



# North Stifford Village Hall

Handbook for those hiring the Hall

High Road, North Stifford, Essex RM16 5UG

North Stifford Village Hall is located in the North Stifford on the village green in the heart of the village.

The much loved Village Hall, was built in 1959 following a donation to the village by Colonel Sherwood who lived at Stifford Lodge. The land was donated by Sir Francis Whitmore. The hall is in the ownership of local Trustees and managed by the Village Hall Committee, all of whom are volunteers.

The Hall provides a centre for various in-house events, for our regular hirers and for the one-off occasions and celebrations that provide memories for the attendees. Anyone wanting to hire the Hall should follow the guidance that is available on our website (<https://northstiffordvillagehall.co.uk/>).

We hope that the guidance contained in this Handbook proves helpful for your use of the available facilities, especially if you're not too familiar with the Hall. It represents what is available, how things work, what you should look out for and where you should take extra care and some of it will reinforce issues written into the Hiring Agreement and the other documents available on our website.

We hope that you enjoy using our Hall, and that you will consider returning for further events. If, as is said, you have enjoyed your hiring experience please tell others; if you found there was anything of concern or that you think we could do better we would rather hear first and please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are willing to learn, are always pleased to receive comments and will do anything that is reasonably within our power to provide an excellent facility for our users.

There follows a walk-through of the facilities and what the Hall has to offer but if you have any questions please contact us.

1. **Hiring:**

North Stifford Village Hall is a registered charity and the Management Committee thank all hirers for choosing, using, maintaining and caring for our wonderful hall.

The current hiring charges are displayed at: [\\_ https://northstiffordvillagehall.co.uk/](https://northstiffordvillagehall.co.uk/)

The hall holds a premises licence and our licensing hours are 9am-10pm Monday to Thursday and Sundays / Friday and Saturday 9.00 am to 11.30 pm.

2. **Keys:**

“Regular hirers” are provided with the code for the key safe. You must ensure that all doors are locked at the end of the hire period and the key returned to the safe. Please take extra care to ensure each of the double doors to the hall and porch are individually locked. The car park barrier should also be closed and locked. When returning the keys to the safe, you must make sure that it is closed and the latch turned and the numbers scrambled. Failure to comply could result in your booking being terminated. There is no permitted access the hall other than during your hire period.

3. **Covid:**

Although the government’s Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted and North Stifford Village Hall has now withdrawn its Covid-19 Special Conditions of Hire, it is more important than ever that vulnerable people, those who feel more cautious and those who have suffered as a result of isolation during the last few years feel confident using our village hall in order to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Consequently, in order to enable us to accommodate and support the vulnerable or nervous in our community, we encourage our users to follow these principles:

- (i) No one likely to attend an activity or event should do so if they are unwell or anyone in their household has had COVID symptoms in the last 48 hours;
- (ii) Under current Covid guidelines, hirers can decide on whether to impose social distancing and face coverings when entering or moving about the Hall. We can advise you on all of these issues at the time of booking;
- (iii) Hirers are responsible for regular cleaning of frequently used surfaces during the hire, paying particular attention to equipment such as tables, wash hand basins and kitchen sinks, using either the products supplied or ordinary domestic products. Please clean surfaces used before leaving.

Please take care cleaning electrical equipment: Use cloths - do not spray!

- (iv) The premises should be well ventilated throughout your hire, with windows and doors open as far as convenient and safe to do so. **You will be responsible for ensuring they are all securely closed on leaving.**

Please note, we will have the right to close the hall if there are safety concerns relating to COVID or in the event that public buildings are required or advised to close again. If that is necessary, we will do our best to inform you promptly and

you will not be charged for this hire.

4. **Disabled access:**

The Hall has a double-door entrance/exit and from the Main Hall there is a double-door fire exit.

5. **Toilets/Wash rooms:**

The toilets are sufficient for the maximum numbers allowed by licensing.

A separate toilet is fully equipped for mobility impaired users and also holds a baby changing facility.

6. **Heating:**

The Hall's heating system easily achieves a comfort level in all rooms. If for some reason you require a higher level for your event, we can increase the temperature given prior notice.

7. **Occupancy levels:**

The maximum number of people allowed in the Hall is 100.

8. **Electrics:**

All of the Hall's fully identifiable electrical circuits are now controlled from a Consumer Unit in the Main Hall. Above this Unit, there are switches for:

- Lighting in the Main Hall
- All toilets
- Outside lights

All of the Hall's portable electric appliances are inspected annually and are included on a PAT certificate. Hirers must not bring any such appliance for use in the Hall if it/they do not hold, and it is marked with, a similarly current PAT certificate.

Please note the heaters are controlled by Wi-Fi and are NOT to be turned of.

9. **Risk Assessments:**

North Stifford Village Hall has compiled a Health & Safety and Fire Safety assessments. All of these documents are available on the Hall's website at <http://www.northstiffordvillagehall.co.uk/>

It is the responsibility of the hirer to read these documents and to adhere to their content.

10. **Decorations:**

If you intend to incorporate any sort of wall hung decoration during an event, you must not use Sellotape, drawing pins, nails and Blu Tack on the interior walls or floors as this will cause damage. Magic tape or white tac can be used.

11. **Car Park:**

Even before entering the Hall there are a few important issues to consider.

**It is important that hirers do not allow attending drivers to cause obstruction of the narrow road outside the Hall because it is a vital access route for emergency vehicles and local residents.**

Vehicle users of the car park do so at their own risk and the Hall's Management Committee will not accept responsibility for any damage, accident or loss.

The car park is an enclosed area with a single wide entranceway/exit so drivers must take great care when maneuvering to park or when leaving to avoid vehicle or pedestrian traffic.

The Hiring Agreement requires that hirers manage responsible parking so it may be necessary for you to nominate someone to handle parking arrangements when appropriate, or if a large number of vehicles are expected. With careful arranging there should be room for 30 cars.

For those arriving or leaving the Hall during the hours of darkness, motion sensors activate lights over the Entrance door and the main car park area. These will turn off automatically.

**12. Main Hall:**

Of course, the Main Hall is the most important area for most Hirers. It has good natural light and is well lit for evening events. The wooden floor is ideal for all occasions.

The following items are available and can be provided, by prior request, for your event:

- Public address system
- 14 large tables
- 14 smaller tables
- 100 chairs

This room has the Hall's two double-door fire exits with emergency push/crash bars

**13. Kitchen:**

A fitted kitchen provides the following facilities:

- Single oven
- Electric hob
- Fire Blanket
- Microwave
- Electric water boiler.
- Large larder fridge/freezer
- 1 electric kettle

Great care must be taken when handling knives and children must not be allowed into the kitchen.

There is a large hatch providing service to the Main Hall.

**14. Safety:**

Of course, the safety of our hirers and their guests is paramount and we hope that you never have occasion to rely on the provisions we have made, but:

- (i) Emergency lighting is fitted, which activates in the event of a power cut, or

if the Hall lighting is turned off for maintenance.

(ii) In the event of fire:

- There are three fire exits; the front entrance and the Hall's Fire Exits, all of which have double doors. Both of these fire exits are marked as such with the required emergency lights.
- Fire extinguishers (Foam) are in the Main Hall and a CO2 (Carbon Dioxide) extinguisher, for use with electrical fires, is located on the stage and by the entrance door; and
- Two Fire Blankets are in the Kitchen for use on an oil/cooking or an electrical equipment fire.

All of the fire-fighting equipment is independently inspected annually.

All of the fire-fighting equipment and emergency lighting are inspected monthly by NSVH staff.

A document entitled, 'What to do in the event of fire' is attached to our Standard Terms & Conditions of Hire, which, by signing the Hiring Agreement, hirers confirm they have read and understood.

It is essential that if any of the fire extinguishers or the fire blanket are used, the Bookings Secretary must be notified so that early replacement can be made.

Notices are in place about how to use extinguishers on each particular type of fire. Hirers have the responsibility of ensuring they are aware of these procedures and what to do in the event of fire.

The notices are also displayed on the Hall's website alongside our Fire Safety Risk Assessment, which all hirers are required to read to understand their responsibilities of how to notify the Hall's occupants of fire and to manage an evacuation of the premises.

**It must be remembered that fire extinguishers are for small fires only and have a very limited operating time. The safety of the Hall's occupants for evacuation must be considered first, especially if vulnerable people are at risk.**

(iii) First Aid boxes:

A First-Aid box is located in the Main Hall beside the serving hatch.

Hirers must take care to manage the security of the First-Aid box and to notify us if any items are used so that we can replenish the stock.

(iv) Emergency Services:

There is no landline phone at North Stifford Village Hall but mobile phones do have good service in case the emergency services are required. In this event, someone should be delegated to make the call and wait in the roadway to assist on their arrival.

The 'what3words' ([what3words /// The simplest way to talk about location](#)) app is widely used by the emergency services and the Hall's What 3 Word position (**jokes.assume.parent**).

(v) Defibrillator

A public access defibrillator is held in a dedicated yellow cabinet on the outside wall of Belhus Cricket Clubhouse (What 3 Words **///stage.eagle.soak**) adjacent to the rear of the hall. The cabinet is always locked and can only be opened with the code.

It is not necessary to have had such training because the instructions on how to turn it on are displayed on the outside and then the device has simple voice commands for the operator to follow.

Time should not be wasted whilst waiting for the defibrillator to arrive when a person is suffering a sudden cardiac arrest. The emergency services must be called immediately and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) applied until their arrival.

(vi) Reporting accidents/incidents

By legislation, hirers and North Stifford Village Hall have responsibilities to record matters that might affect Health & Safety and with matters such as death, certain serious injuries and certain 'dangerous occurrences' with the potential to cause harm subject to official notification under the 'Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013' (RIDDOR).

To satisfy these requirements, a set of books are held by the kitchen serving hatch:

a) **Accident Book:**

In the event of an accident happening during a hiring, the responsible person on site must enter details of the occurrence in this book, detailing the circumstances and the injury caused, no matter how small. It is only by doing this that the Hall can satisfy their legal obligations under Health & Safety legislation.

When such an entry is made, the Hall's Bookings Secretary must be informed immediately.

b) **Incident Book:**

Similar to the Accident Book, a record must be made of any incident, that is other than an accident, that might somehow affect the Hall, or its operation. This may be an incident within or outside the building.

c) **Fire Safety Book:**

This is for North Stifford Village Hall volunteers to record the various checks that are necessary throughout the year.

d) **Maintenance Book:**

With any public building there will be times when damage may occur

or defects are detected. Hirers should make a note of any issue that they consider might affect the maintenance of the Hall, so early resolution can be made.

With any damage caused during a hiring, you must notify anyone on the Contact list as soon as possible.

**15. On leaving:**

(i) Cleaning:

- The hall must be swept and left tidy. Large brushes, smaller brushes, dustpans etc. are in the Kitchen. Any floor spillages are to be cleaned up as soon as possible to prevent damage to the floor.
- The cooker, fridge and freezer are to be left in a clean state.
- Any crockery, utensils, equipment, etc. used must be washed and returned to their original places.
- All surfaces and tables must be left clean.
- Toilets must be left clean and tidy. Nappies are not to be left in the toilet areas.

(ii) Rubbish:

- All rubbish and recyclable materials must be removed from the premises by you unless you have agreed and paid the fee of £18 for rubbish disposal, in which case all rubbish must be bagged and given to the caretaker to dispose of in the bins.

(iii) Finally:

Please check that:

- All signs and decorations are removed;
- All tables and chairs are stacked neatly in the designated area, with the chairs no more than **8 high**. Please stack chairs of the same design together;
- All doors & windows are closed and locked;
- All curtains are left open;
- **All taps, lights and other appliances are turned off;** and
- You have not forgotten any personal items

We hope that your event goes well and that you will consider future use of North Stifford Village Hall.