

# Whessoe Parish Council

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## WHESSOE PARISH HALL FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

Version	Date of review	Reviewed	Approved	Comments
v1.0	4/4/17	S Robinson	WPC at Annual Parish Meeting 22.5.17	
v1.1	24/2/19	S Goldfinch		Redrafted for Hall Management Committee
V2.0		Whessoe Parish Council	Approved at WPC meeting 18/3/19	Final version
V2.1	14/5/20	B Goldfinch		Revised plan and amendments made
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V4.0		WPC	WPC meeting 24/5/21	Approved
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V5.0		WPC	WPC meeting 22/5/23	Approved

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## 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PREMISES

The hall was purpose built in 1989 of brick with a tile roof. It is to be found on the edge of Darlington on the A167, 300yds north of the White Horse Hotel. It is heated by gas central heating.

The Hall is owned and managed by Whessoe Parish Council which consists of seven Parish Councillors.

The facilities comprise the main hall, meeting room and kitchen, an entrance lobby, two unisex toilets and a disabled toilet with baby changing facilities. The Hall is available to hire for both private and public events. The main hall has a capacity for 60 persons. The meeting room has a capacity for 15 persons. The total surface area of the building is 140 square metres.

There is a car park to the side of the building with space for 15 cars. There are three emergency exits leading directly out of the building from the main hall through the entrance lobby, in the kitchen and the meeting room.

A plan of the building is given in **Appendix A**.

## 2. PRINCIPAL USES OF THE PARISH HALL

The hall is currently used on a regular basis to hold classes in embroidery, dancing, tai chi, karate, Pilates and computer coding for children. It is also used for meetings, public consultations, children's parties, and as a polling station.

The Hall is not licensed for the sale of alcohol but has its own music licence.

The Parish Council encourages all users of the Hall to carry out their own Fire Risk Assessment, highlighting the areas that pertain to their own group of users and their activities.

The Parish Council encourages hirers to make themselves aware of the exit routes, the firefighting equipment and the plan of the Hall detailing the location of the equipment and the escape routes.

Exit routes are marked on the plan of the building in **Appendix A** and the emergency fire plan is given in **Appendix B** to this risk assessment. Both are available to all Hall users; they are published on the web site and also on the notice boards of the main Hall.

## 3. FIRE RISKS

3.1 Electricity which includes all lighting and power (including fuse boxes, junction boxes, lighting fittings and equipment), kitchen appliances (microwave, cooker, fridge and dishwasher), extractors and filters, portable appliances (including heaters), entertainment equipment (including that utilised by hirers of the hall) and hand dryers.

3.2 Gas boiler and pipe work.

3.3 Hot surfaces and obstruction of ventilation equipment (kitchen).

3.4 Smoking.

3.5 Accidental fires.

3.6 Arson, and lesser mischief, e.g., horseplay.

#### **4. PEOPLE AT RISK OF FIRE**

**Parish Councillors, Parish Clerk, Borough Councillors and members of the public:** Parish Council meetings are held in the meeting room once every two months. Councillors and the Clerk attend meetings of the Parish Council and work on their own occasionally and when trades people are working in the hall. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Parish Councillors, the Clerk and regular hall users hold keys to the building.

**Contractors:** The Parish Council employ contractors on both an ad-hoc and scheduled basis for the purposes of safety checks and building maintenance. Councillors or the Clerk to the Parish Council will open the hall for contractors and will stay with them and lock and secure the building when they have completed their work.

**Hall Users (maximum of 60 in the main hall and maximum 15 in the meeting room):** All hirers are made aware of the layout of the Hall and the location of firefighting equipment and fire exits by Councillors or the Parish Clerk. The Hall has two easily identified fire exits through the entrance hall and through the kitchen and the meeting room has one easily identified fire exit.

Two fire exits at the entrance to the main Hall and the kitchen have lights over them. The Hall will be kept unlocked whenever in use.

**Disabled Persons:** It is the responsibility of Hall hirers to ensure disabled persons are given adequate assistance in the event of an evacuation.

**Children:** It is the responsibility of hirers to ensure all children within the Hall are supervised and that they are given adequate assistance in the event of an evacuation. Hall user groups are expected to have carried out their own Fire Risk Assessment.

#### **5. AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM SYSTEM**

Whessoe Parish Hall does not have an automatic fire alarm system fitted.

#### **6. EMERGENCY LIGHTING**

Emergency lighting has been installed in the hall in the following places:

6.1 In the main Hall above the entrance door to the lobby.

6.2 In the main Hall above the entrance door to the kitchen.

6.3 In the kitchen above the fire exit door to the path.

In the event of a power failure the emergency lighting will remain on and will guide Hall users towards the fire exits out of the building.

In the event of a power failure and the failure of the emergency lighting a torch is provided and readily available in the kitchen.

The emergency lighting is checked on a bi-monthly basis by a designated Parish Councillor and a record kept of the tests.

## **7. ESCAPE ROUTES**

The plan in **Appendix A** gives the designated fire escape routes. These are located at the front entrance (marked 1 on the plan), from the main Hall and through the kitchen to the exit door (marked 2 on the plan). A further escape route is available to any persons in the meeting room through the exit door (marked 3 on the plan).

**All exits lead onto the paths at the side of the building to the car park which is the designated fire assembly point. The fire assembly point is marked by a sign at the entrance to the car park from the A167.**

## **8. INTERNAL FIRE DOORS**

There are no internal automatic fire doors in the hall.

## **9. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

See **Appendix A** for locations of extinguishers (marked E1, E2, and E3).

E1. Main Hall: 1 x Foam Extinguisher located at the entrance to the main hall from the entrance hall.

E2. Kitchen: 1 x Powder Extinguisher (Blue) located adjacent to the kitchen fire exit and boiler.

E3. Kitchen: 1 x Foam Extinguisher located adjacent to the kitchen fire exit and the boiler.

Foam extinguishers are suitable for small fires involving combustible material, e.g., paper, cloth, wood and liquid fires (other than free-flowing liquid fires).

**THEY ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, DEEP FAT FRYERS OR CHIP PANS.**

Powder extinguisher (Blue) is suitable for fires involving all electrical equipment.

All fire extinguishers within the premises are subject to an annual inspection by the supplying company and the Certificate of Inspection is retained in Whessoe Parish Council records in a clearly marked file in the Committee Room.

## 10. FIRST AID

As part of the emergency plan, a suitably stocked first aid kit is maintained and available for general use. **This is sited in the kitchen area and clearly marked.** A nominated Councillor and Clerk to the Parish Council are responsible for ensuring that it is kept stocked. Included within the box are sterile adhesive dressings for use in the food preparation area. In the event of burns or scalds, sterile dressings can be used **but no lotions or creams.**

## 11. SIGNS AND NOTICES

11.1 All designated fire exits are clearly signed and illuminated in accordance with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996. All designated escape routes leading to a fire exit are clearly signed.

11.2 'Action to take in the event of fire'. These are sited in the main hall, meeting room and kitchen. See **Appendix B.**

## 12. FIRE PREVENTION

### 12.1 Electricity

All electrical installations and equipment are maintained and protected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and such maintenance and repair as required are carried out by a competent person and records maintained.

All 13-amp socket outlets are protected by residual current devices (Trip rating 30mA). These form part of the maintenance of the electrical installation. A fixed wiring test is carried out by a competent and registered company every five years and a copy of the report is kept on the Parish Council's files.

Portable electrical appliances are tested and inspected annually by the Parish Council's electrical contractor.

**It is the responsibility of hirers of the hall who use their own electrical equipment at the hall to ensure compliance as to testing and maintenance of such equipment. This forms part of the contract of the hire of the hall.**

### 12.2 Hot surfaces and obstruction of ventilation equipment

This forms part of good working practice within the kitchen area. Regular users of the kitchen are made aware of fire risks and suitable notices are displayed in the kitchen area for hirers of the hall.

### 12.3 Smoking

There is a strict '**No Smoking**' policy for the whole of the premises endorsed by suitable notices.

#### 12.4 Gas boiler

The boiler is located adjacent to the fire exit door in the kitchen. And is inspected annually as part of the gas safety inspection.

#### 12.5 Accidental fires

Strict control of all waste accumulated during events at the hall must be maintained and disposed of at the conclusion of the event.

**Candles must not be used in the hall, e.g., for decorative purposes on tables.**

Flammable materials are not stored on the premises.

#### 12.6 Arson

Hirers are responsible for controlling behaviour on the premises.

The Parish Council has strict control of hall key allocation.

All persons having control of any activity at the Hall are responsible for securing the premises at its conclusion and to ensure that no person is left on the premises. This check also includes the need to cover all likely sources of ignition prior to closure such as electrical equipment, waste containers, etc.

Particular attention should be paid to the kitchen area.

### 13. FIRE ACTION

13.1 In the event of fire the person in charge of the Hall or function at the time will immediately instruct all persons to leave the building using the nearest available exit and assemble at the designated assembly point in **WHESSOE PARISH HALL CAR PARK at the entrance to the car park from the A167 away from the building**. The designated assembly point is clearly signed. The entrance to the car park and the route from the car park to the Hall must be kept clear for access by emergency services (e.g., the fire service).

Although there is the possibility of a false alarm, the initial action is evacuation of the building. If the location of a fire is immediately detected and is obviously manageable, e.g., a small fire in a waste bin, it may be possible to extinguish it **BUT WHERE ANY DOUBT EXISTS EVACUATION MUST REMAIN THE PRIORITY.**

13.2 **CALL THE FIRE SERVICE.** The Hall does not have a telephone installed so a mobile phone must be used. If no member of the party has a mobile the alternative is to ask to use the telephone at a house close to the Parish Hall.

13.3 Once the Hall has been evacuated, no-one should be permitted to re-enter **unless it has been deemed to be safe to do so by the Fire Service.**

13.4 Access for the Fire Service should be maintained. Any obstructions at the entrance must be removed. Cars must be parked in the designated bays in the car park, and they must not be parked in such a way that obstructs the Fire Service appliance in the car park.

13.5 On arrival of the Fire Service, the nominated person in charge should report to the Officer in Charge that all persons have been evacuated or their last known location.

13.6 Fire extinguishers located within the Hall should only be used after calling the fire brigade and:

- a. the fire appears obviously to be easily manageable.
- b. it is safe to do so without risk to health.

**Hall users must not attempt to use the fire extinguishers if they do not feel confident to do so.**

#### **14. SHORT TERM HIRING – RESPONSIBILITIES**

**It is crucial that the temporary responsible person understands their legal duties and responsibilities as part of the hiring agreement for the Hall for the duration of the event or function.**

**A ‘temporary responsible person’ includes a person nominated by the hirer to oversee the safety of all persons attending the Hall during the period of hire. That person must familiarise themselves with the ‘Fire Emergency Plan for the Temporary Responsible Person’ (See Appendix B).**

**It is imperative that this Fire Risk Assessment together with appendices are read and understood prior to any such event.**

#### **15. INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

All Parish Councillors will be given a copy of this Fire Risk Assessment document and it will be signed and dated by the Chairman, all Parish Councillors and Clerk.

All Parish Councillors should be aware of:

- a. Location of firefighting equipment, i.e., fire extinguishers, and their specific uses.
- b. Fire prevention measures.
- c. Fire action procedures including evacuation, calling the Fire Service, maintaining access for fire appliances, briefing on arrival and location of assembly point.



**16. REVIEW**

This Risk Assessment to be reviewed annually or earlier when alterations to the premises or change of use, etc., require.

**We have read this risk assessment and the appendices and agree to follow the procedures which are given in this document.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ **Chair of the Parish Council**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Vice Chair of the Parish**

**Council**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Councillor**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Councillor**

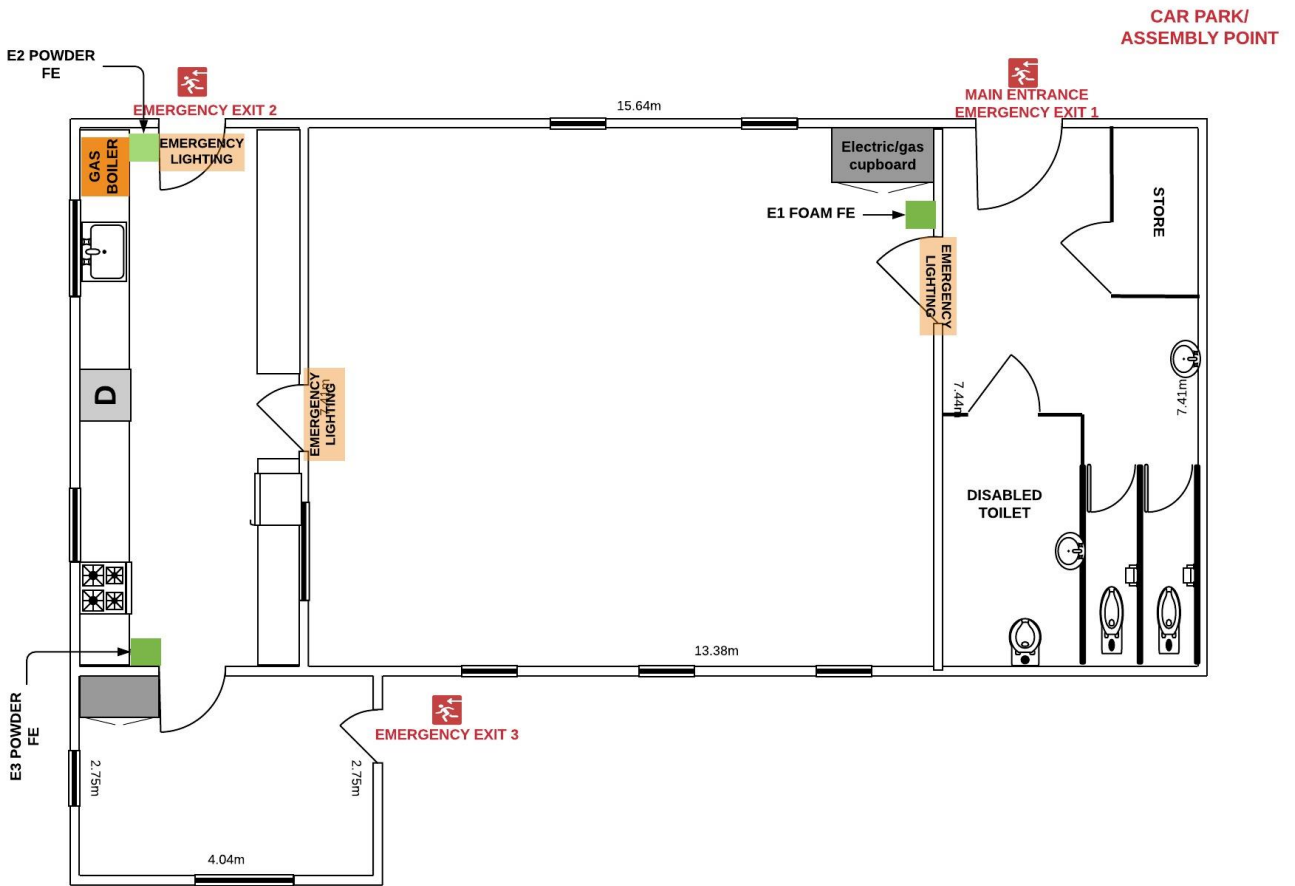
\_\_\_\_\_ **Councillor**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Councillor**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Councillor**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Clerk to the Parish Council**

# APPENDIX A – WHESOE PARISH HALL PLAN



## **Emergency Plan – Fire**

### **Short term hiring – Responsibilities of Temporary Responsible Person**

As the temporary responsible person for the event/function, you have **legal duties** with regard to the safety of those persons assisting or attending the event.

**It should be noted that any portable electrical appliance brought into the hall as part of the event or function should be tested and certified (PAT testing).**

#### **Before the event or function, you should be aware of:**

1. What fire protection systems are present.
2. Identification of escape routes and exits.
3. Checking that all escape routes are clear of obstruction and any combustible materials.
4. The location of firefighting equipment and their specific use.
5. How a fire will be detected.
6. What helpers should do if they discover a fire.
7. How the evacuation of the hall should be carried out.
8. Arrangements for calling the Fire and Rescue Services
9. Where people should assemble after evacuation and procedures for checking that evacuation has taken place.
10. Arrangements for fighting the fire (if safe to do so).
11. Procedures for meeting the rescue services on arrival and ensuring easy access.

#### **At the start of the event or function, you should notify all those present about:**

1. The 'No Smoking' policy.
2. The emergency plan in the event of fire, the means of activating the fire alarm call points and their location.
3. Location of exits and escape routes.
4. Location of assembly point - **the far end of the car park at the entrance from the A167.**
5. The location of fire extinguishers.
6. Care for those with special needs.

#### **During the event or function, you should ensure that:**

1. Escape routes and exits do not become blocked.
2. The 'No Smoking' policy is enforced.
3. No naked flames are present, e.g., candles, combustible material.
4. The hall or committee room does not become over-crowded - **Hall maximum of 60 persons and Meeting Room maximum of 20 persons.**

#### **At the end of the event or function, you should ensure that:**

1. There are no apparent sources of ignition.
2. All electrical apparatus is switched off and any hot surfaces are allowed to cool before leaving.
3. All portable appliances, e.g., heaters, sound equipment, etc. are turned off and disconnected.
4. All accumulated rubbish is removed from the hall and taken away for your disposal.
5. If keys have been supplied by the Parish Council to regular users, all lights are extinguished, and doors/grilles properly secured to prevent unlawful entry. For all other events or functions these duties will be carried out by the Chairman, Clerk or a nominated person from the Parish Council.