

Hallmark One, Two and Three Renewal.

Date of visit: 8th July 2019

Visitors: Sarah Blackburn and Eileen Zoers

On following the directional sign from the main road you turn into the site of Mark Village Hall with a good sized car park with dedicated parking spaces for people with a disability, together with a children's play park, skateboard area, basketball court, playing field and the recently installed, adult training equipment. You cannot but be impressed and the whole site is tidy and welcoming.

We were not disappointed on entering the hall, the inside is very clean bright and tidy, as were all the other rooms.

We were met by five members of the committee: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chairman and Booking Secretary.

Hallmark One.

The Community Association was founded in 1970 and since 1979 the land and building have been owned by Sedgemoor District Council and leased back on a 99 year lease. In 2010 the most recent Community Association constitution was adopted. There are five managing Trustee Officers and additionally six Affiliated Group members and six individual managing trustees. New members are provided with a pack that contains relevant information and a copy of the constitution. Meetings are held every 5-6 weeks with an excellent attendance of 60% of the committee. The minutes of the meetings are well written and each page is signed and dated by the Chairman.

Only groups from Mark are invited to provide a representative to the committee. Those from outside of Mark, that use the hall can, become Associate members.

Officers of the committee are voted into office at the AGM as is required in the Community Association constitution.

It was noted that

- the list of names addresses and phone numbers committee members does not include data of appointment/resignation from the committee. This information can be very helpful when updating data for the Charity Commission
- the Charity Commission online information requires a list of all the Trustees, not just a list of the Officers, which is currently the entry for Mark Village Hall. This should be corrected as soon as possible.

It was suggested that the Trustees' Annual Report be included with the annual accounts to give a more complete picture of the charity's year. The accounts are Independently Examined and signed in good time before the AGM. Cheques are signed by two out the four approved signatories

Concern was expressed that the receivables process for collecting hiring fees has a lack of segregation of duties. The Booking Secretary takes the bookings, raises the invoices, and receives money where it is not paid by BACS. She also records the transaction in the paper cash book. This process provides less than optimal

financial control because an error can only be detected after the event rather than prevented by the way the process is designed. The annual review by the treasurer and the Independent Examiner are too late to prevent errors.

A better process would be that the Booking Secretary takes bookings, quoting agreed prices. She could also raise the invoices, copying in the treasurer. The Treasurer receives payments (checks for BACS received) and writes up the “cash book”. Deposits are invoiced and booking is not confirmed until payment received.

A hiring agreement is used for all bookings. Occasional hires get the key from the Booking Secretary. All regulars have keys including a fob for the alarm. There is a tidy and organised booking diary and bookings are also shown on line.

Insurance requirements are met and other providers consulted at renewal. The employers liability insurance certificate is current and displayed. The Health and Safety poster and No smoking signs are on view.

Hallmark Two

We have noted the written policy and procedures for hall hirings. See comment above re collection of hire fee for occasional hire.

The hiring agreement is used for all hirings: it contains reference to the hirers’ responsibility with regard to children and vulnerable users.

The committee members present believe their cleaner is self employed therefore there is no contract of employment. The visitors advised them to check the status of the cleaner on the HMRC site <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-employment-status-for-tax>.

General Data Protection Regulations. Due to an oversight this aspect was not available on the day of our visit. However the committee took immediate action and have forwarded to the visitors a copy of their GDPR policy.

A comprehensive Risk Assessment document has been produced which collects together almost all of the items required in Hallmark 2/3 and is checked fortnightly by 2 committee members in rotation of 6 persons, a good idea as it brings fresh eyes to the role. No recent completed ones were to hand; the visitors have since received scanned copies. Maintenance checks are covered in the task list.

The First Aid Kit is well-stocked and it is checked as part of the Risk Assessment check. An Accident record is available that meets the required standard: it has not been used as yet.

The Fire Risk Assessment is checked with other risk assessment items including fire extinguishers, fire doors, instruction in case of fire, running man signs, emergency lighting etc. There is a plan of the premises on view.

There is an inventory, however, it has not been checked recently. It is suggested this should be an annual job. It was advised that it would be useful to price replacement costs say every 3-5 years (and fixtures and fittings) to ensure insurance is adequate. This can be done relatively easily by pricing items on line. The recent break in would perhaps have highlighted this need.

Items from chairs and tables to cleaning aids and supplies were stored tidily and safely. Short Mat Bowling equipment is stored in the hall, the youth theatre has a storage container outside, otherwise little else is stored by user groups at the hall.

The kitchen, bar area and toilets are well kept and maintained to a good sound and clean condition.

Steps have been taken to improve energy efficiency the roof has been insulated with a false ceiling lighting has been changed to LEDs the heating is electric and an annual switch carried out.

The committee have a Premises Licence and have the summary on display. They do not have an alcohol licence. TENs are used and a record is kept of the number used.

A PRS and PPL licence are held by the committee.

Hallmark Three

All rooms can be accessed (with the exception of the stage) by wheel-chair users. There are also good baby changing facilities and room for buggies to be left in the entrance area.

There is regular communication with users and user groups via email and at regularly held meetings: information on events etc. is put in the Parish magazine and on the website. Two of the Trustees are also Parish Councillors. Approved minutes of meetings are available on the website.

Two recent new users of the hall are ballroom dancers and Scottish Terrier Dogs group.

Consideration is given to offering new clubs or organisations discounted rates to help them get established. There are periods of time during the day when the hall is not in use. There is an internet connection at the hall which could encourage a different group of users who require such a facility. May be the struggle to attract young people could be met if this facility was made better known, perhaps a homework club?

We understand that 'Truspeed' is being installed in the village, fibre cabling with electricity and the hall will get free connection forever!

They have good working relations with the Parish Council, school, church, pubs and shop in the village.

An induction pack is provided to new committee members and generally the majority of committee members take an active part in management of the hall.

Social/ fundraising events are held three to four times during the year. With the cushion of the legacy, it does help to take the pressure off fundraising. They recently held an Abba concert with dancing and are considering another, this time with a Queen tribute group.

The visitors felt that the Financial Policy needed some attention to include recording funding from grants as restricted fund, as too should funds raised at a fundraising event where the event states that is the purpose of the event. It is also possible to designate a certain amount for a specific purpose such as the roof or reserves in the event there is the loss of a regular user group and its hire fees. Restricted funds can only be used for the reason they were awarded or raised while you can un-designate funds should they be needed for something more vital. It does demonstrate to possible funders why you have such funds in your accounts and is therefore good financial planning.

There is a maintenance programme in place fed by information from the comprehensive regular Risk Assessment checks. The committee are also aware that in the foreseeable future they will have to replace hall roof.



The community of the village of Mark are very lucky to have such a fully developed site situated so conveniently including external facilities which are free to the community to use (amazing kids playground, Games court, skateboard park, football pitch, and recently erected adult gym equipment.

Subject to the following items we recommend the renewal of Hallmarks 1, 2 and 3:

- the list of names addresses and phone numbers committee members does not include data of appointment/resignation from the committee. This information can be very helpful when updating data for the Charity Commission
- the Charity Commission online information requires a list of all the Trustees, not just a list of the Officers. This should be corrected as soon as possible.

Both areas above where addressed and completed 12/09/19.

Congratulations to the committee on the success of managing your hall to such a good standard and renewing all three Hallmark standards.

Eileen Zoers and Sarah Blackburn

Visitors 8/7/2019

Please note that this report is based on information provided by members of the Hall committee present at the time of the visit. It is the responsibility of the Hall committee to report any inaccuracies or misrepresentations within the report to the Community Council for Somerset for correction or amendment.