

The Hallmark Quality Scheme



Hallmark was launched by the Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) in 2007 and currently operates in 20 counties.

It promotes effective, well-managed community buildings through a quality standards scheme, backed by trustee peer assessment.

The Hallmark scheme has two main benefits:

- it provides funders and other organisations with a benchmark for a well managed community facility.**
- it gives village hall volunteers confidence that they are running the hall in the correct way.**



Community buildings benefit local residents by:

- **maintaining assets for the benefit of the local community.**
- **providing volunteering opportunities for local residents.**
- **providing membership open to the whole community.**
- **providing a venue, facilities and equipment to groups.**
- **providing local services and activities for the community.**
- **acting as a focus for the life of the community.**

Community buildings need to find efficient ways of operating at the centre of community life – an issue specifically addressed by the Hallmark Scheme.



Hallmark in County Durham:



In 2004, 145 community building `health checks` completed under the DEFRA `Change Up` programme, indicated that many organizations struggled to meet their charitable duties, their legal responsibilities and fulfilling their role as a hub at the centre of community life.

This is reinforced by the experience of DRCC staff advising community groups on their governing documents, insurance, employment, health and safety, licensing, hiring, funding, finance needs and other issues.

“Community buildings play an important role... providing a physical focus for the regeneration of communities...particularly in isolated rural areas, where they provide the only local meeting place”

Co. Durham Community Buildings Survey 2003 - Sheffield Hallam University



Outlining a strategy for community buildings, the report concludes:

“Simple indicators could be used to prioritise issues...forming part of an annual process of review and forward planning...helping to identify potential problems before they become irreversible”.

The Hallmark Scheme provides just such a set of `simple indicators`.

Hallmark 1 - Charity administration and management

Note: All items in bold must be achieved and 70% of the remainder excluding those that are not applicable to your hall

COMMITTEE	
1	Trust Deed available for committee members
2	At least two meetings held annually or as stipulated in the Trust Deed
3	50% of committee attend meetings
4	Well kept minutes
5	List kept of all committee members names and addresses and when they came into office (and when they resign)
6	Minutes to record trustees acceptance of their responsibilities on taking up office
7	Evidence that organisations (regular user groups) appoint representatives
8	Charity Commission-CC3 or The Essential Trustee is given to committee members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

9 AGM is held annually - in or near month shown in the trust deed

10 Evidence that AGM is conducted correctly i.e. in accordance with the Trust Deed

11 Annual report prepared in accordance with Charity Law for income level

ACCOUNTS

12 Policy in place for financial procedures

13 Well presented annual accounts

14 Accounts are independently examined

15 More than one trustee knows of the 'auditor'/independent examiner

16 Accounts approved and signed by trustees at meeting before their adoption at the AGM, or in accordance with the Trust Deed

17	Cheques are signed by two (unrelated, unconnected) committee members
18	Accounts indicate that the committee is managing the finances responsibly
19	Daily record of all receipts and payments are kept up to date
HIRING	
20	Hiring agreement used for all bookings
21	Clear arrangements for access to the hall - key collection
22	Instructions to hirers on use of the hall
23	Organised payment procedure in place
24	There is a clearly understood policy on the practices and procedures for hiring the hall i.e. hiring to under 18s, commercial, deposits/bonds used for all bookings.
25	Is this recorded in a written policy?
26	Tidy and/or organised booking diary

INSURANCE

	Evidence of insurance:
27	Building
28	Public liability
29	Contents
30	Insurance cover reviewed annually
31	Compliance with any insurance conditions

NOTICES

32	Health and Safety Poster
33	Employers Liability Insurance certificate current and displayed <i>(if appropriate)</i>
34	Contact name / number for the hall
35	Premises Licence Summary or copy
36	No Smoking signs on all entry doors to the building
37	Community Action/Council membership certificate on view <i>(if applicable)</i>

MAINTENANCE : OUTSIDE OF HALL**38 Free of litter****39 Planted area is well maintained****40 Gutters free of debris****41 Doors are in good condition****42 Windows are in good condition****MAINTENANCE : INSIDE OF HALL****43 Main hall decoration is in fair to good condition****44 Furniture is in fair to good condition****45 Kitchen is adequate and clean****46 Kitchen equipment is adequate and in safe condition****47 Toilets are adequate and clean****48 Other rooms are clean and tidy**