

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

7th November 2017

AGENDA ITEM 9.4 – Capacity of the Village Hall

1 Background

1.1 Council will recall asking your Clerk to seek guidance as to the capacity, in terms of numbers of persons, of the Village Hall for events.

2. Report

2.1 Contact was specifically requested with the Fire Service, to ask if a representative of the FS could visit and advise. However, the FS responded by saying that it did not carry out such a function at the present time.

2.2 Accordingly recourse was had to other potential sources of advice, in the knowledge that there seems to be no hard and fast guidance on the matter. Three separate documents, from different parts of England, available on the internet, were found and all three seemed to adopt a similar approach, which is believed to emanate from the Building Regulations.

2.3 The guidelines given comprise consideration of two criteria – the floor area of the hall in question, and the number and width of the exits from that hall. The guidelines suggest that for an event where persons are standing, an allowance of 0.5 sq m per person should be made. If the event involves persons seated at tables, then an allowance of 1 to 1.5 sq m per person should be made.

2.4 In terms of the area of the Village Hall, excluding the stage, (41.75 sq m) the resultant capacity guidelines are therefore 83 persons for a standing-only event, and 28-41 persons for a seated event (with tables as well as chairs).

2.5 The Hall has two exits – the main exit/entrance and an opening-outward fire door. If one assumes that one of these exits is blocked, and only one is in use, the capacity is of the order of 100 persons. This calculation results from consideration of the width of the remaining doorway and its ability to accommodate persons at a rate of 40 per minute over a period of 2.5 minutes.

3. Conclusion

3.1 As a result of the exercise carried out, it is suggested that the maximum figures of 80 Persons for a standing-only event, and 40 persons for a seated event (using tables and chairs) be adopted as guidelines for the letting of the Hall, with discretion being given to your Chair in conjunction with your Clerk for events that do not simply fall within either category.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That members consider the guidelines suggested.

Jack Steel
Clerk to Parish Council