

Health and Safety Policy

Part 1 – General Statement of Policy

This document is the Health and Safety Policy of **Rowlands Castle Parish Hall**.

Our policy is to:

- a) Provide healthy and safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for our contractors, employee(s), volunteers, and users
- b) Keep the village hall and equipment in a safe condition for all users
- c) Provide such training and information as is necessary to contractors, staff, volunteers and users.

It is the intention of the Parish Hall Management Committee (PHMC) to comply with all health and safety legislation and to act positively where it can reasonably do so to prevent injury, ill health or any danger arising from its activities and operations.

The PHMC considers the promotion of the health and safety people at work and those who use its premises, including contractors who may work there, to be of great importance. The PHMC recognise that the effective prevention of accidents depends as much on a committed attitude of mind to safety as on the operation and maintenance of equipment and safe systems of work. To this end, it will seek to encourage contractors, employees, volunteers and users to engage in the establishment and observance of safe working practices.

Contractors, employees, volunteers and users will be expected to recognise that there is a duty on them to comply with the practices set out by the PHMC, with all safety requirements set out in the hiring agreement and with safety notices on the premises and to accept responsibility to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves or others.

For the purpose of this policy, users will include: volunteers, contractors, employees and hirers. NB Currently there are no employees of Rowlands Castle Parish Hall.

POLICY APPROVED BY THE ROWLANDS CASTLE PARISH HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE on:

Reviewed: 31 March 2025

Date for next review: September 2025

Part 2: Organisation of Health and Safety

The PHMC has overall responsibility for health and safety at Rowlands Castle Parish Hall. The 'competent persons' delegated by the Management Committee to have day to day responsibility for the implementation of this policy are the Facilities Officer (FO) and the Administrative Officer (AO).

It is the duty of all users to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their activities and to co-operate with the PHMC in keeping the premises safe and healthy, including the grounds.

Should anyone using the hall come across a fault, damage or other situation which might cause injury and cannot be rectified immediately they should inform the AO/FO as soon as possible so that the problem can be dealt with. If relevant, warning signs should be placed up.

Where equipment is damaged a notice should be placed on it warning that it is not to be used and inform the relevant person.

An HSE Poster is displayed on the notice board in the main hall. A plan of the hall can be viewed in the main lobby, showing the location of fire exits, fire extinguishers, electricity distribution panel, stop cock, boiler and other useful information relating to the building.

Part 3: Health and Safety Procedures

Insurances

Building, Employer and Public Liability Insurance to the sum of £10 million is held. The Insurance Certificate is displayed in the entrance hall. Where contractors are used to carry out work, they must have their own Public Liability Insurance. Evidence of this insurance should be obtained where appropriate.

The AO can ask for evidence of appropriate insurance from hirers where such activities may require it e.g. bouncy castle companies, Brownie residentials.

Gas

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations, 1998 state "It shall be the duty of every employer or self-employed person to ensure that any gas appliance, installation pipework or flue installed at any place of work under his control is maintained in a safe condition so as to prevent risk of injury to any person" The PHMC shall ensure that the boiler is serviced and a Gas Safety Certificate is issued annually. Posters are displayed advising who to call in a gas emergency and the boiler cupboard is kept locked-a key is made available to nursery staff. If any gas-related/general building work that may affect gas appliances is undertaken, contractors must demonstrate that they will conduct appropriate safety checks on completion to ensure the system is safe and compliant with regulations

Electrical

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) to be carried out annually on all electrical equipment within the premises. It is the responsibility of users to report any faults promptly to the AO/FO. Users should not use any equipment with obvious damage and should not overload power sockets. Users to be made aware of the location of the fuse box and how to safely turn off the electricity.

Electrical consumer units are set at height or contained in a locked cabinet to ensure children cannot gain access.

The Health and Safety Executive states: *Electrical installations should be tested often enough that there is little chance of deterioration leading to danger. Any part of an installation that has become obviously defective between tests should be de-energised until the fault can be fixed. You should have your electrical installation inspected and tested by a person who has the competence to do so*¹

The PHMC will ensure that the electrical installation of the Hall is carried out once every 5 years. It is next due in February 2029.

Any equipment brought in by users should be in good, working order and PAT tested annually. The AO will inform hirers when the PAT-testing company is visiting and hirers can bring in their electrical equipment to be tested at their own cost.

Fire Safety

The PHMC will appoint a 'Competent person' to ensure comprehensive fire safety procedures are in place and reviewed annually – this will be the Facilities Officer. In June 2022 a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) was carried out, by an independent, qualified company. Fire risk assessments will be reviewed annually and where any material changes are made to the building or operations. The next FRA will be carried out again in 2025.

The evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the building. All groups are responsible for their members being aware of fire exits and how to evacuate safely.

Fire exits are to be clearly signed and kept clear of obstructions. Lines painted outside denote where cars must not park. Corridors should be clear of items and equipment. Fire doors are to be kept closed and never left propped open. No fire door should be locked. Storage rooms should be kept neat and tidy and not allow items to pile up. A fire blanket is provided in the main kitchen. The alley leading from the garden to the front of the building to remain clear of obstructions.

The curtains should be treated with flame retardant chemicals and be advised by the contractor on the frequency. The stage should be kept clear and tidy, particularly in front of the fire doors at the back.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises, including the garden and signs are displayed throughout.

The fire alarm system and equipment are serviced twice a year. All emergency lighting will be checked monthly and fire alarms tested weekly by the Administrative Officer (AO)

The on-site day nursery is responsible for carrying out a fire risk assessment and must share this annually with the AO. They should have an emergency evacuation plan and ensure there are sufficient, trained staff to conduct a safe and efficient evacuation. There should be an induction programme for new staff and regular drills (at a minimum of quarterly) which are recorded and shared with the AO.

Following advice from the FRA assessor, overnight stays are now prohibited

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq.htm>

Premises maintenance

The FO will carry out regular checks of the building to look for any risks or defects. The FO will carry out an annual review of the premises and raise with the PHMC any repairs/alterations/renewals that are needed.

The stage scaffolding and lighting will have monthly visual checks.

Slips, trips and falls

Mats are placed by each entrance to reduce the amount of dirt and water that is brought into the building. All corridors and doors should be kept clear of items and equipment. Rooms should be kept in good tidy order, with no trailing wires or piles of items that could topple over.

Any spills should be cleared up promptly and 'wet floor' signs used as appropriate. Users should be informed where equipment is to mop up spillages/excess water.

Access to the stage in the large hall should be supervised when children are present. No children should be present when the cupboards under the stage are being accessed, due to the risk of a fall into the void behind the stage. All cupboards under the front of the stage are fitted with locks and must remain closed at all times after use.

Users should take care when using the steps up to the stage and use the handrail on the wall. White tape placed on the edge of steps to aid users. Visual checks to be carried out regularly to ensure lighting rig and scaffold is secure.

The basement in the small hall is no longer to be used for storage and should not be accessed except for essential maintenance

Working at height

Users are aware a stepladder is provided when needed – chairs should never be used to stand on. Users should not step on the top step/platform of the stepladder. Any task that requires working at height should be undertaken by an appropriate contractor.

Hazardous substances

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. You can prevent or reduce workers exposure to hazardous substances by assessing the hazards, putting controls in place and providing information to employees. See separate COSHH policy. Any cupboards in the kitchen that contain chemicals are fitted with a child lock.

There are two carbon monoxide alarms in the boiler room. The batteries will be tested by the AO monthly, replaced every 6 months and the alarms replaced every 5-7 years. Advice sought from fire safety company about a wired alarm option.

Safeguarding children

A comprehensive system of magnetic locks fitted to doors will ensure that only specific staff can access the nursery/large hall during operating hours. The FO/AO will both have access but will always alert a member of staff, if they have a need to enter. Where contractors need to enter the nursery, they will be escorted by the FO/AO, or supervised by nursery staff as previously arranged. The FO and AO roles are both subject to a basic DBS check. See separate Protocol for Securing the Nursery and Safeguarding policy

Vehicles

Cars parking in the forecourt of the premises, and/or dropping off, pose a risk to pedestrians and users of the Hall. Users should always be encouraged to park in the designated on-road areas or in the Recreation Ground carpark nearby. Users should not drop off/pick up by parking on the double yellow lines. The only exception to this is volunteer drivers dropping off for the RVS lunch club and/or individuals with a Blue Badge. Parking in front of the three fire exits in the forecourt is strictly forbidden.

Children on the forecourt should be supervised by parents or nursery staff at all times.

Manual handling

Trolleys are provided for the safe transportation of chairs and tables. Signs are displayed in the storage areas showing safe usage instructions and maximum loads.

Accidents

Whilst the PHMC is not legally obligated to have an accident book, recording accidents can be a valuable tool in the management of health and safety at the Hall. Users should be encouraged to fill out a report in the accident book which will be kept in the lobby. The individual completing the form should either hand it directly to the AO/FO or use an envelope provided and leave in the letterbox. This form will be stored, according to GDPR, in the locked office. When raising appropriate information about accidents with the PHMC, personal data will be anonymised, where it has been requested or felt to not be relevant to the reporting. Each accident should be investigated by the FO/AO, and any information that is different from the report, should be added. The accident reports and completed books should be stored for 3 years.

Users should be encouraged to highlight any incidents/near misses to highlight any safety concerns.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

RIDDOR states that deaths and injuries that arise from accidents at work, must be recorded and reported via the Health and Safety Executive online form. *A RIDDOR report is required only when: the accident is work-related; and it results in an injury of a type which is reportable (as listed under 'Types of reportable injuries')*.

When deciding if the accident that led to the death or injury is work-related, the key issues to consider are whether the accident was related to: the way the work was organised, carried out or supervised; any machinery, plant, substances or equipment used for work; and the condition of the site or premises where the accident happened.²

² <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg453.pdf>

Guidance on what to report and how can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>

Cuts/burns/injuries from use of the kitchen

No unsupervised children to be in either kitchen. Users are made aware that any equipment provided on site must be used responsibly and written instructions followed. Sharp knives are kept locked away.

First Aid

A First Aid box is provided in each kitchen and contents are checked quarterly – sooner if an accident report shows it has been used. Signs on the door show where it is located.

There is a defibrillator on the front wall of the building – training is offered to staff in its use.

Health and hygiene

Given that the Parish Hall does not operate as a food business, there is no obligation to register with Environmental Health. Any users who do operate as a food business, should register with East Hants Environmental Health – these are currently the Montessori nursery and the RVS lunch club. The PHMC is committed to providing clean, hygienic and suitably equipped catering facilities. These measures include:

- Ensuring the kitchens are regularly cleaned by our professional cleaner
- Ensuring the floors are in a good condition, non-slip and easily cleaned
- Providing a handwash basin
- Providing closable waste bins that are emptied regularly
- Providing fridges with thermometers
- Undertaking a deep clean annually
- Taking pest control measures

Premises Licence

The Parish Hall has a Premises Licence which covers a range of permitted activities including the sale by receipt of alcohol. The Licence Holder is the Parish Hall Management Committee. The PHMC must demonstrate how it promotes the four statutory Licencing objectives:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm

See Premises Licence Policy for more detail.

Emergency situation

The Administrative Officer's number is made available to users for cases of emergency. Emergency contacts for gas, water etc are displayed in the main lobby.

Use of the garden

As the garden backs on to a golf course, there have been occasions when golf balls have landed in the garden. To mitigate the risk of injury, netting has been installed covering the whole garden with supporting metal posts throughout the grassed area. The posts have been fitted with padding to reduce injury in the event of a collision. The protective covers will be checked regularly to ensure they are effective. The netting is the responsibility of Rowlands Castle Golf Course who should carry out any repairs/alterations and ensure it is clear of leaves. A formal agreement is in place.

Leaves that fall into the garden are cleared throughout the winter and disposed of to help the grass remain in a good condition.

The area covered in paving slabs should be kept tidy and checked regularly to identify any loose slabs.

There is external lighting along the back of the building and down the side of the kitchen, illuminating the alleyway. Hirers to be informed of the position of the switches to aid visibility in the garden.

Asbestos

Asbestos policy to follow

Legionella

Legionella policy to follow

Lone Working

Lone Working policy to follow

Additional

In order to ensure that Health and Safety remains the highest priority of the PHMC, a 'competent person' will be appointed. This person will ensure that the Health and Safety policy is properly embedded within the procedures of the Hall and kept up to date – this is currently the FO.

The office will contain a Health and Safety file with all relevant risk assessments, policies and information. It will be the responsibility of the AO to ensure this is kept up to date. There will be a checklist for Hirers which will include health and safety advice.

This policy will be made available to all users with relevant additional policies shared where appropriate e.g. the Premises Licence when a hirer is planning to sell alcohol. All relevant Health and Safety policies will be uploaded to the Hall's Online Booking system.

The PHMC will have Health and Safety as a regular agenda item to monitor the progress of actions arising from risk assessments and ensure any issues are dealt with promptly.

This policy should be reviewed bi-annually.