

Church Premises Management Session

Parish Administration Training 11th October 2017

Many if not all of you are probably engaged to some extent in managing church centres and rooms.

The parish consultation about CMS revealed some use the booking aspects of their CMS so a combined system whilst others use stand alone booking systems like Libris and Hallmaster:

www.crucialsoftware.co.uk/hall.php
www.hallmaster.co.uk

We will be looking into HMS a little more at the CMS seminar & workshop. For today I will share some Resources and pointers then invite participation! We have a few whom I know use booking systems like Aretia Debenham.

Intro

If you are not currently hiring out any church premises but intend to do so, your church leadership will need to explore with Wendy Harris or Jane Seals of **the DAC** as they may need **Diocesan approval** first.

You will also need to **check any title deeds or leases** for any clauses governing letting premises, especially any **restrictive covenants on user** which affect the activities that can be engaged in. Indeed you may need legal advice generally.

Be careful about the **terminology** you use especially in the booking form for a single or regular hiring to ensure a tenancy agreement is not inadvertently created.

Hiring out church owned premises demonstrates **good stewardship of assets**. In addition to helping the church to reach out into the local community, this can generate a useful source of income.

Resources

A number of resources readily available to provide guidance and templates

- the UK Church Administrator Network 'UCAN' have an excellent article 'Rooms to Let' reference to which is in their latest newsletter www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Articles/Rooms-to-let

A comprehensive article for all the matters to consider and action; from identifying the purpose and vision for letting the premises to insurance, legal aspects, the booking agreement, assessing the space available, parking, access, kitchen, other facilities.

- UCAN also have a sample letting policy in their Resources section available to members
- Action with Communities in Rural England 'ACRE' have a section on village halls which also applicable to church buildings. They have a direct link to Hallmaster from their website www.acre.org.uk

- **The Health & Safety Executive** website has a handy checklist for health & safety aspects of managing community halls + a short guidance sheet about who has legal responsibility for health & safety. Encouraging advice: Taking a sensible, proportionate approach is the key to making sure the hall provides a healthy and safe place for people to use without unnecessary bureaucracy!
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/village-halls.htm>
- **Ecclesiastical Insurance** has a helpful web section on hiring of church premises to outside groups and organisations + guidance notes on health & safety and a model church insurance health and safety policy.
<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/churchguidance/churchhealthandsafety/hiringofchurchpremises/index.aspx>

Guidance on what churches need to consider when hiring out church premises to outside individuals organisations.

The booking agreement

Whenever the premises are hired, a formal booking agreement - that sets out the conditions of hire - should be agreed and signed. As this is a legal document, it should be drawn up following consultation with the church's legal advisers.

Health and safety

It's very important that the premises are safe for the use intended. This should form part of the church's health and safety policy.

Public liability insurance

The public liability (third party) insurance under their Parishguard policy provides an indemnity to the PCC as property owners if held legally liable for accidental bodily injury to members of the public, or accidental damage to their property while the premises are being hired.

This insurance, however, does not extend to indemnify any outside groups hiring the premises. So the PCC should obtain written confirmation from any hirers that they have public liability cover for their activities while the church premises are being hired.

Most organisations that operate on a regular basis are likely to have their own insurance cover and any individuals hiring the premises for a private function should check with their household insurers to ensure that the public liability cover would extend to include the organising of such an event.

Child protection

When hiring church premises to children's groups [a common scenario] the PCC should refer to the Diocesan Child Protection Guidelines, and/or the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser, for specific advice and guidance on this matter. It is good practice for the PCC to obtain written confirmation from any such group that it has a child protection policy and that it uses the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service.

Food Hygiene

If a church is simply providing a venue for events where an outside caterer supplies the food, then they are responsible not the PCC for complying with food hygiene legislation.

Any regular preparation of food, e.g. a community café or meals, the food hygiene regulations apply.

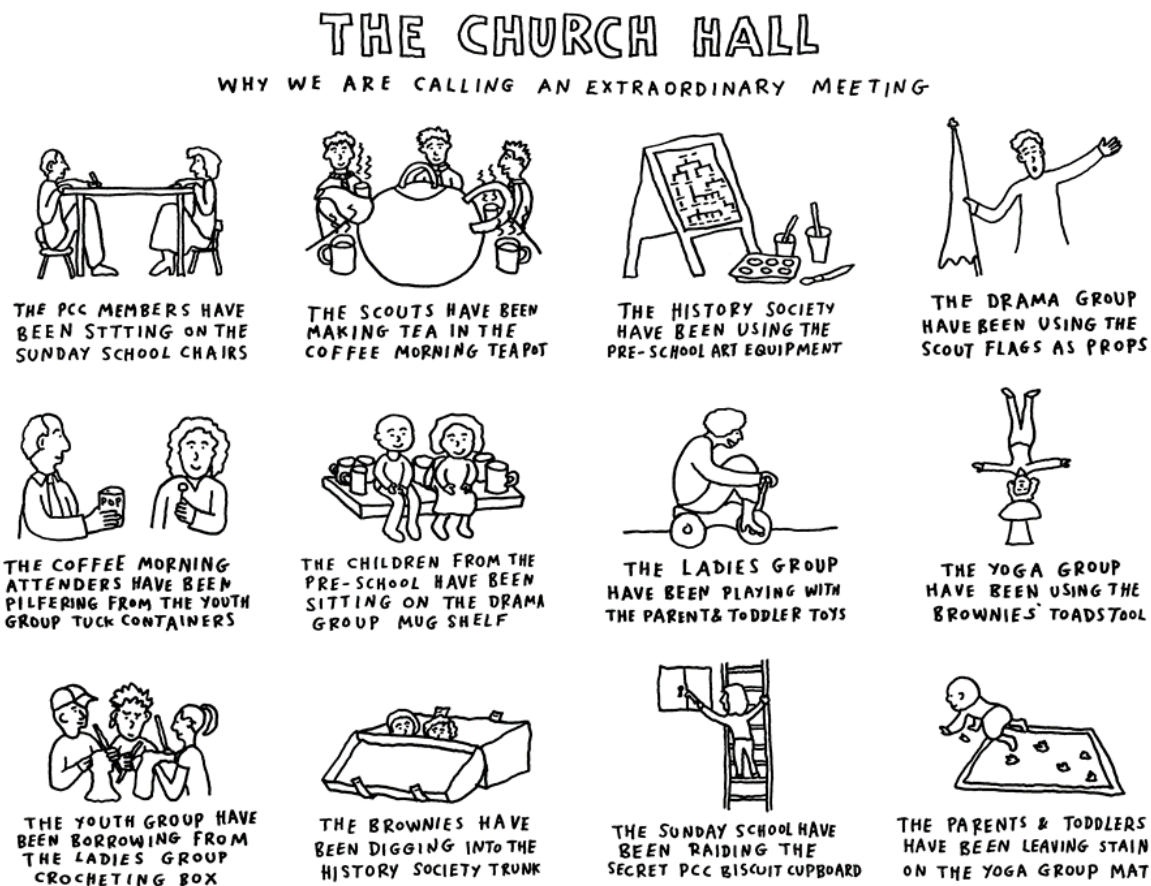
Whatever the level of food preparation there are guidelines to follow. All kitchens must be well maintained and clean.

ACRE has published an information sheet No. 20 on Health and Hygiene in Village Halls, applicable to church premises, with very useful guidelines. Order from the website or contact Surrey local adviser Karen Holdsworth-Cannon for an email version

Licences

There is a range of performing licences that might need to be considered: Video, PPL where CDs are played and PRS for concerts & performances.

CCLI can mostly supply these although if your church centre/hall is a separate building from the church PRS has to supply their licence.



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