

Staffordshire Village Halls Advisory Service



Village Halls Newsletter



EDITOR'S THOUGHTS

Following a number of recent enquiries, it has become apparent that there is a basic lack of understanding amongst many committee members of their roles and responsibilities. Many do not realise that they are actually charity trustees and I find it quite alarming that often they have not even seen a copy of their charity's governing document, let alone understand it.

Whether you have been elected, appointed by a local group or have been co-opted on to the committee you are all charity trustees and are jointly and equally responsible for the general control, management and administration of the charity. Every year, each committee member upon election or appointment, should sign a declaration to say that they are not disqualified from being a trustee and they understand and accept their roles and responsibilities. So it is important to know what those responsibilities are.

Where can you find this information? The ACRE VHIS 17 on Trustees Roles and Responsibilities and the Charity Commission's publication, "The Essential Trustee" are essential reading. As charity trustees you must ensure that you always act for the good of the charity and its beneficiaries and that in so doing you comply with the terms of the governing document and any legislation. So you need to familiarise yourself with your charity's governing document. It might be a Trust Deed, Conveyance, Indenture, Scheme, etc, but basically it is the document that sets out the objects of the charity and how it should be managed. Every committee member should have a copy of this document and it should be referred to before making any major decisions as it may include restrictive covenants or set out procedures that need to be followed in certain situations.

As charity trustees you will need to ensure that you keep up to date with any legislation that is relevant to your charity. A good way of doing this is by making sure you are receiving this newsletter and that it is circulated to all committee members as it often features items about changes in legislation that may effect your charity, such as the Pensions Auto-Enrolment Scheme.

Your committee should also consider undertaking the Hallmark quality standards scheme, which looks at whether your charity is being administered properly and in accordance with your trust deed and whether it is complying with legislation and has appropriate policies and procedures in place.

Don't forget, I am here to help, so If you have concerns about running your hall, are unsure about your responsibilities or are interested in participating in Hallmark, please contact me on 01785 242525 Ext 206.

Cathy Russell
Village Halls Adviser

AUGUST 2016

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The Queens Award for Voluntary Service 2017

Voluntary Service Nominations are invited for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award for local volunteer groups across the UK. Created to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 the Award is the equivalent of an MBE for volunteer groups. Any group undertaking voluntary work who provide a social, economic or environmental service to the local community can be nominated for the Award. Each group is assessed on the benefit it brings, and the standing it has within the local community. Nominations can be made online until midnight on 16 September at:

www.gov.uk/queens-award-for-voluntary-service

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NEW VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY HALLS NETWORK

You will be aware that the National Village Hall Forum agreed at their AGM in January to disband. In order to fill the gap left by the forum, ACRE has set up an online reference group with support from Norris & Fisher (Insurance Brokers) Ltd.

The Village and Community Halls Network provides an opportunity for members to air their views and consolidate them in the development of policies in support of village halls and similar rural community buildings.

Members consist of volunteers managing these buildings, county-based village hall associations, representatives of organisations with an interest in village halls such as NALC, and others who appreciate the role of village hall and community halls in the provision of facilities for the delivery of services across rural England.

Village and Community Halls Network Members:

- Contribute to discussions on issues affecting village and community halls by email and through telephone and video conferencing.
- Bring issues to the attention of their MPs and local policy makers, such as local authorities.
- Act as local contacts for the Press to explain issues and provide case studies to demonstrate issues.
- Occasionally attend meetings with Government Ministers and Departments.
- Proactively engage with ACRE and other members of the Village and Community Halls network by providing information that can support policy development.

Reasons why you should join:

- To share good practice with other like-minded members.
- To gain an early insight and knowledge on how new/changing legislation might impact on halls generally.
- To protect village and community halls by contributing to the development of appropriate legislation and regulation.
- An opportunity to meet with like-minded people whether face-to-face or electronically.

If you wish to join, visit: www.acre.org.uk/our-work/village-halls-network

Free Legal Advice and Support for Not-for-Profit Organisations

Small not for profit organisations are able to access free legal advice from The LawWorks Not-For-Profits Programme. The LawWorks are able to provide one off legal advice by matching up organisations with a volunteer lawyer that can advise on subjects including:

- Property
- Contracts
- Tax
- Insurance
- Insolvency
- Data protection
- Defamation
- Company Law
- Intellectual property

For more information: <https://www.lawworks.org.uk/legal-advice-not-profits/free-legal-assistance>



The Hallmaster online bookings system is:

- Internet based, with NO software to download or updates to apply
- Can easily integrate with existing websites
- Reduces workload
- Allows for multiple users to have access to the hall bookings
- Automated emails for confirmations and messages
- Additional Invoicing & payment tracking module converts bookings into invoices
- Support via telephone and email
- Annual price covers unlimited bookings and upgrades

A 90 day free trial is available, but when you sign up for a full Annual Licence, if your hall is a member of the Village Halls Advisory Service, you will receive a £10 discount .

For more information visit: www.hallmaster.co.uk.

CONSULTATION -

Views sought on charity sector sustainability

The Select Committee on Charities has been set up to consider issues related to sustaining the charity sector, and the challenges of charity governance, and is now calling for written submissions from interested parties. All interested individuals and organisations are invited to submit written evidence to the inquiry by 5 September 2016.

The focus of the Committee's inquiry will include:

- the main pressures currently faced by charities, and the impact these pressures have
- the skills required to lead and manage a charity
- the role trustees should play in the performance and effectiveness of a charity
- the role of national and local Government with the charitable sector
- the role of the Charity Commission
- charities' accountability to their beneficiaries, their donors, and the general public
- the effective delivery of services
- the current challenges to the financial sustainability of charities
- innovation, particularly in the digital arena.

Written evidence must be received by 5 September 2016. The Committee's reporting deadline is 31 March 2017.

For further information visit: www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/charities-committee/news-parliament-2015/call-for-evidence/

PENSION AUTO-ENROLMENT

Do you employ anyone in your community building? Did you know that the law on workplace pensions has changed? You will have to assess all your staff for eligibility but you may not have to automatically enrol them for a pension. The Pensions Regulator's online 'duties checker' will ask you some simple questions to help work out which legal duties apply to you. You will need to know your PAYE reference and letter code and the age and earnings of anyone you employ. The link below tells you how to check your duties:

www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers/duties-checker.aspx

If anyone who works for you is aged between 22 and up to state pension age and earns more than £833 per month (£192 per week), you are an employer who has to provide a pension scheme. However, even if you don't, you still have certain duties and must complete a declaration of compliance.

Further information is also set out in the Pensions Regulator's Essential Guide to Automatic Enrolment available here:

www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/docs/the-essential-guide-for-automatic-enrolment.pdf

ACRE'S RURAL COMMUNITY BUILDINGS LOAN FUND

A number of village hall committees have unexpectedly paid off their loans or repaid part in a lump sum so ACRE currently has funds available to loan out. Loans can be made for capital works to rural community buildings projects where the facility provides community space for everyone. The fund is useful for bridging too. The loan, together with interest, can be repaid within either five or eight years, but there is some flexibility and the average loan taken out is for around £15,000. See the ACRE webpage: www.acre.org.uk/our-work/rural-community-buildings-loan-fund

FUNDING

The Ecology Building Society Charitable Foundation

The Foundation aims to support projects that enhance the built environment for community benefit. This year, the Foundation intends to provide grants of up to £5,000 for projects which will focus on providing a sustainable building that will bring lasting benefits to the environment and community. The grant could be used to make energy efficiency improvements to an existing building, such as a community hall or it could be used to construct a sustainable building, such as a cabin or classroom, which would be used to educate the community on energy saving and/or sustainability.

For further information visit: <https://www.ecology.co.uk/about/charitablefoundation/>

One Stop's "Carriers for Causes"

One Stop's "Carriers for Causes" is funded through the money raised from the 5p bag charge in One Stop stores. Carriers for Causes grants are available for good causes within two miles of a One Stop shop. Grants of up to £1000 will be available to support projects that 'benefit local communities helping to improve lives and local places'. The types of projects funded will be very broad and will cover the direct costs needed to deliver the project.

For further information visit: <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Pages/Category/carriers-for-causes-uk>

PAT SERVICE



Portable Appliance Testing Charges:

Within 5 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£55
5-10 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£65
10-15 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£75
15-20 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£85

And so on

Additional items (above 20) will be charged at:

Members - £1.50 per item

Non-members - £2.50 per item

If you would like to arrange for your portable electrical equipment to be tested, please call Cathy on:

01785 242525 Ext 206.

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