



ACTion
with communities
in cumbria

Hallmark Toolkit

**A Quality Standards Scheme
for Village Halls**

HALLMARK 

*north west
together **wecan***



LOTTERY FUNDED



HALLMARK

Quality Standards Scheme for Village Halls

Contents

Introduction	1
Peer Assessment Procedures	2
Peer Assessment Request Form	3
Peer Assessment Request Form Guidance Notes	4-5
Village Hall Details	6
Hallmark 1	7
Checklists	8-10
Evidence	
Hallmark 2	11
Checklists	12-15
Evidence	
Hallmark 3	16
Checklists	17-20
Evidence	
Useful Websites	21-22

Introduction

Background

The Hallmark scheme was launched by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) on 30 March 2007 and currently operates in 19 counties. It promotes the delivery of effective and well-managed village halls through a quality standards scheme which is backed up by a system of peer visitors. The trained peer visitors use a system of checklists to identify performance and provide an external validation of achievement.

The Hallmark has two main benefits:

- It provides funders and other organisations interested in village halls with a benchmark for a well managed hall.
- It gives village hall volunteers confidence that they are running the hall in the correct way.

How to use this folder

This folder is designed to help you achieve the Hallmark quality standards. It sets out the procedure for applying for Hallmark, the criteria you need to meet to reach each standard and provides a place to hold some of the evidence needed to pass each level.

We have provided folders, so that you can keep the information needed in one place. You don't have to use these as long as the information is readily available for inspection by the trained peer visitor.

How Hallmark works

Any village or community hall in Cumbria (or another participating county) is eligible to apply for a Hallmark award. There are three levels, Hallmark one must be achieved before the hall moves on to Hallmark two, and Hallmark two must be achieved before Hallmark three. You don't have to commit to achieving all three levels. A Hallmark will be valid for three years from the date of the visit

- **Hallmark 1**, charitable administration and management – assesses whether the hall is complying with the requirements of its charitable status.
- **Hallmark 2**, health, safety, security and licences – assesses compliance with legislative issues.
- **Hallmark 3**, community, social awareness, forward planning and development – examines and assesses the role of the hall in the community and how it interacts with its users and the wider community.

All three levels aim to:

- Reward and establish good practice.
- Encourage improvement in established customs and procedures.
- Gain recognition for obtaining good standards in the management of the hall.

Peer assessment procedures

Once your committee has decided to work towards the Hallmark quality standard, you need to read through the criteria for the level you are working towards, starting with level one. You need to meet 70% of the criteria, including some compulsory elements to achieve each level.

The criteria for each level are detailed in this folder:

Hallmark 1	page 7
Hallmark 2	page 11
Hallmark 3	page 16

When you are confident that you can demonstrate that you meet the requirements you need to request a visit. You can do this by completing the Peer Assessment Request Form on page 3, and returning it to ACT. Guidance notes accompanying this form can be found on page 4. If you need any assistance please contact ACT – details on back page.

Your hall will be assessed by two trained peer assessors (visitors); they will come to your hall and meet with you. Please note that at least two committee members should be available to talk to the visitors. They will examine the relevant documents and walk round your hall to check that all is in order. They will make their decision based on what they see during their visit and report back to ACT to confirm if the level has been achieved. You will receive a written report detailing their findings. If the level has been achieved ACRE will issue a certificate of achievement.

The Old Stables, Redhills, Penrith
 Cumbria CA11 0DT
 Tel: 01768 840827, Fax: 01768 867972, e-mail: info@cumbriaaction.org.uk

ACT – ACRE Hallmark Peer Assessment Request Form

Name of Village Hall/Community Asset:

Name of main contact:

Position:

Telephone number:

Email:

Please tick the level for which you are requesting an assessment. Please note that you must achieve Hallmark 1 before progressing to Hallmark 2, and Hallmark 2 before progressing to Hallmark 3. Only one Hallmark will be assessed per visit.

Hallmark 1 Charity administration and management

Hallmark 2 Health, safety, security and licences

Hallmark 3 Social awareness, community, forward planning and development

Do you wish to apply for a grant to cover the Visitor's expenses: Yes No

Signed:

Date:

Please be aware that all requests for volunteer expenses are at the discretion of ACT. Funds are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Please read the Peer Assessment Request Form Guidance Notes before completing this form.

ACT will use the personal data provided on the application form to process your application and to monitor the progress made. ACT may also use information, including personal data that you provide on the form, and subsequently, for publicity purposes.

For office use only:		
Asset ID No:	Name of Visitors allocated:	Date Visitors contacted:
Date assessment received:	Date assessment sent to ACRE:	Date/amount expenses paid:

Peer Assessment Request Form Guidance Notes – ACRE Hallmark



What is the ACRE Hallmark?

The Hallmark scheme was launched by ACRE in 2007. It promotes the delivery of effective and well-managed village halls through a quality standards scheme which is backed up by a system of peer visitors. The trained peer visitors use a system of checklists to identify performance and provide an external validation of achievement.

Checklists exist for three different areas:

1. **Charity administration and management**
2. **Health, safety, security and licences**
3. **Community/social awareness, community and development**

Each level must be achieved before progressing to the next level.

Who can apply?

The application must come from an authorised committee member representing the Village Hall/Community Asset.

Before applying

Please contact ACT so that we can discuss the criteria you need to meet to achieve the level for which you are applying.

Where applicable the Peer Assessment Request form is your formal application for the payment of Visitor expenses from ACT.

Please be aware that all requests for volunteer expenses are at the discretion of ACT. Funds are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

- Each Village Hall committee is eligible to claim for visitor expenses for a maximum of two peer assessor visits.
- The Visitors (peer assessors) will be selected by ACT.
- ACT will pay expenses direct to the Visitor on receipt of a Visitors Expense Form.
- ACT will not accept responsibility for any Village Hall committee failing to adhere to a prearranged appointment. Should such circumstances arise, visitor expenses will be paid as though the assessment took place. Any subsequent expenses must be paid by the Village Hall committee.

Step 1 Please read through all the notes carefully, before requesting an assessment.

Step 2 Please be aware that ACT is keen to encourage all Village Halls and Community Asset committees, from all parishes to achieve a nationally recognised Quality Standard. However, funding available to support the process is limited.

It is important that you contact ACT before filling in your request form, to obtain the latest information and advice. We will talk through the process with you and advise on whether you are likely to meet the current priorities for this scheme. Contact details for ACT are shown below.

Step 3 Remember that to achieve each level of the ACRE Hallmark you will need to be in a position to meet 70% of the criteria, including some compulsory elements. A criteria checklist will be provided on request.

Step 4 Once you are in a position to meet the criteria, please complete a Peer Assessment Request Form and return it, together with a copy of your Governing Document and most recent account, to:

ACRE Hallmark
Action with Communities in Cumbria
Offices O-Q Skirsgill Business Park,
Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0FA
01228 817224

Step 5 On receipt, ACT will allocate the request to appropriate Visitors.

Step 6 The Visitors will contact the Village Hall/Community Asset direct to arrange an appointment.

Step 7 The Visitors will assess the Village Hall/Community Asset.

Step 8 Following the assessment the Visitors will forward all necessary paperwork to ACT, including an expenses claim form where appropriate.

Step 8 ACT will inform the Village Hall/Community Asset of the results of the assessment.

Step 9 Where the criteria have been met ACT will contact ACRE, who will issue a certificate of achievement.

Step 10 ACT will issue a cheque direct to the Visitors in payment of agreed expenses.

Hallmark 1

Charity administration and management

Please arrange for a minimum of two people and **no more than four** to be present at the visit, one of whom should be an officer of the committee. It would help if one of these could be a representative from a user group.

Documentation to be made available to the visitors by committees:

1. Minute book/file (with agendas) for all meetings including the AGM.
2. A copy of the accounts to be sent with entry or as soon as possible before the visit.
3. Daily record of all receipts and payments (book or computer records).
4. A copy of the charity's Annual report (including the Reserves Policy).
5. A copy of the Trust Deed or Charity Commission scheme or Community Association Constitution i.e. the governing documents of the charity.
6. Booking diary calendar.
7. Hiring agreement and returned booking forms, any instructions to hirers.
8. Insurance policy certificate.

Any other paperwork you feel would be useful for the visitors to see to back up your management of the hall.

HALLMARK

a quality standards scheme for village halls

Hallmark 1 - Charity administration and management Checklist for village hall management committee

Name of Hall _____

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. (Where this isn't a requirement of the governing document, the committee have made effort to ensure the committee is representative).
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 (if appropriate)
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

For more information on any of the above see ACRE village hall information sheets or publications;
 VHIS 7: Village Hall Insurance Cover
 Managing Your Hall Volume One
 Model Hiring Agreement
 Swan Good Practice Guide - Preparing for your Village Hall AGM

Please contact ACT for information on how to obtain copies of the above publications.

Hallmark 2

Health, safety, security and licences

Please arrange for a minimum of two people and **no more than four** to be present at the visit, one of whom should be an officer of the committee. It would help if one of these could be a representative from a user group.

Documentation to be made available to the visitors by committees:

1. Copy of Food Premises registration (*if applicable*).
2. Food Handlers notice.
3. Accident record.
4. Fire risk assessment.
5. Records for maintenance, emergency equipment/doors/lights.
6. Risk assessment record and safety rules.
7. Health and Safety file to include:
 - a. Fire evacuation procedure notice.
 - b. Electrical and gas safety certificates.
 - c. Reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences (RIDDOR) forms.
 - d. Copy of plan of the building which should show location of services, pipes, gas mains, water pipes, overhead power lines on site.
 - e. List of contacts from which expert advice and guidance can be obtained.
8. Health and safety policy.
9. Inventory of equipment.
10. End of session check list.



HALLMARK

a quality standards scheme for village halls

Hallmark 2 - Health, safety, security, licences Checklist for village hall management committee

Name of Hall _____

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

1	Spot check of bold items in Hallmark 1 and action points from report
2	There is a written policy on the practices and procedures for hiring the hall i.e. key collection, hirings to under 18s, commercial, deposits/bonds used for all bookings
3	Hirers are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to children and other vulnerable users
4	Contract of employment issued (<i>where applicable</i>)

HEALTH & SAFETY

5	There is a Health & Safety policy
6	Risk Assessment undertaken
7	Health and Safety poster on display (or evidence that employee has been given HSE leaflet) if appropriate
8	No Smoking sign on entry to the premises
9	Food handlers notice on display
10	First Aid Kit is well stocked, easy to find and accessible
11	Someone is responsible for keeping it well stocked
12	Accident Record kept
13	Fire Risk Assessment has been undertaken

14	Fire extinguishers are: checked annually
15	stored in allocated position
16	Correct emergency exit signs indicated by 'Running Man' sign
17	There are instructions in case of fire

18	Evacuation procedure in place
19	There are instructions on how to use the lift in the event of a fire. <i>(if applicable)</i>
20	Evidence that emergency lighting/doors checked as working
21	No emergency exit blocked by equipment or rubbish
22	Plan of premises on view showing fire exits, fire fighting equipment, alarms etc.

MAINTENANCE and SECURITY

23	There is a building maintenance record which is kept up to date
24	Location of services is indicated e.g. electric/water/gas
25	An access audit has been carried out on the hall
26	Advice regarding energy efficiency has been sought or given to users
27	There is procedure for hirers to report damage/broken equipment.
28	Someone is appointed to take the necessary action
29	Inventory of equipment (kept up to date)
30	There is a policy on money left on the premises
31	End of session check list is on view
32	Doors to rooms/stores are marked with their use
33	Items kept in the building are stored safely and tidily
34	Policy for hirers storing equipment at the hall e.g. must have committees permission, no inflammable substances
35	General hall equipment and items available to hirers are accessible, clean, safe and in good condition e.g. Chairs and tables

	The kitchen is maintained as follows:
36	Clean and sound work surfaces
37	Clean impervious floor covering
38	Wall decoration sound
39	Hot water to sinks
40	Hand washing basin with soap and hand drying facility (where applicable)
	Cleaning supplies and equipment are:
41	in good condition
42	stored safely
43	accessible for use by hirers
	Toilets are maintained as follows:
44	Toilets clean / toilet paper provided
45	Hand drying facilities
46	Hot water and soap to the basins
47	Waste bin/s provided
48	Floor surface in good condition and clean

LICENCES	
	Halls that hold a Premises Licence should have:
49	Premises Licence Summary (or a copy) on display
50	Evidence conditions are kept e.g. electrical, gas etc. checks done at a frequency required by licence conditions or set out in operating schedule
51	Lists of activities licensed and relevant conditions of the licence to pass to hirers (through hiring agreement or additional information)
52	Are Temporary Event Notices (TENs) used for all/ some licensable activities?
53	The committee have a record of the number of TENs that have been used by the hall
54	The hall complies with alcohol licensing regulations e.g. there is a Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) to authorise the sale of alcohol, or the hall uses Temporary Event Notices (TENs) for events where alcohol is sold
55	Hirers including regular users are advised about the licence requirements for the sale of alcohol
56	If there is a permanent bar - the appropriate legal arrangements are in place
57	The committee have considered the need for a PRS licence. If necessary, appropriate action has been taken.

58	Relevant users been informed about Phonographic Performance Ltd
59	The hall is registered as a food business if appropriate

For more information on any of the above see ACRE village hall information sheets or publications;
 VHIS 7: Village Hall Insurance Cover
 VHIS 9: The Village Hall and its Premises License
 VHIS 10: Alcohol in Village Halls
 VHIS 12: Phonographic Performances Ltd.

VHIS 13: The Performing Right Society
 VHIS 15: Health & Safety legislation and Village Halls
 VHIS 20: Health and Hygiene in Village Halls
 VHIS 22: Managing employees as volunteers

Model Hiring Agreement
 Your village hall management committee
 Maintaining Your Hall
 Village Hall Good Management Toolkit

Please contact ACT for information on how to obtain copies of the above publications

Hallmark 3

Community/social awareness, forward planning and development

Please arrange for a minimum of two people and **no more than four** to be present at the visit, one of whom should be an officer of the committee. It would help if one of these could be a representative from a user group.

Suggested documentation to be made available to the visitors by committees:

1. Copies of any written policies for example:
 - Hiring policy.
 - Financial policy.
 - Recruitment staff/committee members.
 - Equal opportunities policy.
 - Policy on activities involving children.
2. Any published information for example:
 - General hall leaflets.
 - Welcome leaflets for users.
 - Introduction packs for new committee members.
 - Guidance for teenage parties.
3. Village/hall newsletters or magazine.
4. Posters about events.

Any other documentation that you feel would be useful for the visitors to see.



HALLMARK

a quality standards scheme for village halls

Hallmark 3 - Community/social awareness, forward planning and development

Checklist for village hall management committee

Name of Hall _____

Note: All items in bold must be achieved and a minimum of 3 items in each section

1	Spot check of bold items in Hallmark 1 & 2 and action points from report
---	--

FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

The hall is welcoming:	
2	Directional sign to the hall
3	Clean, tidy approach to the hall
4	Entrance hall uncluttered
5	Tidy, informative notices (not too many 'Do not')

SOCIAL AWARENESS:

Details for booking the hall are accessible:	
6	Contact number displayed at the hall (visible externally)
7	It is easy to make contact with the booking clerk
8	Consideration been made for key collection/unlocking for person with a disability
The needs of people with disabilities have been considered by the provision of:	
9	a dedicated parking place for people with a disability
10	access to the building for people with disabilities?
11	toilet facilities for disabled
12	public address system
13	hearing loop available
14	notices in clear good sized print
15	Baby changing facilities are available

16	There is somewhere under cover for baby buggies and walking aids to be left
----	---

USERS:

17	There is a welcome pack/leaflet available for users
18	Established communication with users
19	There is a regular agenda item for users reports/comments/feedback
20	There is an established policy for encouraging new groups to use the hall
21	Organisations not represented on the committee are actively encouraged to appoint a representative.
22	A new club/organisation has been established and has been using the hall within the last 3 years
23	Minutes of meetings are posted at the hall.

COMMUNITY:

	Diary of events is on view:
24	externally
25	internally
26	There is evidence of a policy of open accessibility (e.g. no one group denied access to use the hall)
27	The annual report is circulated to the community
28	There are established working relations with other organisations in the area
29	There are established communications with the community e.g. newsletter, open days etc.
30	If there is spare booking capacity available there is evidence to suggest that the committee are addressing how to fill it
31	Open days are held
	Social events are held regularly:
32	for fund raising
33	to bring the community together
34	Social events are well attended by a cross section of the community

COMMITTEE:

35	The committee is representative of the community
36	Consideration been given to the inclusion of under 18s

37	New committee members are actively sought by: Consideration being given to timings of meetings
38	Arranging lifts to meetings
39	Mentoring new members
40	An introduction pack is given to new committee members
41	Committee members are encouraged to attend training
42	There is an established policy to meet committee members expenses for training
43	The whole committee take active part in the management of the hall

FORWARD PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

44	An energy efficiency audit been undertaken
45	Energy efficiency measures have been implemented
46	Hirers have been advised as to how they can save energy and recycle in the hall
47	Use has been made of a cycle rack to avoid car use
48	There is a maintenance programme in place
49	There is a contingency fund for maintenance/improvements/equipment replacement
50	Evidence of policies in place for: finances
51	recruiting new committee members/staff
52	equal opportunities
53	fund raising
54	hiring
55	health and safety/hygiene
56	environment & energy efficiency
57	Children and vulnerable users
58	others
59	There is a regular review of the above policies with records available
60	A community/users survey has been conducted in the past 5 years in order to monitor the activities that take place in the hall
61	A Parish Plan has been undertaken and the committee have ensured that the role of the hall was included

62	There are development plans: for the building
63	use of the hall
64	contribution to the community
65	There is a fundraising programme
66	There is promotional material for the hall e.g. leaflets of facilities and activities, website
67	Additional equipment/ facilities are available for hirers
68	Any other good practice elements noted

Useful websites

About Equal Opportunities provides website containing over 90 articles on equality issues www.aboutequalopportunities.co.uk

Action with Communities in Cumbria provides information on a range of rural issues including specialist advice for village halls and other community assets. www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national umbrella body of the **Rural Community Action Network (RCAN)**, which operates at national, regional and local level in support of rural communities across the country. www.acre.org.uk

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) provide employment up-to-date information, independent advice and training on a range of employment issues. Work with employers and employees to solve problems and improve performance www.acas.org.uk

AWAZ (CIC) (Cumbria) promotes the active participation of BME people and groups in the development of policy at district, county, regional and national levels. www.awazcumbria.org

Charity Commission provides up to date information on legal responsibilities and returns and it's a great place to keep up to date with changes in the law governing charities and their responsibilities for reporting, accounting, risk management, etc. www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Companies House provides on line information concerning companies limited by share and limited by guarantee, including the documents required in reporting company activity such as the appointment of directors. www.companieshouse.gov.uk

Cumbria CVS provides trustee training through their Trustee Network and advice and support on volunteer recruitment and funding. www.cumbriacvs.org.uk

Cumbria Disability Network promotes the active participation of disabled people and groups in the development of policy at district, county, and regional level. www.cumbriadisabilitynetwork.org

Cumbria Youth Alliance is a key sign-posting organisation for young people, workers, organisations, parents and carers, with over 100 organisations as members from all over Cumbria. www.cya.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission promotes equality and [human rights](#), by providing [advice and guidance](#), working to implement an effective [legislative framework](#) and raising awareness of people's rights. www.equalityhumanrights.com

Food Standards Agency exists to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food. www.food.gov.uk

Governance Works provides support to the boards of voluntary and community organisations to ensure they have the necessary understanding of governance and the skills to fulfill their roles www.governance-works.org

Health and Safety Executive provides information and support on health and safety issues including how to conduct risk assessments www.hse.gov.uk

Independent Safeguarding Authority holds information on individuals working with children or vulnerable adults where they consider them to have caused harm or pose a risk of harm. Provide information on safeguarding issues www.isa-gov.org.uk

NCVO offers lots to download and read about every aspect of governance www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Public Concern at Work (PCaW) - independent authority on public interest whistle blowing, offers advice to people with whistle blowing dilemmas and professional support to organisations www.pcaw.co.uk

Young Cumbria provides advice, information and development support to youth groups and projects throughout Cumbria. www.youngcumbria.org.uk

Alternative formats may be available. Please contact ACT on 01228 817224 to discuss your requirements.

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

Registered in England as Voluntary Action Cumbria | Charity Registration Number 1080875 | Company Number 3957858
©ACT 2012. This publication may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as ACTion with Communities in Cumbria copyright and the title of the publication specified.

DT033 ACT Toolkit 12.12.12