

Hallmark - Guidance Notes

What is the ACRE Hallmark?

Hallmark was launched by Action with Communities in Rural England (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 checklists to assess how the hall is run and provide an external validation of achievement. In Cumbria, Hallmark is overseen by ACTion with Communities in Cumbria.

There are 3 Hallmark awards covering:

- 1. Charity administration and management**
- 2. Health, safety, security and licences**
- 3. Community & social awareness, communications, forward planning and development**

Each Hallmark award is valid for a period of 3 years. Each Hallmark must be achieved before progressing to the next.

Who can apply?

The entry form must be completed by an authorised committee member representing the Village Hall.

Before applying

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

- The Visitors (peer assessors) will be selected by ACT.
- Halls are asked to contribute £50 towards the cost of volunteer Visitor travel expenses.
- ACT will not accept responsibility for any Village Hall committee failing to adhere to a prearranged appointment. Should such circumstances arise, volunteer Visitor expenses will be paid as though the assessment took place.

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

Step 2 Contact ACT for the latest information and advice. ACT will issue you with a criteria checklist. To achieve Hallmark you will need to be in a position to meet all compulsory elements, and 70% of the remaining criteria.

Step 3 Once you are in a position to meet the criteria, please complete the Hallmark Entry Form, and return it, together with: a copy of your Governing Document; most recent accounts; and a cheque payment for £50 made payable to 'Voluntary Action Cumbria' (contact us if you would prefer BACS):

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria
Offices O – Q Skirsgill Business Park,
Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0FA
Tel: 01768 425666

Step 4 On receipt, ACT will allocate the request to appropriate Visitors and arrange an assessment visit.

Step 5 The Visitors will assess the Village Hall.

Step 6 Following the assessment the Visitors will make a recommendation to ACT and forward all necessary paperwork, including a travel expenses claim form where appropriate.

Step 7 ACT will inform the Village Hall of the results of the assessment.

Step 8 Where the criteria has been met ACT will request a Hallmark certificate from ACRE and issue the certificate to the Village Hall.

Step 9 ACT will issue a cheque direct to the Visitors in payment of agreed expenses.

How long is a Hallmark award valid?

Each Hallmark award is valid for a period of 3 years, in its own right, as marked on the certificate.

When a hall is assessed for Hallmark 2, elements of Hallmark 1 (providing it has not lapsed) will also be reassessed. If these are in order, the Hallmark 1 award is deemed to be valid. If the hall also achieves Hallmark 2 a common review date for both Hallmark 1 and Hallmark 2 will be issued.

Similarly, when a hall is assessed for Hallmark 3, key elements for Hallmarks 1 and 2 will again be checked and if all are achieved a common review date will be set.