

## **Introduction**

Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall comprises a main hall (Hickmott), a smaller meeting room, a kitchen, toilets and car park. It is for use by local groups for regular hiring, one-off events such as parties and fundraising events by the management committee. The hall is managed by a committee, comprising volunteers and elected trustees. Its physical upkeep is maintained by self-employed contractors appointed by committee members as need arises. There are no other hall staff and so the hall is unmanned in between bookings, apart from when self-employed contractors (including the cleaner) are on site. Hirers for public events/activities are therefore required to have carried out their own risk assessments and, where appropriate, have their own safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

This safeguarding document is for all trustees, other volunteers and hirers of the hall. It is reviewed annually and a hard copy is contained within the key documents file held in the kitchen at the hall.

The appointed safeguarding representative for the hall is: Heidi Foggon.

## **Safeguarding position**

Most activities and events that take place at the hall are organised and run by members of the public. However, the committee may organise and run fundraising activities throughout the year. Both types of activities may include children and/or vulnerable adults, whether known or unknown. The management committee therefore recognises that all trustees, volunteers and hirers have a duty to safeguard vulnerable users of the hall, and its premises, and those who may come into contact with vulnerable users. They should respond to any concerns they may have regarding the physical, sexual, emotional or psychological safety, or concerns relating to discriminatory or financial violation or exploitation, of a vulnerable person in relation to hall use. This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith.

## **1. Purpose**

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect**

This policy defines how Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall operates to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

We have a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises including children, young people and adults at risk involved as visitors and/or as participants in all activities and events. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees and volunteers.

## **2. Definitions**

### **Children and young people**

Children and young people are defined as those persons aged under 18 years old. This policy will apply to all contractors and volunteers and will be used to support their work. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### **Adult at risk of abuse or neglect**

For the purposes of this policy, vulnerable adult refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to Section 42 of the Care Act 2014:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- because of their care and support needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk.

### **Persons affected by this policy**

- All trustees and volunteers.
- All those attending any activity or service that is being delivered from the village hall.
- All visitors and contractors.

### **3. Policy Principles**

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. People who are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age, or illness.

Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall charity has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall charity recognises that under the Care Act 2014, it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It also recognises its responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004. Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall charity is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

Brabourne and Smeeth Village Hall Committee is committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount,
- All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse,
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part, and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

#### **4. Procedures**

A. All members of the committee will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities, undertake training where appropriate on safeguarding issues including whistleblowing where it is available and offered by their local safeguarding board/partnership or other local support organisation and ensure that they understand the principles set out in this policy at 3 above.

B. All members of the committee will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.

C. All members of the committee, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted.

D. The hall committee will follow safe recruitment practices.

E. A member of the committee will be appointed to be responsible for child and adult at risk safeguarding matters. This person will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the relevant safeguarding agency.

F. The named person is Heidi Foggon.

G. All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or adult at risk will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. The appointed person will know who to contact and where to go for support and advice in relation to an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children or adults at risk who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or adult at risk; or
- Behaved towards a child (or children) or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk.

H. The hall committee will require all hirers who wish to use the hall for activities which include children and adults at risk, other than for hire for private parties arranged for

invited friends and family, to either produce a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) when requested to do so or, confirm that they have understood and will adhere to the hall's principles and procedures with regard to safeguarding.

I. The village hall management committee will carry out an annual review of this policy.

### **Policy Statement**

Any organised clubs, events or regulated activities, run by either volunteers, or committee members, involving vulnerable persons, will not be permitted to take place without first considering the safeguarding implications and making the appropriate provision (e.g., risk assessments, policy changes, introductory training, safe recruitment procedures).

1. Organisers of activities knowingly involving children and/or vulnerable adults are advised to carry out safer recruitment processes when it comes to volunteers or staff. Safeguarding training and/or DBS checks should be considered and carried out if deemed appropriate.
3. The Management Committee will keep the premises safe for use by children and vulnerable adults. The Committee recognises that a higher standard of safety is required where small children, those who cannot read safety notices and physically disabled adults, use the hall. Users of the hall organising activities for these groups will be made aware of areas of concern in this regard when being shown the hall and will be expected to risk assess for these and mitigate accordingly.
4. Hirers must be aware of their obligations under the Licensing Act 2003 to ensure that alcohol is not sold to those under the age of 18. Furthermore, no children may be admitted to films, productions or events when they are below the age classification for the film, production or event. No gambling or entertainment of an adult or sexual nature shall be permitted on the premises.
7. Hirers of public events and activities will need to declare the relevant body in their own safeguarding policies and detail their own referral procedures. Members of the committee will report any such incidents to the safeguarding representative who will then make the necessary referrals.
8. Advice on how to handle disclosures from a child or vulnerable adult can be found at the end of this document.
9. All Trustees, hall employees, volunteers and hirers are to be made aware of this policy. Should anyone require further information or guidance, this will be obtained from either Kent ACRE or other relevant body.

### **Procedures**

1. A copy of this policy will be contained within the file of key documents held in the kitchen at the hall. It is also available to prospective and actual hirers on the hall booking website. New Trustees and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this policy on appointment.
2. Organisations/groups hiring the hall for activities specifically for children will be asked to submit their Child Protection/Safeguarding policy and procedure to the bookings manager for approval by the safeguarding representative before the first booking commences. Organisations hiring the hall for activities specifically involving vulnerable adults will be asked to submit their Vulnerable Adults Protection/Safeguarding policy and procedures to the bookings manager for approval by the safeguarding representative before the first booking commences.
3. The Committee will require hirers to report any damage, breakages or safety issues needing attention to the booking manager, who will inform the appropriate people. These will be dealt with as soon as practicable, in the light of the circumstances, with provision to prevent access by children and vulnerable adults pending repair where appropriate.
4. Contractors engaged to carry out work at the premises must not be allowed unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. All contractual work will be arranged outside of times when the hall will be being used by children or vulnerable adults. If this is unavoidable (e.g. in the case of an emergency repair) the hirer will be made aware and if necessary, should provide additional necessary supervision (for example, during trips to the toilets).
5. When one part of the hall is being used by an organisation/group/hirer involving vulnerable persons, no other part of the hall premises (e.g. Committee Room) will separately be available for hire at the same time.
6. Anyone undertaking a risk assessment on behalf of the management committee must take this policy and implications into account.

Version 1 adopted by the Committee: June 2026

Date for Next Review: June 2027

### **Advice on how to handle disclosures from a child or vulnerable adult:**

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child/vulnerable adult as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the person they are right to tell you.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.

- Do tell the person what you are doing and when and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done. Do seek medical attention if necessary.
- Do inform parents/carers/family members unless there is suspicion of their involvement.
- Don't make promises you can't keep (for example you won't tell anyone else).
- Don't interrogate the person – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the person has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the person feel responsible for the abuse.
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your nominated child protection person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.