

Providing services in village halls

This Information Sheet provides guidance on the practical considerations for village hall management committees where the community needs a venue from which to operate services outside the traditional role of the village hall.



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Introduction

Village halls and similar rural community buildings are an ideal venue from which to provide activities for the whole community. Many have a multi-purpose role serving as a centre for arts, sports and social activity and, in some cases, providing education, health or retail services. These activities contribute to the financial sustainability and viability of the hall as well as benefiting the community.

90% of rural halls are charities, run by volunteer trustees, whose objects are the provision of community space. The volunteers (village hall management committee) are legally responsible for the financial management of the hall; its condition and maintenance, as well as the day-to-day operation, ensuring that all necessary policies and procedures are in place. The provision of activities and services in the hall is often instigated, encouraged and supported by the hall committee in conjunction with other community organisations and the parish council.

ACRE works with a number of Government departments and national organisations to raise the profile of halls and volunteers managing them and to demonstrate the value of the activities and services that are provided. More information about this work can be found on the ACRE website or by contacting your local ACRE member.

This Information Sheet provides guidance on the practical considerations for village hall management committees where the community wants to provide services that are traditionally outside the usual remit of a charitable hall, such as post offices and shops, conference facilities, weddings, libraries and the provision of IT resource centres. The basics of the legal implications are contained in section 2.



1. The role of the parish council

Local councils can be expected to provide encouragement, support and practical help for service provision that will benefit the local community, as their key role is to represent and meet the needs of local people.

The parish council may have been involved in a Village Appraisal or Community Led Plan that identified the need for a particular service. If so, they could take on a liaison role between groups in the community, the local authority, as well as other voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations.

Section 19 of the 1976 Local Government Act enables a parish council to give unlimited financial assistance for work on village halls or in support of their running costs. Other legislation allows parish councils to support the provision of post offices. See **Section 8**.

For further information see **ACRE's Information Sheet 2, Parish council help for village halls**.

2. Legal implications

Under its charitable objects, a rural hall provides recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare (Recreational Charities Act 1958 now part of the Charities Act 2011). The hall charity provides space for community groups whose activities are wide ranging, though not necessarily charitable, and improves the conditions of life for those living in the hall's area of benefit. Non-recreational (or commercial) activity such as training courses, IT centres, clinics and post offices require careful consideration before they are provided in the hall.

The Charity Commission are keen to ensure that charities are able to adapt and modernise but also that hall management committees are aware of any financial risks, and that the provision of a service does not interfere with the running of the hall for public benefit. They are most likely to want to be

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assured that, where part of the hall will be used on a semi-permanent basis, the space is surplus to requirements; the hall has the power to let and that, if a purpose built extension or refurbishment is provided, a long-term view is taken.

- 21 Where space is to be let, ACRE recommends the use of an Occupational Licence, which will avoid any security of tenure under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954. A Lease from a village hall management committee to a shop, children's nursery, doctor's surgery or other commercial activity needs to comply with Section 36 of the Charities Act 1993. The village hall management committee should ensure that they are paid a commercial rent by the organisation running the activity or service.
- 22 Where the village hall management committee decide to deliver a non-recreational service or activity which is not the primary purpose of their charity it, may be possible to change the objects of the charity. A shop or post office will be considered as trading, which is not a charitable activity; neither is running a bar/sale of alcohol which can only ever be an ancillary activity. The provision of IT facilities could be charitable if the facility is an educational resource or perhaps training and support is to be provided for unemployed people. Before making changes, the village hall management committee should consult the Charity Commission and/or their local ACRE Network member for guidance.
- 23 Where a charity carries out small levels of non-primary purpose trading, i.e. the trading is ancillary to the activity of the charity and not prohibited by the hall's governing document, this is acceptable. The committee should be aware of the Charity Tax Trading Exemption which says that the turnover of the trading activity should be no greater than either £8,000 or the lesser of £80,000 or 25% of the charity's total gross income. If regular trading takes place and exceeds the limits it may be worth considering setting up a trading arm and covenanting all the profits back to the charity.

Contact your local ACRE Network member for a model Occupational Licence and/or Deed of Covenant.

3. Insurance and security

It is important to inform the hall's insurance company of a new service operating from the hall, although it will be the responsibility of the organisation managing the service to carry out appropriate risk assessments, insure their equipment and indemnify the village hall management committee against any risks that may arise.

Security of the hall is an important consideration. Where a post office is located in the hall, Post Office Limited will always evaluate potential premises and will specify appropriate security items. In some cases, permanent alterations to the village hall may have to be made, such as fitting of a strong lockable door, to serve as an internal barrier; or the placing of bars over a vulnerable window or perhaps a separate external exit may also be required. However, in most cases only a secure storage cupboard would be needed. Organisations offering child care services or services for other vulnerable people may have security requirements in connection with access to the premises. In rooms where IT equipment is provided security will again need to be considered.

It is important to inform the hall's insurance company of a new service operating from the hall

4. Hire charges and hiring policy

Where surplus space is let on a permanent basis under an Occupational Licence or Lease then an annual market rent will have been agreed for the space.

For more occasional hiring such as weddings, use for conference facilities and perhaps hiring for commercial sales, the hire charge will need to be considered and agreed by the committee. They should note that for commercial use they should charge more than the usual hire rate, perhaps double, because as a charity they should not be subsidising a business. Rural halls vary both in size, and the

facilities they offer, so standard hire charges are difficult to calculate. However, they should reflect the running cost of the hall and any additional one-off charges that a specialised hiring might require. For instance, a hall may need additional cleaning after a wedding hire. A deposit should always be taken and it is recommended where the hirers are not regular local organisations that it could be in two parts. Firstly, an advance deposit that secures the booking and is offset against the final invoice and secondly a security deposit that is held against damage and possible licence infringements and is repayable on a satisfactory hiring.

Information about hire charges for halls across your county will be available from your local ACRE Network member. Generic information can be found in **ACRE's Model Hiring Agreement**. Further information on calculating hire charges can be found in **ACRE's Information Sheet 28, Creating a business plan**.

5. Rates

If part of a building is used by a commercial organisation then it is possible that rates could be apportioned and halls could lose some of the rate relief. The village hall management committee need to be aware that:

- If the service or activity is a private enterprise then in principle business rates could be payable. If a voluntary service or activity, rates are not affected.
- A rating assessment should be directed to the village hall charity as the occupier of the building, not the organisation occupying the space if an Occupational Licence or Hiring Agreement is in use. If a sub-lease were made that would indicate to the local authority that the organisation is the occupier and the rating assessment would be made to the organisation, not the village hall charity.
- If the premises are used part-time by a business the charity could lose the discretionary 20% relief.

However, a case may be made that, although the premises may be used part-time by the business, they are available at other times, and the rest of the accommodation is available at the same time, i.e. the premises is still available for charitable purposes more than 50% of the time.

6. Licences

A number of licences or a combination may be needed by the hall in order to deliver some activities and services. This section refers to the most commonly held licences.

- 6.1 It is not necessary to hold a Premises Licence for the exhibition of a film in a hall provided that the following conditions are met:

The film is shown in a hall between 08.00 and 23.00 hrs and the audience does not exceed 500.

- The film is not provided with a 'view to profit'.
- The organiser gets consent to the screening from the hall committee (this is most likely to be through a formal hiring agreement).
- The organiser ensures that each screening abides by the age classification rating for the film.

The condition that the film entertainment is not being provided with a 'view to profit' is explained as follows. 'An entry charge does not of itself make the film entertainment licensable; it is whether the organiser intended to make a profit (that includes raising money for charity). A charge or contribution that is made solely to cover the costs of the film screening is consistent with 'not being provided with a view to profit'. The 'not with a view to profit' condition applies solely to the activity of exhibiting the film under this exemption. A charge with a view to making a profit may legitimately be levied for any other activity or event that is distinct from film admission, such as the provision of refreshments, film talks, or a social event'.

- 6.2 Performing Right Society issue licences and collects the royalties on behalf of composers,

No fee is charged for a Premises Licence unless it includes the sale of alcohol

authors and music publishers under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

- 6.3 Phonographic Performance Licence issue licences and collect the royalties due to record companies and performers under copyright legislation for sound recordings used in public.

The Community Buildings Tariff is administered jointly by PRS and PPL under The Music Licence.

6.4 Registration as a food business

The Food Standards Agency issues guidance for village halls on registration as a food business and further information is available in **Information Sheet 20, Health and hygiene in village halls.**

If the village hall committee has any concerns about registration they should discuss it with their environmental health officer. Organisations hiring the hall that are unsure of their situation should contact their own national body or local environmental health officer.

6.5 Film copyright

See Appendix B

7. Shops

Rural halls are often in a central location and the most obvious site and building to house a community shop. The shop may be a purpose built building on the same site, an extension of the hall or surplus space within the hall. It is also a good place from which to host a post office, whether a hosted service or by using the car park for a mobile service. See **Section 8.** It is important to ensure that there is good communication between the group setting up the shop and the village hall management committee.

Consideration will need to be given to the impact on the hall either because it allows part of its site to be built on; an extension needs to be added to the hall or because there is a shared access. If the former, then

should the shop no longer require the premises would there be an alternative use for it or would it just be a liability?

The Plunkett Foundation has suggested that 500sq ft is about the appropriate amount of space for a community shop. Your local ACRE Network member will also be able to provide support and information.

8. Post offices

The loss of post office services is likely to have an adverse effect on any community and those most badly affected will be elderly people, mothers of young children and people without private transport. The Post Office supports the Outreach Post Office model solution where it is appropriate for the local community.

The aim of the range of models is to enable communities to retain services in communities that may otherwise not be able to sustain a full-time branch. The Post Office needs to ensure the success of any new post office by considering its commercial viability and will review what is available within the community in terms of appropriate premises, which will include village halls and other similar buildings.

The issues with regard to tenure, charitable status, security and insurance already considered in this information sheet need to be taken into account. See **Appendix A** for detailed information about the different models available for delivery of outreach services.

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9. Community cafés and farmers markets

Community cafés can range from a once a month drop in session, to a small facility within the village hall/shop or a daily café serving coffees, lunches and teas. Some may also include an internet access point and post office facilities.

The same issues with regard to the tenure, charitable status and licences arise that have been dealt with in previous sections of this Information Sheet.

The village hall could provide a venue for the WI or Farmer's Market. This is most likely to be a monthly or perhaps a bi-monthly activity. A hire charge could be made to the organisation running the market or the village hall management committee could decide to run the market as a fundraiser, i.e. market the event and perhaps gain local sponsorship, charge stallholders per table and provide refreshments. This gives the community access to local produce and provides a regular income for the hall but it is important that having made a commitment, the committee provide a good service and continually ensure a good range of stallholders.

10. Cinema and film

There has been a focus on reviving cinema in rural halls due to small cinemas closing and films only being available in multiplex cinemas in large towns, to and from which there is unlikely to be late night transport. In some areas local authorities may invest in equipment and films that can be hired by hall committees or in a group of halls could form a hub and jointly purchase equipment.

Whichever way the cinema service is delivered, it is important to ensure that the correct licences are in place.

See **Appendix B**, tips for providing film and cinema facilities.

11. Office space, IT resource centres and conference facilities

Office space and IT services can be made available in halls either as an open access service for individuals and businesses in the community, or space can be taken on a semi-permanent or permanent basis by the parish council or another organisation. The issues with regard to tenure, charitable status, security and insurance, already considered in this Information Sheet, need to be taken into account. In addition the committee will need to consider internet access which provides a

challenge for communities with slow broadband speeds. Consideration also needs to be given to security in terms of internet access for children, young people and other vulnerable people. **Appendix F** provides an example of a policy developed by a village hall committee for use of internet facilities at their hall.

ACRE's **Model Hiring Agreement** includes specific clauses relating to WiFi security.

Conferences, training and away days could be an opportunity for rural halls. Marketing to businesses and local authorities can highlight the opportunities they would have for supporting the local community, charities and voluntary organisations. The Community Council for Somerset have encouraged halls in Somerset to consider this option and **Appendix C**, tips for providing conference facilities may help.

12. Weddings

Village halls are ideal venues in which to hold wedding receptions, particularly where there are good parking facilities and possible outside space for a marquee. The hall will need to be in good condition and have a kitchen suitable for use by outside caterers.

It will be necessary to carefully manage the bookings so that a balance can be gained between weddings and other possible community activity at weekends. One new hall in the south west that is a popular venue for weddings made a conscious decision to restrict use to 13 weddings a year.

A full day's hire charge and a deposit needs to be decided upon, together with any licences necessary for entertainment and the sale of alcohol. Different rates for local people within the area of benefit of the hall and those from outside can be charged. See **Section 5**.

It is possible for rural halls to apply to their local authority to register as a venue for civil ceremonies. Processes and paperwork vary between local authorities, as does the cost. Read the Government Guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848875/registering_a_venue.pdf and <https://www.gov.uk/approval-of-premises-for-civil-marriage-or-civil-partnership>

Village halls are ideal venues in which to hold wedding reception, particularly where there are good parking facilities.

The village hall management committee will need to make sure that their Fire Risk Assessment procedures and processes are in place and kept up to date and appoint a responsible person who will ensure that the Regulations are complied with.

Some halls have space for a marquee, either stand alone in the grounds or playing field or as an extension to the hall. Any marquee needs to be fit for purpose and erected by competent persons or by specialist contractors. Always check the responsibilities with regard to the marquee and any insurance requirements.

13. Libraries

The provision of library services is a statutory role of local authorities but where local communities decide to provide library facilities in village halls, then the committees running them could play an important role.

Consider the following questions before agreeing to provide library services:

- Look carefully at the contract/agreement you will be required to enter into with the local authority.
- Can the library be incorporated into existing space that is not required for the charitable activities of the hall or is an extension solely for the purposes of the library needed?
- Will there need to be an occupational licence, or will the tenure arrangements form part of the local authority contract?
- Independent legal advice may be needed; who will pay for this?
- What will the opening hours of the library be and what arrangements will need to be made for access to the building, given other activity will be taking place in other areas of the hall? This needs particular attention where children and other vulnerable people are taking part in activities in the

It is important that fire risk assessment procedures and processes are in place and kept up to date.

hall. In some cases library services take the form of an informal service where books are donated by the community and a swap system operated.

Appendix D provides an insight into the experiences of Lavenham Village Hall in Suffolk which provides the space for the provision of a library for the community.

14. Other services

The services covered above are the most commonly provided in village halls across rural England; others provide space for doctor's surgeries and shared use with schools where they may not have a hall. In all these situations sections 1-6 of this Information Sheet need to be taken into account, as well as specific requirements of the service. A doctor's surgery for instance may require a waiting area, sink, and privacy and possibly internet access. We would also suggest you discuss any proposals with your local ACRE Network member who can provide further advice and information. They will also be familiar with similar services provided by halls in your county, as well as having useful contacts within local authorities.

Appendix E provides a case study where a school negotiated temporary use of the village hall during a build project.

Appendix A - Provision of post office services in rural communities

The two main types of post office services available to rural communities are:

Community Post Offices

These Post Offices have varying opening from 15-30 hours a week depending on the size of population being served. Most post office services are available. Many, but not all, are run within a village shop environment.

Post Office "Local" Service

Local style post office branches provide a wide range of services from the retail till and are open for longer hours than Community Post Offices, when the shop, pub, garage or other business it is housed within is open.

There may be a number of different reasons why the community needs to consider provision of post office services:

- The retirement of an existing sub-postmaster/mistress or loss of existing premises which creates the opportunity to change the level of service required in the community
- Post Office Ltd identifies a need for post office services in a new location
- The level of service i.e. number of hours provided needs to be changed.

The Post Office's team of Field Change Advisors will be able to advise the whole community on the situation for their area and guide them through the process.

If it is not possible to provide either a community Post Office or Post Office Local there are now two further methods of providing post office services in the community, which are based on an outreach model with a sub-postmaster/mistress providing a service to a number of communities.

Hosted Service

A hosted post office branch will be located within a community building, a pub or village shop and have a dedicated post office serving area. There will be a computer system with online capability for banking, bill payment products, scales for posting letters and parcels. The core sub-postmaster or one of their assistants visits the venue to deliver the service during the agreed hours. This is currently the most used and suitable model for use in halls and similar buildings.

Mobile Service

A mobile service where customers enter a van for the service, which is provided over a screen less counter. The vehicles are presented in Post Office livery and are readily identifiable. Local residents are given visiting times and locations, which may be the village hall car park or some other safe parking area. It delivers services to a number of communities within the catchment area. The core sub postmaster/mistress delivers the service. This service is now rarely offered.

Providing a hosted service

A hosted service is where a community building hosts a part-time post office branch run by the core sub-postmaster/mistress of a core branch situated in a nearby town or larger village – usually for 2 or 3 morning or afternoon sessions each week. The core sub-postmaster/mistress is paid by Post Office Ltd to provide this service. Essential, secure and/or valuable equipment is brought to the hosted premises at the beginning of each session and taken away again at the end of each session.

The number of sessions and their duration will be decided by Post Office Ltd depending on the volume of business. Periodic reviews of opening hours will take place. The Post Office products and services offered via the hosted service will generally match those provided at the core branch.

The basic requirements for hosted premises are:

- Good location i.e. central position or near to other public buildings such as a school/church or public house
- As good a physical access as possible i.e. for pushchairs and people with disabilities
- Sufficient space for the necessary furniture and equipment that will need to be used during opening times. This could include a counter or trolley. This does not have to be a dedicated space and can be used for other purposes at other times. The Field Change Adviser can provide dimensions, but there is usually room for local negotiation and ingenuity
- Sufficient secure storage space to store small equipment e.g. scales, forms and leaflets which will remain at hosted premises. No cash will normally be left at the hosted premises.

The sub-postmaster is responsible for ensuring that the premises he/she provides the service from are kept clean and maintained to a good standard, and provided with adequate lighting and heating.

If the hall is considered suitable the Field Change Adviser and the prospective core sub-postmaster/mistress will undertake preliminary conversations with the village hall management committee to explain the process and set expectations.

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If the village hall management committee decides to proceed to the next stage, the Field Change Advisor will arrange for a scoping report to be undertaken by the Post Office's Property Projects Team to check:

- Suitability of phone line i.e. ability to have an additional single dedicated line installed. This may require a BT survey
- Suitability of electrical circuit for the installation of the required computer equipment. An electrician employed by Post Office Ltd will be asked to undertake an inspection of the village hall's wiring system
- Suitability of the building for use as a post office branch

A feasibility study to look at security considerations, ease of setting up equipment, health & safety, access requirement etc. Any expense incurred for the scoping report will be covered by Post Office Ltd.

The Property Projects Team will be responsible for liaising with the village hall management committee in respect of installation of equipment but the direct contractual relationship and day-to-day liaison will be with the core sub-postmaster/mistress.

Thank you to Community Action Dorset, for their input to this Appendix.

Appendix B - Tips for providing film and cinema facilities

Getting started

It is advisable to find out what community support there is for showing films in the hall before investing in equipment. A simple house-to-house questionnaire asking about support for provision of such a service, with queries about the type of films, what time of day and which day of the week would be preferred, and an idea of the price range people are willing to pay for tickets is a good way to ascertain this.

What type of films you show may depend on your local circumstances – an isolated community a long way from the nearest cinema may find that demand is for showings of mainstream films local residents wouldn't otherwise get to see; whereas if your nearest cinema is relatively easily accessible there might be more demand for independent or foreign language films that the big cinemas don't show so often.

To begin with, set up a working party to develop the idea, gather local feedback and run the first screening to test the water. If the community cinema becomes established, this working party might become an independent organisation that hires the village hall, with its own committee, constitution, bank account and so on, or it might simply become a subcommittee of the village hall. Whichever arrangement you end up with will depend on who is willing and able to get involved and will also be influenced by whether you run film screenings as a private film club or as publicly advertised events.

In some areas there may be organisations that can provide equipment and expertise for your test screening or even on an ongoing basis. For instance, in Cumbria and Yorkshire, CineNorth run a network of rural film screening venues in village halls and other community venues. To find out who can help in your area, contact your local BFI Film Hub or get in touch with Cinema For All (see Useful Links below).

Premises Licence

Since the deregulation of Premises Licences in 2015, community venues operating on a not for profit basis no longer need a Premises Licence for many forms of entertainment, including film. In particular, your film screening must be between the hours of 0800 and 2300, to an audience of under 500 and not "profit-seeking". That doesn't mean that an individual film screening can't show a surplus, as long as that surplus is used to pay for future film screenings. You still must abide by the film's BBFC age certificate and ensure, for instance, that only adults are admitted to a film with an 18 certificate.

Copyright licensing

Any screening of a film outside a private house must be properly licensed for copyright purposes – this is not the same as a Premises Licence!

For films distributed by most of the large studios and production companies the

licence can be obtained from one of two rights management companies,

The Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC) or Filmbank Media. For many more niche, independent or foreign language films the licence may need to be obtained directly from the individual distribution company. You can find out who the distributor of a film is by looking the title up on the BBFC website. The MPLC website has a list of production companies they operate on behalf of but has no facility for looking up individual film titles. The Filmbank Media website has an easy to use search function to find any film they provide licences for.

There are two main types of licence:

Commercial / Theatrical / Single Title Screening Licence

This sort of licence covers the screening of a specific film on a specific day or days. It will generally cost a minimum of around £100 per screening, or a percentage of your total ticket sales, whichever is the greater (this applies even if your tickets are free!). This type of licence allows you to charge for admission if you wish, and permits the public advertising of the screening.

Non-commercial / Non-theatrical / Umbrella licence

This sort of licence is a flat rate annual fee which permits the screening of films to a specific audience, with no public advertising and with no right to charge an admission fee. The version of this licence provided by the MPLC is specifically aimed at film clubs and societies, while the version provided by Filmbank Media is aimed more at incidental use in public places (eg care homes or doctors' surgeries), although some film clubs do use it. If in doubt contact the relevant company to check what sort of licence you need.

Umbrella licences (Filmbank call their version a Public Video Screening Licence) are much cheaper, as little as £105+VAT for an annual licence compared to £83+VAT per film for a single title licence. However, they are much more restrictive in terms of not permitting an admission fee to be charged and not permitting any public advertising of film screenings. They are best suited to a Film Club which covers its costs by charging members a subscription fee and then only admitting members to screenings. A Single Title licence must be used if you wish to advertise your film programme publicly or charge an admission fee.

Whichever licence you opt for, you must be careful to ensure that it covers all the films you wish to show. As mentioned, many smaller distributors, and even some of the larger ones, might not be covered by licences from Filmbank or MPLC.

Almost all licences permit you to screen a film from your own copy, be it on DVD or BluRay or a digital copy, as long as it was itself legally obtained by purchase or hire.

Useful links

- **BFI Film Audience Network Film Hubs:** <http://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/distribution-exhibition-funding/film-hub-lead-organisations>

Supported by Lottery funding, these organisations exist to help expand film exhibition beyond the multiplexes and reach new audiences. They may run training courses, provide funding, support marketing for particular titles or help put you in touch with other organisations in your areas that can help you.

- **Community Cinema** <https://mycommunitycinema.org.uk/>

Website with hints and tips for setting up a community cinema including links to potential sources of funding, advice on what equipment you might need, and a free online listings directory.

- **Cinema for All** (formerly the British Federation of Film Societies): <http://cinemaforall.org.uk/>

National membership organisation for community cinemas offering specialist advice and support, training and conferences, an equipment hire scheme (with free hire for new members running a test screening), and a film licence booking service with VAT-free licensing on a catalogue of over 800 films.

- **Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC):** <http://www.themplc.co.uk/>

Providers of single title and umbrella film copyright licences on behalf of a range of film production companies, including many of the major studios. Their Umbrella licence offers a low-cost annual license product including a version specifically aimed at film clubs and societies. Members of Cinema for All receive a discount on their first licence booking.

- **Filmbank Media** <https://www.filmbankmedia.com/>

Providers of copyright licences on behalf of a range of film production companies, including many of the major studios. Their website is easy to search for individual film titles and is best suited to arranging single title screening licences as their umbrella licence is not specifically designed for film clubs. Opening an account with Filmbank usually requires a returnable deposit, but this is currently waived for members of Cinema for All.

- **Independent Cinema Office:** <http://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/>

Aimed more at professional independent cinemas than the community film sector, but their website has lots of useful resources and guidance on subjects such as marketing and programming, including a list of contact details for individual film distributors not covered by Filmbank or MPLC licences. They offer a range of support services, events and training that film clubs or societies might find of interest.

- **British Board of Film Classification:** <http://www.bbfc.co.uk/>

Organisation that provides age certification for all films released in the UK. Its BBFC insight service provides more detailed information on why a film title has a particular certificate, which can be useful additional information for parents. Film listings also include the details of the film's distributor.

Appendix C - Tips for providing conference facilities

There are a number of reasons why a hall committee may consider offering their hall as a conference/training/away day venue:

- Lucrative, repeat business
- Halls are sometimes underused during the daytime
- Wider economic impact; use of local businesses such as B&B & local caterers
- Business and local authority might be encouraged to fund/volunteer for the hall charity.

Who could be a target for marketing?

- Small businesses
- Local authorities, departments of a County Council such as social services, Adult Learning, National Park, Police and NHS
- School governors and Local Parish Council Association
- Voluntary and charitable organisations both national and countywide e.g. Relate, ACRE Network Members, CVSs
- Other organisations such as training providers and U3A.

What would be required of a venue?

- Medium to large space (clean, warm and ideally comfortable chairs)
- Smaller room(s) or room dividers
- Ease of access from main road/railway/bus route
- Good signing essential
- Car parking
- Disabled facilities and good access into and out of the building
- Kitchen/catering facilities – bear in mind that catering organisations may have specific requirements.

What equipment might be required?

- Hearing loop (can be hired/borrowed)
- Public address system
- Flip chart
- Stage/platform
- Overhead projector
- Screen (free standing or pull down) or good plain wall
- Display boards
- Walls on which flip chart paper can be displayed (use of blue tack on walls)
- Extension cable(s)
- Broadband connection and WiFi

A leaflet detailing all the necessary information saves numerous conversations. It should include:

- Details of the booking system with a nominated person to follow the booking through
- Arrangements for access to the hall and any special requirements e.g. hearing loop
- Information about local caterers

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- A location map with details of the nearest railway or bus station. Include local taxi services and provide information about car parking at the hall
- Details of all equipment available
- An explanation of how the heating system works!

Attention should be given to the terms of the hiring especially where specialist equipment is being provided. When setting charges it is important to consider all possible costs and whether it may be necessary, in some circumstances, to have a hall committee member available during the event.

Appendix D - Experiences of Lavenham Village Hall, Suffolk, in providing library services

We are grateful to the library manager, the hall manager and the chair of the Lavenham Community Council who provided answers to a number of questions from ACRE. Their joint knowledge and experience is recorded below:

The Library manager made the hall committee aware that the library facilities in the Lavenham Guildhall were becoming inadequate for the needs of the library. The new village hall was under construction and the use of a room was offered.

There is a licence in place between Suffolk County Council and Lavenham Village Hall which covers cost, responsibilities, opening hours, heating, lighting and maintenance of the space occupied by the library. The agreed amount is at a market rate, although when the library is used outside the agreed hours the council pays an additional hire charge.

There was some opposition to the new hall and to the library relocating. However, use of the library increased once it opened and it was able to offer additional facilities such as access to the internet.

The relocation of the library has proved advantageous because:

- The library is open outside the hours for the village hall providing extra cover for general enquiries and any incidents that may occur and vice versa
- Security; the building is rarely unoccupied
- Users of the library are able to return books via the automated return terminal when the library is closed and they are attending a hall function
- Library use has increased and some residents who may not have had reason to enter the hall are made aware of the facilities available
- Library staff have use of modern kitchen and toilet facilities.

Advice for other communities considering locating a library in their hall:

- Define very clearly the space, storage and access requirements from the outset and be realistic. Lavenham Library uses foyer space for newspapers and leaflets etc on a 'grace and favour' basis which works well but could in some circumstances create tensions.
 - There should be clear arrangements about use of the library space outside library opening hours – are the village hall trustees able to rent it to other hall users or does the library have exclusive use?
 - Allowance should be made for the amount of administration undertaken by the hall trustees in hosting the library.
-

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Providing services in village halls



- Lavenham Village Hall was a new building so was equipped with facilities for the disabled. Older halls considering accommodating a library will need to take access and other requirements into account.

Accommodating the library has been of great benefit to the hall and the community with good partnership working between the hall trustees, the Parish Council, Suffolk County Council and the library staff.

The willingness, of the library staff and of the management team at the villagehall, to be flexible has been a key to the success of this project.

Appendix E - Case study from Fittleworth Village Hall, Sussex - Temporary use of hall by local school

The key features of the arrangement between Fittleworth Primary School and the Village Hall were:

- the school wanted to use the village hall as a replacement school hall while rebuilding work was carried out. They also wanted to use the hall and the kitchen for daily lunches
- the arrangement was to run from 3rd September 2009 with the licence having an end date of 23 July 2010, although there was a clause allowing the licence to end earlier upon one month's notice. It in fact ended at the end of the Spring term in 2010
- a member of the committee was designated to negotiate with the headteacher and a school governor to agree the terms of the arrangement
- the agreed terms were summarised onto two pages and was called a "Schedule of Heads of Terms for a Licence"
- the document was then sent to West Sussex County Council (WSSC) whose legal department prepared a licence in the form of a letter with 7 key features. The letter stated that the Schedule of Heads of Terms was attached and should be adhered to
- the document was then signed by a representative from the hall and a representative from WSSC
- it was a condition that all existing day time users were to be able to continue to hold their normal bookings during this period. They agreed that if the School was able to accommodate new daytime users, the School would receive a credit of £1.95 per hour used. This arrangement worked well.

Hire charges and costs:

- the school estimated they needed the hall for about 3 hours per day during the school week
- as the school was using the kitchen for hot meals, the electricity element of the hire rates was excluded and it was agreed that the school would pay for all electricity used for the core hours of 08.00 – 16.00 of a school day at the supplier's rates. This was calculated by taking meter readings.

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Providing services in village halls



- from the local hourly rate at the time of £9.50 and a £6.50 charge for the kitchen they deducted the standard electricity and gave a discount of 35%, so the rate used for an average day was £17.90
- an amount of £3,400 for the term (September to July) was agreed based on the average and then electricity usage was added. Total charge for electricity for the whole period of hire was £416.

Appendix F - Policy statement regarding broadband provision and use

Jubilees Hall, Winsham, Somerset

Broadband facility and related public access

POLICY STATEMENT

Principles

As the only public facility in for its provision, the Management Committee feel that they have an obligation to the community to take a lead in facilitating access to:

- The Internet, for those residents who do not have access already, either at low cost, or with limited free access.
- Provide training facilities for the greater understanding of the use of the Internet for the purpose of sending and receiving email and 'browsing'.
- Provide training and learning opportunities on a wider canvas of information technology when the opportunities arise or can be sought.

The Hall Management Committee will attempt to fulfil these obligations through:

- Promoting and developing the sponsored PC Users Self-Help Group.
- Supporting the development of an Internet Café.
- Make available free or low-cost training facilities.
- Making special arrangements to facilitate its use by young members of the community.
- Adopting a minimal risk policy in protecting the community from the dangers that can arise from inappropriate use of the Internet from the hall.

Implementation of Policy

Self-financing

The broadband facilities must in the longer term be self-financing, thereby providing an economic return on all the hall resources that are used. This includes rental of the Meeting Room, the use of the Committee Room and the kitchen by the Internet Café. The use of consumables and additional hardware must be met by users by direct payment, fundraising and or

grants. To this end there will be, generally, a charge levied on Internet users.

Restrictions

There will be no unrestricted use to the Internet. Firewalls will be established to block access to websites, and categories of websites deemed to be inappropriate at the absolute discretion of the Management Committee. Further controls will be implemented to provide additional protection for the youth and younger children of the village when using the facilities with parental permission. The list of restricted categories and blocked Internet sites is available on request to the hall secretary.

Free homework use

To support the children of the village, all use of the Internet for homework research will be free and available during opening hours. In using this facility internet access will be restricted to educational research sites deemed suitable for under 18s. There will be no access to email, instant messaging facilities or to computer games.

General access

All other use of the Internet must be paid for at the published rates and regardless of age. Under 18s will be assumed to be using the retail service with parental permission, but will be required to give their age if asked and allowed access subject to the further protections detailed below. Should there be any doubt as to the age of a user; proof of age must be provided before the level of access requested will be granted.

Further sources of information and advice

ACRE and its Network provides an information and advice service for village hall management committees through its network of village hall advisers. A link to the village hall advisers is available on the ACRE website www.acre.org.uk

ACRE produces a range of village hall publications and information sheets to support this service which are available from your local ACRE member.

ACRE publications that may be of interest to readers of this Information Sheet are listed below:

- **Information Sheet 4:** Village halls and insurance
- **Information Sheet 17:** Trustees' roles and responsibilities
- **Information Sheet 6:** Village halls and registration for VAT

Useful contacts

Performing Right Society (PRS)
www.prsformusic.com

PPL
www.ppluk.com

The Music Licence:
<https://pplprs.co.uk/>

Charity Commission
www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Charity Commission Leaflets

- CC3 The Essential Trustee:
What you need to know,
what you need to do
- CC15b Charity Reporting
and Accounting:
the essentials