

Fire Safety Assessment – Goodrich Village Hall Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005

SUMMARY

Overall Goodrich Village Hall is considered by the Trustees to be a low risk due to the purposes it is used for, the general open plan layout of the hall, the usable parts being single storey, the absence of steps or stairs and of dead-end corridors and the number of ways of exiting the building.

Potential sources of ignition are limited by the absence of gas and oil-fired equipment and equipment involving open flames. The main potential sources of ignition in the use of the building are:-

- Fire commencing from the electric cooker installed in the kitchen (but this is minimised by the physical constraints of cooking foods in the limited space of the kitchen and low number of occasions it is produced.)**
- A fire commencing in the main electrical and IT locker.**
- The use of candles and tea lights in table decorations. These are used in the open plan area of the hall and any fire would attract immediate attention. The use of indoor fireworks and pyrotechnics is prohibited.**

Governance

Goodrich Village Hall (GVH) was originally built to meet the needs of the people of the parishes of Goodrich and Marstow. It is currently used for a wide variety of groups and organisations from Goodrich and Marstow as well as the wider area, including events organised by the trustees of the hall. GVH is also used for meetings of the parish councils and as a polling station. The hall is also hired for private events, such as weddings and parties, and commercial events. It is very occasionally hired for overnight accommodation

GVH is managed by trustees drawn from the residents of Goodrich and Marstow.

The Building

The original part of the hall was built in 1888. A large extension was built in 1976 and this accommodates the main (Godric) hall. Looked at from the highway, the original part of the hall is at the front and the extension runs the full width at the rear of the building. Car parking is at the front and side of the building.

The original part of GVH is constructed of brick and stone under a tiled pitched roof. As is common with buildings of this age considerable quantities

of timber have been used in fitting out the interior, particularly for floors, ceilings and roofing.

The extension at the rear of the building is constructed of brick and has a flat felted roof. The roof also houses an array of photovoltaic solar panels.

The usable part of the hall is all at ground floor level. The main entrance door is located in the centre and the front of the building and gives access to a central corridor that leads to all rooms/areas of the hall. Additional fire exits are located in Godric Hall (two) and the Committee Room. An additional door exits from the kitchen. All parts of the hall have flat, direct and close (within 15 yards) access to the outside and at least two means of exiting (except for toilets and shower room).

GVH was originally constructed with two rooms at first floor level, one above the Tudor Room and other above the Committee Room. These rooms are not used and can only be accessed by use of a ladder via a ceiling hatch. These rooms are completely empty. Some cables are routed through the rooms.

The Tudor Room, the Committee Room and the two rooms above them contain fireplaces. It is believed that the associated chimneys are not sealed and thus can be a source of a downdraught in the event of a fire (draught exclusion comfort measures have been taken in the Tudor Room and the Committee Room).

GVH has a modern electrical system and cabling, including photovoltaic solar panels.

Heating and hot water is supplied from air-sourced heat pumps, which are located outside the building. The low temperature water is pumped to heaters located in all main rooms. The heaters contain electronic control systems to regulate the temperature and control the air circulation fans, all contained with a metal casing.

The only other heating sources, are wall mounted electric convector heaters, located within the toilets and a wall mounted fan heater in the kitchen (high level).

Storage cupboards are provided for use by some of the regular users of the hall in order to keep all areas free of clutter.

Lidded exterior bins are provided for rubbish and recycling.

Fire Arrangements

A fire alarm system is installed. Break glass call points are also fitted in all rooms/area of the hall and feed back to a main alarm panel located in the electrical locker in Godric Hall. Smoke detectors are fitted in Godric Hall, Tudor Room, Committee Room and storage area above main door to Godric

Hall; also a heat detector is located in the short passage way between the kitchen and the central corridor and they all feed back to the main alarm panel located in the electrical locker in Godric Hall. A fire plan is displayed on the notice board close to the main entrance.

The Trustees are aware that there are two variations from Clause 45 of BS 5839-1:2013, namely zone cabling was carried out in non-fire-retardant cabling and in respect of head removal monitoring. The trustees are advised that these two items comply with BS5839 Part1:1988 and that the later standard is not retrospective. At their meeting on 4 July 2017 the trustees considered the risk this presents and concluded that given the layout of the premises and the open nature of the accommodation and the use of the hall that the risk this presented was low.

Audible alarms can be heard in all areas and are of sufficient volume to be heard over background noise and loud music.

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are located within the GVH. These are located as follows:-

- Godric Hall (next to electrical locker) – CO2
- Godric Hall – Foam
- Kitchen – CO2 and fire blanket
- Front door - Foam

The extinguishers are of sufficient number and are of the correct types for the fire risk (eg carbon dioxide for electrical fires). Notices are provided at each fire extinguisher location indicating its type and use.

There is a green open space located across the road from the main entrance to GVH. This provides a convenient and safe assembly area in the event of the need to evacuate the hall – it is a safe distance from the building in the event of fire.

Signs and notices that conform to the standards laid down are located in all areas and provide information on the action to take in the event of fire and the location of the assembly area.

Luminous pictogram signs and emergency lighting are provided to direct people to emergency exits.

Emergency lighting is provided in all rooms/areas to illuminate a safe route for evacuation of the building during hours of darkness.

Arrangements for vulnerable groups

GVH is not currently used by groups and organisations specific to vulnerable people. As all parts of the hall have flat, direct and close access to the outside and at least two means of exiting, the needs of the present level of use by vulnerable or disabled people are met. The current child protection

policy ensures that children and young people are accompanied by an appropriate adult. The terms and conditions of booking, places the responsibility for fire arrangements on the hirer.

Accommodation Use

GVH is very infrequently used for overnight accommodation by groups. As GVH is fitted with smoke/heat detectors and has easy access to fire exits this use is regarded as acceptable. In addition to the legal ban on smoking in public places, the terms and conditions for hire for accommodation use extend the ban to all uses of the hall.

Checks and Inspections – electrical installation

The fixed electrical installation of the hall is inspected and tested by a competent person at least every five years.

PAT testing is not carried out each year but a visual check of portable equipment and its associated cabling and plug form part of the quarterly health and safety inspection of the hall.

Checks and Inspections – fire alarm system and emergency lighting

The fire alarm and emergency lighting system are inspected in accordance with the relevant British Standard at six monthly intervals by a competent person. The fire alarm system is tested weekly and the emergency lighting system monthly.

Checks and Inspections – fire extinguishers and fire blankets

Portable fire extinguishers etc are inspected by a competent person annually. A visual check is conducted weekly.

Checks and Inspections – Fire Doors

The fire doors are checked weekly to ensure they operate correctly and that they are free of obstructions.

Checks and Inspections – Rubbish Removal

As part of the weekly check the building is checked to ensure that there is no build-up of rubbish. Rubbish removal to exterior lidded bins forms part of the duties of the cleaner.

Checks and Inspections - building exterior

The lidded exterior bins are emptied every two weeks (alternating between recyclables and general waste) to prevent a build-up of combustible material on the site.

Risk Assessments

For the purposes of this assessment GVH has been divided into four areas, the Godric (main) Hall, Tudor Room, Committee Room and other areas including the kitchen, toilets, central corridor and shower room. Individual assessments for these areas are attached and form part of this document.

Plans

Plans of the building form part of this document and illustrate the fire arrangements.

Records

Risk assessments and supporting documents and plans, together with maintenance and check records, along with the fire marshal register are kept in a wall mounted fire document box located in the short corridor next to the kitchen.

Fire Service Access

A ramp leading up to the building from the highway will prevent fire appliances parking adjacent to the building. The nearest parking will be approximately ten metres from the building on the highway.

The building is not normally occupied at night.

Conclusion

The arrangements set out in this assessment are regarded by the trustees as sufficient to meet the low level of risk present in GVH. Particularly taking into account that all parts of the hall have flat, direct and close access to the outside (significantly inside the laid down guidance) and at least two means of exiting (except toilets and shower).

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