

Wedmore Village Hall Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone connected, in whatever capacity, with Wedmore Village Hall. The safeguarding policy set out below will provide the foundation of protecting children and vulnerable adults who attend any function within the building.

It is the direct responsibility of the individual or organisation when hiring the Hall to be guided by this policy when planned activities including children and / or vulnerable adults in their programme of events.

All reasonable steps must be taken to prevent harm and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. There can be no excuse for not doing so.

Persons directly affected by the safeguarding policy adopted by Wedmore Village Hall Management Committee include the following persons who must be fully aware of its implications in practical terms:

- All trustees
- All volunteers and staff
- All those attending any activity that is being delivered from the village hall
- All visitors
- All contractors

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults using Wedmore Village Hall is paramount. Without exception, they have the right to be protected from any form of abuse which will not be tolerated on any level. Specific examples of such abuse include physical, verbal, sexual, racial, gender based, wilful exclusion, bullying or neglect.

Children and vulnerable adults regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith has the right to feel 'safe' no matter who they are or what their individual circumstances whilst using Wedmore Village Hall.

Safeguarding Policy Principles

The safeguarding policy adopted by the Trustees of Wedmore Village provides essential moral and legal guidance to support effective processes, policies, and procedures which will ensure safety for all.

This policy reflects the aims of the Charity Commission for England and Wales report produced in 2017 where:

'Trustees should proactively promote and safeguard the welfare of the charity's beneficiaries. They must take reasonable steps to ensure that their beneficiaries and others who come into contact with their charity do not, as a result, come to harm. This should be a key governance priority for trustees.'

and makes the following statements regarding funders:

‘Charities that fund other organisations ... should be confident that the partner is capable of delivering the proposed activities or services and has in place appropriate systems of control including adequate safeguarding policies and procedures’.

There can be no excuse for not taking all reasonable action to protect children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1988. People who are eligible to receive health or community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age or illness.

Consequently, the Trustees of Wedmore Village:

- have a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to any kind of abuse, regardless of type or definition.
- recognises that under the Care Act 2014 there exists a legal requirement to provide for the duty of care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. The Trustees also fully recognise their responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the terms of the Children’s Acts of 1989 and 2004.
- will respond without delay if safeguarding concerns are raised. The appointed safeguarding officer, Simon Tomes, will ensure immediate action to launch an investigation to ensure safety for all.
- will support organisations and individuals who hire the hall to ensure they are fully complicit with the terms of our adopted safeguarding policy. Organisations and individuals will be required to submit evidence of their own safeguarding policies as well as relevant Disclosure and Barring Certification (DBS forms).
- are fully committed to the principles that the welfare of children and adults considered to be at risk is paramount. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

**See Appendix A: Hiring Application Form, Compliance Protocol and Guidance Notes*

Safeguarding Policy Definitions

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person over 18 who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and is unable to protect him / herself against harm or exploitation.

Abuse can take many forms including:

- Physical abuse: covering a wide range of abuse from hitting to deprivation of liberty.
- Psychological/Emotional abuse: covering a range of abuses such as threats, exclusion, humiliation, coercion, to leaving a person feeling worthless as well as denial of basic human rights.
- Sexual abuse: covers sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.
- Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse. This form of abuse may manifest itself in forms of physical, educational, emotional and medical neglect.
- Criminal exploitation includes drug running, human trafficking and modern slavery.
- Bullying or harassment which includes cyber abuse, extremism and radicalisation.

- Financial and material abuse may involve the unauthorised taking (theft) or misuse of any money, income assets, personal belongings or property or any resources of an individual without their informed consent.

There are several important pieces of legislation that promote and safeguard children and adults at risk. The Care Act 2014 sets out the processes and definitions and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides the framework for The Vetting and Barring Scheme and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The Children's Acts from 1989 and 2004 are also key points of reference regarding such matters.

Safeguarding Procedures

All Trustees of Wedmore Village Hall will:

- sign the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Trustees' which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to matters concerning abuse.
- familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities, undertake training where appropriate on safeguarding issues including whistleblowing. Relevant training for Wedmore Village Hall Trustees is accessible online as follows and access is made to support the annual review of this policy:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1>

<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/safeguarding/>

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/safeguarding>

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/voluntary-community-groups/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

- understand the principles set out in the safeguarding policy.
- carry out safe recruitment practices at all times.
- share the key essentials of the adopted safeguarding policy with organisations and individuals who hire the hall to ensure they are fully compliant with our requirements going forward.
- ensure all hirers, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted.
- work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promotion of welfare to the benefit and safety of all concerned.
- ensure a safeguarding officer is in place. Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Named Person is Simon Tomes who can be contacted by email at chair@wedmorehall.org.uk. He is responsible for reporting concerns that arise, to investigate as a matter of urgency and report the matter to the relevant safeguarding agencies (social services, the police and Wedmore Village Hall Trustees). In the event of any alleged breaches of safeguarding within Wedmore Village Hall please follow the above steps without hesitation:
 - Report and refer the matter to the Child Protection and Vulnerable Named Person Simon Tomes
 - He will gather necessary information and will record details of the allegation. If the matter is reported at a later stage by a responsible person (e.g. a parent / carer), the

matter will be followed up by the Child Protection and Vulnerable Named Person with the responsible person in support of the child / vulnerable adult at risk. An independent witness should also attend.

- Simon Tones will record the allegations from a neutral standpoint without asking any leading questions which could 'shape' the allegation.
- Upon conclusion, the Child Protection and Vulnerable Named Person will refer on, if necessary, the matter to the relevant agency (social services/police)
- Should the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Named Person be unavailable he will be substituted by the Secretary of Wedmore Village Hall Management Committee who is also a Trustee.
- carry out an annual review of the safeguarding policy. This will be itemised as a matter for discussion on the applicable agenda and outcomes will be clearly recorded in the subsequent notes of meeting.

**See Appendix B 'Trustee Statement of Eligibility'.*

Policy adopted by the Wedmore Village Hall Management Committee on 22 May 2025

Appendix A: Hiring Compliance Protocol and Guidance

Hire Agreement

A written hire agreement is in place so that Trustees of Wedmore Village Hall and the hirer(s) understand their rights and responsibilities.

The hire agreement will be a key document as it passes responsibility for the village hall to the hiring group or individual for the period of hire. This includes compliance with all of the hall's policies, including the key aspect of safeguarding.

It is reasonable for the Trustees of Wedmore Village Hall to expect hirers to be able to provide evidence of safeguarding and DRB compliance upon request. Evidence could be in the form of a paper copy or via a link to a website to provide an online copy.

All hirers must guarantee that any activities for children and vulnerable adults 'at risk' are in accordance with the Children's Acts of 1989 and 2004

All hirers must:

- ensure that any activities for children, young people and other vulnerable adults are only provided by fit and proper persons in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- provide the Trustees of Wedmore Village Hall with a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- ensure that any activities for children under 8 years of age comply with any legislation current at the date of the hiring. All youth organisations using Wedmore Village Hall must have adequate, qualified adult supervision at all times.

Appendix B (Declaration of Acceptance of Office)

Trustee Statement of Eligibility

Name of Charity: Wedmore Village Hall

Charity Registration No: 284902

Declaration by Charity Trustee

I have received and studied the governing document of the charity and support its purposes. I realise that as a member of Wedmore Village Hall Management Committee I am one of the Charity Trustees.

I fully understand the duties and responsibilities as explained to me and as indicated in the Charity Commission Leaflet CC33a, 'Responsibilities of Charity Trustees'.

I am over 18 years of age and am not disqualified from serving as a member of the Management Committee, and in the event of my becoming disqualified, will take no further part in the committee whilst that disqualification exists.

I have a practical working knowledge of all policies (including safeguarding) adopted for use by the Wedmore Village Hall Committee to ensure full compliance at all times.

By completing and signing this form, I declare that I:

- am willing to act as a Trustee of Wedmore Village Hall
- understand the purposes of the organisation, its policies and procedures.

I am not prevented from acting as a Trustee of Wedmore Village Hall due to the fact that I:

- do not have an unspent conviction for at least one 'listed' offence.
- have never been subject to a debt relief or bankruptcy order.
- have not previously been removed as a trustee in England, Wales or Scotland by the Charity Commission or Scottish Charity Regulator
- have never been disqualified as a Company Director
- am not a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation.
- have never been included on the sex offenders register.
- have never been found in contempt of court by way of making false statements.
- have never been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission

Name (please Print):

Home Address:

Date of Birth:

Signature: