – personal safety has to be prioritised over the prevention of damage to the building or its contents. In the fullness of time, the fire extinguishers may be removed. If you are not already very familiar with the operation of fire extinguishers, and the fire is very localised, then do not try and never put yourself at risk.

## ***7. Brought In Equipment and Materials***

All equipment brought into the building by, or on behalf of, the hirer is at their own risk but, nevertheless, in the furtherance of fire safety we do not allow portable heaters, anything containing solvents or inflammable liquids or anything which uses a naked flame. Only PAT-tested electrical devices can be brought in. All waste must be removed at the end of your hire and placed in the bins outside. Hazardous and combustible materials must not be left in the hall when you leave.

## ***8. Use of the kitchen***

Children are not allowed in the kitchen. All kitchen equipment must be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If the cooker hobs are being used, then they must not be left unattended. If the oven is being used, then it must be checked at regular intervals not to exceed 30 minutes. All appliances (except the refrigerator) must be turned off both at the appliance and at the wall switch (if provided) before you leave. If two groups are in the hall at the same time, and the kitchen is being shared, then both groups must liaise with one another to ensure that the above conditions are met.

## ***9. Portable Furniture***

The hall provides tables and chairs and, on request, movable staging which can be laid out as required by the hirer. However, in doing so, the hirer must be aware of any potential impacts on fire escape routes. At all times, bear in mind that any of the possible escape routes may become unusable because of smoke or fire so there must always be multiple ways out of the main hall, supper room or kitchen.

If the kitchen is in use, then nothing must block or impede the pathways to the doors to either the corridor or the supper room. If the supper room is in use, then nothing must block the doors to the entrance lobby or the main hall. If the main hall is in use, then there must be clear pathways, at least 1m wide: - (a) to the doors to the entrance lobby, (b) to the doors to the toilet corridor, and (c) to the fire escape to Cross Haw Lane. Nothing may be placed in front of these exits across their full width and to a distance of 1m. Nothing must block the main external entrance to the lobby on either side and nothing must block the fire escape door from the toilet corridor.

If chairs are laid out in theatre-fashion (ie in three or more rows, facing in the same direction) then chairs must be clipped together in blocks of three or four. You can use tie wraps if no clips are available, but you must supply your own and clear up any spent ones afterwards. There must be a wide gap across the middle of the hall between the lobby and fire escape doors, and a corridor at least 1m wide left clear along the full length of the room.

If your group includes people with limited mobility, or wheelchair users, then consider asking them to locate themselves closer to the fire exits in order to make evacuation easier.

Remember that there is a legal requirement that everyone is able to evacuate the building within 2 minutes.

## **10. Evacuation**

If the fire alarm sounds, or if your Fire Safety Manager alerts you to a fire, then you must immediately begin to evacuate the building. Do not collect coats or personal belongings unless you already have them at hand. Leave by the nearest clear fire exit door and make your way to the fire assembly point which is on the verge of Cross Haw Lane just to the south of the hall. Do not return to the building until you are told by your Fire Safety Manager that it is safe to do so.

## **11. Fire Safety Training**

The committee will provide fire safety training for trustees, volunteers and contractors and will offer it to Hirers and/or their appointed Fire Safety Managers. The training will talk them through the fire safety measures at the hall and the procedures that have been put in place to ensure personal safety.

At present, this training is offered on site and face-to-face but the committee is considering providing an online equivalent which may make it more accessible to hirers.

## ***Appendix 1***

### ***Duties of the Trustee-appointed Responsible Person***

- Acting as Responsible Person at all times when the hall is not hired out to a third-party.
- Ensuring someone else acts as temporary Responsible Person for any occasion when the hall is occupied by anyone other than a third-party hirer (eg for cleaning, for work by contractors, for hall-run events) if they are unable to attend themselves.
- Advising the trustees, committee and executive on fire safety matters.
- Maintaining the fire safety risk assessment and driving the process of mitigating identified risks.
- Performing the regular checks of the fire alarm system, fire doors, emergency lighting and fire escape doors.
- Maintaining fire safety signage.
- Arranging for the servicing of fire safety related equipment.
- Checking and maintaining the Fire Safety Logbook and bringing issues to the attention of the executive.
- Training volunteers, trustees and hirer's nominated Fire Safety Managers.
- Keeping records of who has been trained and when.
- Assist in inspections of the property by enforcement authorities and report back to the executive on any issues.

## Appendix 2

### *Duties of hirer-appointed Fire Safety Managers*

- On arrival, signing-in on the Fire Safety Log thus becoming “Responsible Person” for the duration of the hire.
- Consider having a Register of Attendees so that, in the event of an evacuation, everyone can be accounted for.
- Consider holding a fire-drill – either for real or as a paper exercise.
- Performing a quick check before the session starts: Exits clear, furniture sensibly laid out, chairs joined if appropriate, no naked lights, no untested electrical equipment, no portable heaters.
- At the start of the session: introducing themselves to attendees as Fire Safety Manager. Explain what to do if they detect a fire, explain what to do if the alarm sounds, show them where the fire exits are, tell them where to muster.
- If they detect a fire: break a glass to sound the alarm (remember, there may be another group, or others, in the hall so they will need to hear the alarm too).
- If they hear or have just triggered the alarm: initiate an evacuation, check everyone able to make an exit, check the rest of the building (toilets, kitchen etc), phone 999.
- Check your group at the assembly point – is everyone there?
- Wait for the fire brigade to attend and liaise with the fire officer when they arrive.
- Only advise your group to return to the building when told it is safe to do so.
- Advise one of the hall’s emergency contacts (see notice board) to let them know what has happened.
- At the end of the session, note anything significant that has happened in the Fire Safety Logbook and then sign-out.

Special considerations when there is more than one group in the hall at the same time:

- In this situation, there will be more than one “Responsible Person”.
- In the event of the alarm sounding, ensure you work together to get everyone out safely and accounted for.
- Consider sharing responsibilities: eg one of you clears the building, the other calls 999.

Special considerations for events where attendees come and go as they please (eg coffee mornings, drop-in sessions):

- There is no opportunity to do a start-of-session briefing so you will need to be constant and vigilant all the time and take control should the need arise.
- Announce yourself throughout the building if the alarm sounds.
- Consider wearing a hi-vis tabard to make it clear who you are.

Special considerations for repeated/regular hires:

- If you are booking multiple sessions at the same time, then you may not have a single individual who is able to be Fire Safety Manager throughout.
- In that case, the Hirer should name themselves as Fire Safety Manager on the Booking Form and appoint individuals as Responsible Persons for each hire.
- The appointed Responsible Person signs the Fire Safety Logbook, as above, taking on the role for that session as they do so.

## Appendix 3

### Risk Assessment

The following pages are an extract from the full fire safety risk assessment carried out by Ian Ridley on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Sections and Items not relevant to the hall have been removed (eg relating to employees, on-site staff and overnight use) and additional columns added to show what action has been taken to address the identified risk and whether that risk is now considered mitigated.

REF	ITEM	RESULT	ACTION	MITI-GATED?
<b>1</b>	<b>Fire Hazards and their Elimination or Control</b>			
<i>1.1</i>	<i>Electrical Source of Ignition</i>			
1.1.1	Reasonable measures taken to prevent fires of electrical origin	PASS		
1.1.2	Fixed installation periodically inspected and tested	PASS		
1.1.3	PAT testing carried out	PASS		
1.1.4	Suitable policy regarding personal electrical appliances	PASS		
1.1.5	Suitable limitation of trailing leads and adapters	PASS		
1.1.6	If portable equipment is brought in by hirers then it must be PAT tested	QUERY	Added to conditions of hire	YES
<i>1.2</i>	<i>Smoking</i>			
1.2.1	Reasonable measures taken to prevent fires as the result of smoking	PASS		
1.2.6	A No Smoking policy is in place throughout the premises with smoking allowed outside only	PASS		
<i>1.3</i>	<i>Arson</i>			
1.3.1	Does outside security against arson by outsiders appear reasonable?	PASS		
1.3.2	Is there an absence of unnecessary fire load in close proximity to the building?	PASS		
1.3.3	Is there a letterbox which could be used to introduce flammable materials?	FAIL	New external letterbox fitted	YES
<i>1.4</i>	<i>Portable Heaters</i>			
1.4.1	Is the use of portable heaters avoided as far as possible?	PASS		
1.4.2	Are more hazardous types used?	PASS		
1.4.3	Are suitable measures taken to minimise the hazard of ignition of combustible materials?	FAIL	Policy to be reinforced	Ongoing
1.4.4	Are fixed heating systems subject to regular maintenance?	PASS		
<i>1.5</i>	<i>Cooking</i>			
1.5.1	Reasonable measures taken to prevent fires as a result of cooking?	PASS		
1.5.2	Cooker filters changed and ductwork cleaned regularly	PASS		
1.5.3	Suitable extinguishing equipment provided	PASS		

REF	ITEM	RESULT	ACTION	MITI-GATED?
1.5.4	Age of equipment	FAIL	Microwave replaced	YES
1.6	<i>Lightning</i>			
1.6.1	Does the building have lightning protection?	QUERY	Not needed	YES
1.7	<i>Other significant Ignition Sources?</i>			
1.7.1	None found	PASS		
1.8	<i>Housekeeping</i>			
1.8.1	Is the standard of housekeeping adequate	FAIL	Curtains across fire escape route removed	YES
1.8.2	Combustible materials appear to be separated from ignition sources?	FAIL	Curtains replaced by blinds	YES
1.8.3	Avoidance of unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials or waste?	FAIL	Curtains replaced by blinds	YES
1.8.4	Avoidance of inappropriate storage of combustible materials	FAIL	Curtains replaced by blinds	YES
1.8.5	Appropriate storage of hazardous materials	PASS		
1.9	<i>Hazards introduced by Outside Building Contractors and Building Works</i>			
1.9.1	Is there satisfactory control over works carried out in the building by external contracts including "hot work" permits?	PASS		
1.9.2	Are fire safety conditions imposed on outside contractors?	PASS		
1.9.3	If there are in-house maintenance personnel, are suitable precautions taken during hot work, including use of hot work permits?	PASS		
1.10	<i>Dangerous Substances</i>			
1.10.1	If dangerous substances are, or could be, used has a risk assessment been carried out, as required by the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002?	PASS		
<b>2</b>	<b>Fire Precaution Measures</b>			
2.1	<i>Means of escape</i>			
2.1.1	Is it considered that the building is provided with reasonable means of escape in case of fire?	PASS		
2.2	<i>Measures to Limit Fire Spread and Development</i>			
2.2.1	Are measures in place generally?	PASS		
2.2.5	The door between the supper room and the corridor needs to be a fire door	FAIL	Door replaced with a fire door	YES
2.2.5	If combustible materials are stored in cupboards, then the doors to those areas would need to be fire doors	QUERY		
2.2.5	Fire doors must be regularly inspected to check proper function	QUERY	Door checks to be added to regular checks	YES
2.3	<i>Escape Lighting</i>			



REF	ITEM	RESULT	ACTION	MITI-GATED?
2.3.1	Is a reasonable standard of escape lighting provided	FAIL	Committee to check outside illumination at their next meeting which is held during a dark evening	
2.4	<i>Fire Safety Signs and Notices</i>			
2.4.1	Reasonable standard of fire safety signs and notices?	PASS		
2.4.2	Sufficient fire exit signs	FAIL	New signs acquired and will be installed shortly	Ongoing
2.4.3	Sufficient fire safety signage?	PASS		
2.4.4	Sufficient illumination of signage?	PASS		
2.5	<i>Means of Giving Warning</i>			
2.5.1	Reasonable manually operated fire alarm system provided?	PASS		
2.5.2	Automatic fire detection provided?	PASS		
2.5.3	Throughout the building?	FAIL	Additional smoke detectors fitted in boiler room and kitchen area attic	YES
2.5.4	Extent of automatic detection generally appropriate to occupancy and risk?	PASS		
2.6	<i>Fire Fighting Equipment</i>			
2.6.6	Is sufficient equipment provided?	PASS	The committee is minded to promote evacuation as preferable to trying to fight fires and is considering removing fire-fighting equipment other than the fire blankets in the kitchen	Ongoing
<b>3</b>	<b>Management of Fire Safety</b>			
3.1	<i>Procedure and Arrangements</i>			
3.1.1	Fire Safety is managed by the trustees	PASS		
3.1.2	Is a competent person available to assist them?	PASS		
3.1.3	Is there a suitable record of fire safety arrangements	FAIL	Fire Safety Logbook to be introduced	Ongoing
3.1.4	Is a specific fire safety policy on place?	FAIL	New policy approved and to	YES

REF	ITEM	RESULT	ACTION	MITI-GATED?
			be implemented from 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2025	
3.1.15	Are a sufficient number of trustees trained to assist in fire evacuation, including evacuation of the disabled?	FAIL	A training scheme is to be introduced	Ongoing
3.1.17	Are there routine inspections of fire safety precautions?	FAIL	A caretaker has been appointed and these checks are part of their duties	YES
3.2	<i>Training and Drills</i>			
3.2.17	Hirers to be required to nominate a Responsible Person and training to be offered to these as well as to trustees	FAIL	Procedure being changed	Ongoing
3.3	<i>Testing and Maintenance</i>			
3.3.1	Is the building adequately maintained?	PASS		
3.3.2	Is the alarm tested weekly, and records kept?	FAIL	A caretaker has been appointed and these checks are part of their duties	YES
3.3.3	Is the emergency lighting tested monthly, and records kept?	FAIL	“	“
3.3.8	Are fire escape routes and exit doors checked routinely and records kept?	FAIL	“	“
3.3.10	Is fire safety training delivered, and records kept?	FAIL	“	“