



Gamblesby is a fellside village 10 miles north-east of Penrith. Gamblesby Community Centre is on the site of what was originally the village school, built in the early 19th Century. The property was conveyed to the trustees in 1991 and has since been upgraded significantly.

Background

Improvements to the Community Centre began with a major face lift in 2006 with a new kitchen, meeting room, store and rest rooms. A simple User Manual was also put together with information for anyone using the building.

The committee of Management Trustees running the Centre ensure it is fit for purpose and well used by the community, and they are responsible for the administration of policies and procedures for this.

In 2015 new members joined the committee bringing with them experience from working in industry. It was agreed to utilise this expertise by adopting a more formal approach to administration and policy making.

Experience of an incident at work had led one committee member to be particularly aware of health and safety issues and that, like many other village halls, the centre would benefit from improvements. The first step was to create a Health and Safety File, including risk assessments, for the benefit of Centre users.

A Health and Safety sub-committee was formed with one long term trustee, a second with three years service, and a more recent member of the committee. Between them they had experience from education and industry.

The Project

Work began with a review of the existing user manual which included operating leaflets for electrical equipment such as the cooker and the dishwasher, some architects drawings, and an early Fire Risk Assessment.

The review team agreed that a more structured document, including a Health and Safety



Gamblesby Community Centre

policy, would be more appropriate, and that this would be cross referenced with the existing Hire Agreement. It was decided to document the risks both inside and outside the building, and how these would be managed going forward.

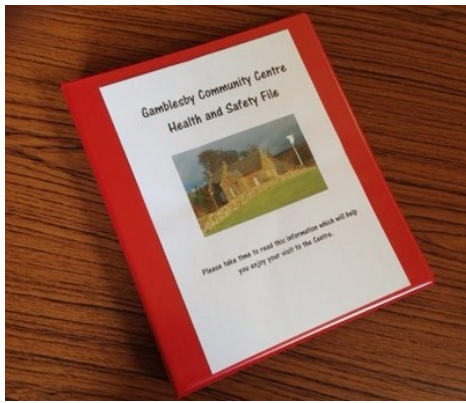
The team searched online to see what other halls were doing and whilst this showed they were far behind some, it was reassuring to see they were going down the right track.

What has been achieved?

The team began to develop **risk assessments** collated into five discreet disciplines:

- Fire risk (using an existing risk assessment);
- Hazards inside the building;
- Hazards outside the building;
- Legionella risk;
- COSHH (Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health) primarily looking at any chemicals stored in the Centre.

They used the IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) approach for writing assessments and began by creating a Hazard Check List looking at anything that had the potential to cause harm.



Gamblesby Health & Safety File



Inside Gamblesby Community Centre

The hazards were grouped together (e.g. slips and trips, falling from height, burns and scolds), and they documented who might be harmed and how, and what was happening to control the hazard.

A scoring system from 1 to 5 helped prioritise work required to reduce risk, considering both the 'Consequence' and the 'Likelihood' of injury. A higher score indicates greater risk and a need to take action. Actions that were felt appropriate and suitable were documented with an 'owner' and date to be completed.

Drafting the **Health and Safety Policy** was quite straight forward after reviewing examples found during earlier research. A statement was added describing how the committee agreed to manage Health and Safety in the Centre giving details of the sub-committee members.

The Health and Safety document began to develop to include: a Building Plan marked with safety features; Access Statement; Premises Licences; Hire Agreement; and Fire Evacuation Procedure, with some Accident and Damage Reporting Procedures and a number of other statements also added.

It was adopted at the 2016 Annual General Meeting and a laminated copy kept for users in the Centre. The document will be reviewed annually but the risk assessments are under continual review. They drive improvements by

identifying the hazards to be eliminated or managed on an on-going basis, and act as records for the Centre.

The Learning

New committee members can bring new skills and experience, but they also bring a 'fresh pair of eyes' with which to assess existing practise.

Forming a sub-committee, rather than one person carrying out the task, has helped to share the workload and the learning which is now embedded within the committee.

Health and Safety is a shared responsibility for the whole committee. To ensure it is regularly reviewed, it's been added to the monthly meeting agenda and the sub-committee carry out site inspections prior to each meeting.

The document has become more than just a Health and Safety file; additional user material is added and will be developed further into a comprehensive document available for the benefit of all users of the Community Centre.

Further Information & Guidance

Contact ACT for more information and access to free guidance materials for village halls.

Tel: 01228 817224

Email: info@cumbriaaction.org.uk

Website: www.info@cumbriaaction.org.uk

ACT champions community and rural issues

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria, Offices O - Q Skirsgill Business Park, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0FA
T: 01228 817224 | www.cumbriaaction.org.uk | info@cumbriaaction.org.uk | Follow us @ACTCumbria
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