

Felton Village Hall Hiring Policy

Purpose of the Policy

This policy enables the Trustees to pursue their aim of providing and maintaining a village hall for the use of inhabitants of Felton and the Neighbourhood without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation.

It ensures that the hall maintains a reputation for fair-dealing with all hirers, prospective hirers and lessees, and that, by maximising its use, charges are kept as low as possible.

Legal Requirements

Premises Licence

Legislative Reform (Supervision of alcohol sales in village halls) Order 2009.

Performing Rights Society / Phonographic Performance Licensing

Motion Picture Licensing

NCC Small Lotteries Licence

Alcohol Licence

Responsibility for Implementing the Policy

The Bookings Officer has responsibility for implementing the policy

People affected by the Policy

The Bookings Officer, Regular Users and other hirers and prospective hirers
Trustees

Monitoring and Review

The Bookings Officer is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy supported by the Officer with responsibility for Policies

In order to monitor the policy, the Bookings Officer will:

- report back to the Committee on any Regular Users' bookings which have been renegotiated
- report back to the Committee any complaints about the hiring process and action taken
- any issues the Bookings Officer has encountered administering the policy

The review will be presented to the Trustees as a report containing data on:

- average occupancy of the hall over a 4 week period (excluding holiday times)
- number and nature of one-off bookings and income earned from them
- Regular User and one-off hirer satisfaction with the bookings process and a summary of:
- any recurring issues

And any recommendations for changes to the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually. The next review is due in April 2023

This policy was adopted on May 24 2021

Signed

Eileen Cameron

Chair

This Policy covers two types of relationship:

1. There are two organisations which rent a room each for their long term exclusive use. Annual lease agreements are negotiated with them.
2. A variety of organisations and individuals hire space at the Hall by the hour or day. Some are Regular Users, others are one-off hirers.

Leasing

1. Two rooms attached to the Hall are available for leasing. At present both have long term lessees.
2. In the event of either room becoming available, the Trustees will discuss how best to use the space in pursuance of the stated aims of the Felton Village Hall.
3. If a room is offered for leasing, the Trustees will seek two references to ensure that the room will be used for appropriate purposes in line with the aims of Felton Village Hall and that costs will be paid. The Trustees may waive this requirement if the potential leasee is well known to at least two Trustees who will vouch for them.
4. The Leasing Agreements set out arrangements in detail.

Remainder of the Policy

The rest of this policy relates to all those hiring space by the hour or day.

1. The Hall is available for hire every day of the year.
2. The Hall is available for hire by anyone aged 18 or over who conforms to our Hiring Agreement and Conditions of Hire for any legal event of any kind.
3. Hiring Agreements and Conditions of Hire (Standard and Special) set out arrangements in detail.

Hire Charges

4. There are 6 categories of hirer / activity: Regular Users, charity fundraising, Training and other activities promoted by the Trustees, elections, commercial sales and hirers who come into none of these categories. For each of these there is a different rate. Details are set out in the Hiring Agreement.
5. Hire charges are lowest for charity fundraising run by volunteers. The next lowest rate is for Regular Users, reflecting their special relationship with the Hall and for training and other activities promoted by the Trustees.
6. Hire charges are reviewed annually at the end of the Hall's financial year and are adjusted if necessary in order to ensure that there is sufficient income to maintain the Hall at the appropriate standard.
7. The Trustees aim to maximise revenue from hiring by keeping occupancy rates high so hire charges can be kept low. The Trustees will publicise times when there is capacity for

one-off or sequences of bookings, using the Hall's noticeboards, Hallmaster and The Bridge.

8. Regular Users are granted 15 minutes before and after the booking time free of charge for setting up and clearing away. All other users must book and pay for such time. Regular Users must pay for any time needed in excess of 15 minutes at each end.

9. There is a buffer of at least 30 minutes between the end of one Regular User booking and the start of the next in either of the spaces. Regular Users must be clear of the Hall 15 minutes after the end of their session if another is following. The Trustees expect that interaction between abutting hirers will be considerate and courteous. Any issues should be reported to the Bookings Officer.

10. The Bookings Officer issues invoices for all hire charges. One-off hirers must have paid all that is owed before their event including the deposit. Regular Users' payments are due within 14 days of issue of the invoice.

11. The invoice number must be quoted when paying, whatever the method.

12. The Trustees reserve the right to ask any hirer to cover the cost of any damage caused by the hirer's negligence. Part or all of the deposit, if made, will be retained for this purpose, and an additional payment may be required to cover the gap between the deposit and the Hall's insurance excess of £250. Hirers are provided with a Hall Handbook and End of Session Checklist to help them use and store all equipment appropriately.

Booking

13. The Bookings Officer keeps the calendar on the Hallmaster site up to date, showing dates and times that are available. Regular Users should, wherever possible, put their provisional bookings onto the calendar via Hallmaster, and must follow these up with the Bookings Officer. Other hirers contact the Bookings Officer.

14. All hirers with the exception of the Pantomime Society may book up to one year in advance. In order to have a good chance of being able to book on their preferred date, One-off hirers are advised to start the process no less than 5 months ahead.

15. Friday and Saturday evenings are not available for bookings on a regular basis. They can be booked by any group or individual one a one-off or occasional basis, and should allow increased use of the Hall for community, social events.

16. The Felton and Thirston Pantomime has its annual run of performances in early February each year. The dates and times in that week when the Hall will not be available are publicised no later than January of the year before so all prospective hirers are informed in advance of requesting dates.

17. If there is a conflict of dates, bookings that benefit the community will have preference over commercial bookings.

18. The Bookings Officer maintains a list of Regular Users' usual booking patterns so possible clashes can be anticipated before they are confirmed. Regular Users are asked to avoid making bookings for the period set aside for Pantomime Society final rehearsals and performances. If they are confident that their activity can run safely in the reduced space and that none of the Pantomime Society's equipment will be touched they should discuss

the practicality of the booking with the Bookings Officer.

19. If a one-off booking is sought with more than 4 months' notice for a time usually taken by a Regular User, the Bookings Officer will first attempt to help the one-off hirer find an alternative time. If this is not possible, the Bookings Officer will contact the Regular User to ask them to find another time or cancel. Such a request will never be made with less than 4 months' notice. Regular User Groups meeting monthly will not have their pattern disrupted more than once in a calendar year. Those meeting weekly will not be disrupted more than twice in a calendar year. In recognition of the inconvenience, Regular Users will not be charged for the changed booking.

20. The Bookings Officer may contact groups to discuss slightly changing start and finish times to enable other bookings or optimise change-over times.

Cancelling and Altering Bookings

21. Cancellation is not charged for if the Trustees have to cancel a booking for any reason other than the hirer not complying with the Conditions of Hire.

22. If the booking is cancelled by a one-off hirer any deposit is refunded. If the cancellation is in sufficient time for the Trustees to find another booking any fees already paid will be refunded. If it is not, any refund will be at the discretion of the Trustees.

23. The Trustees ask for a deposit in advance of a one-off booking. This will be returned once the Hall has been checked and found to have been left in accordance with the Conditions of Hire.

24. The Trustees understand that Regular Users may from time to time need to cancel one of their bookings. The Hallmaster system does not allow the person making the booking to cancel it. As soon as the Regular User knows they need to cancel they must contact the Bookings Officer who is able to remove the booking from Hallmaster. Failure to do this will result in an invoice being raised by the system.

25. The Trustees will not normally charge Regular Users for cancelled bookings as long as the Bookings Officer is given reasonable notice. If, however, a Regular User frequently cancels, especially at short notice, contact will be made to discuss the situation and a there may be a charge.

26. A Regular User may need to alter one of their bookings, bringing their booking slot forward or extending it. In such circumstances, they should immediately book the additional time on Hallmaster and alert the Bookings Officer.

27. If a shorter time is required, the Regular User is not able to make the change on Hallmaster. They must inform the Bookings Officer as soon as the decision is made. These changes cannot be made on the day or retrospectively, and they will be charged for the time booked.

28. Invoices are raised by the Hallmaster system. It is the responsibility of all Regular Users to check that the information on the system is correct. If a Regular User has failed to do this and thinks an invoice is incorrect, they must raise the matter with the Bookings Officer and Treasurer within 7 days of the invoice being issued, explaining why they think it is wrong and allowing for resolution and payment within 14 days of the original invoice. If a Regular User frequently challenges the accuracy of invoices, the Trustees will contact

them to discuss how to improve the situation.

Hiring

29. Together with the Hiring Agreement, hirers receive:

- Standard Conditions of Hire which they must agree to comply with
- Special Conditions of Hire and relevant Risk Assessments if applicable
- Hall Handbook, on line or paper
- End of Session Checklist

30. The attention of all hirers is drawn to the policies on the website, especially the Health and Safety policy, Fair Treatment and Safeguarding policies.

31. Hirers who have not used the Hall before are invited for an induction visit with a Trustee.

32. Regular Users must complete a new Hiring Agreement before the AGM each year, even if their meeting pattern is remaining the same or they do not yet have all their dates.

33. All licensing and insurance arrangements are set out in the Hiring Agreement and Standard Conditions of Hire.

The Activity

34. Access to the Hall is by keys kept in a key box. The code is changed monthly. Regular Users are told the new code each time. One-off users may be given the code or a Trustee may open and lock the hall for them at times agreed at least a week before their booking.

35. The Hall must always be left as set out in the Conditions of Hire and the End of Session Checklist. A Trustee will check that all is in order at the end of a one-off hirer's session.

36. All breakages and damage must be reported both by writing in the book in the main lobby and by emailing the Bookings Officer. Failure to do this could result in future booking requests being declined.

37. Everyone must have left the premises by 12 midnight. If groups wish for an extension they must request this at the time of booking. The trustees may decline this or set special conditions.

38. The Trustees reserve the right to make a brief visit to any event to ensure that all conditions are being met.

39. The hirer or the Trustee making the check must complete the signing in sheet. There is one in each lobby.

40. All hirers are invited to provide feedback, formal or informal, negative or positive, verbally or in writing. There are forms in each lobby and on the website and any Trustee can be contacted.

Hiring of Tables and Chairs

41. The Trustees will consider requests to hire tables and / or chairs for events elsewhere. This will only be possible if furniture is not needed for activities booked into the Hall.

Requests should be made to the Booking Officer.

35. Hire rates:

£50 deposit

£2 per table

£1 per chair

42. The full hire cost together with the deposit must be paid in advance of the furniture being collected.

43. The hirer must arrange with the Bookings Officer or Trustee nominated by the Bookings Officer when the furniture will be collected and returned, keeping the period of hire as brief as possible. The hirer must stick to the times arranged, since this requires a Trustee being at the Hall.

44. The hirer is advised to check the furniture before removing it from the Hall

45. The deposit will be returned once all the furniture has been returned, checked and found to be clean and undamaged. If there are any issues, the full cost of repair must be met by the hirer, even if this exceeds the deposit.