



# Benenden Village Hall

The Street, Benenden, Kent. TN17 4DE

Benenden Village Hall is an asset of the Benenden Village Trust, Registered Charity 1176351

## **REGULATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF HIRE**

### **Booking Enquiries**

Persons looking to hire the hall should initially check availability on the online calendar on the hall's website (<https://benendenvillagehall.org>). Availability should then be confirmed with the hall manager by submitting an online booking enquiry, sending an email ([enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org](mailto:enquiries@benendenvillagehall.org)), or telephoning during office hours on 07419 989830. Enquiries can also be made by text message or WhatsApp and are welcome in person at the Community Office at the hall during office hours although the availability of the hall for a look around cannot be guaranteed unless by appointment.

Enquiries for regular bookings should be discussed with the hall manager either in person or via email.

Office Hours are Monday – Friday, 09:30 – 12:30.

### **Making a Booking**

After the hall manager has confirmed availability, hirers are required to complete an online booking form and confirm that they have read and agree to abide by these **regulations and conditions of hire**. A link for the online booking form will be provided to hirers when availability is confirmed.

Upon receipt of the booking form, an invoice will be sent to the hirer. A deposit will be required to secure the booking with the balance due 2 weeks prior to the event. The hall manager reserves the right to cancel a booking for which payment of the invoice has not been received by the date it is due. A payment reminder will be sent to hirers for overdue invoices and hirers will be notified if a booking is subsequently cancelled by the hall manager.

Discounted hire charges are available to parish residents and regular hirers.

Regular hirers will be invoiced on a monthly basis for the previous month's hire with 1 month for the invoice to be settled.

All hirers must be at least 18 years of age. Anyone making a booking on behalf of someone under 18 must be aware of the responsibilities for which they will be liable.

The times for which the hall is hired must include any time required for setting up and clearing away afterwards.

A minimum 15-minute gap will be maintained between bookings unless otherwise agreed by the hall manager.

Provisional bookings without a deposit will only be held for 10 days.

Unless already familiar with the hall, hirers are encouraged to make an appointment to visit the hall prior to their event and be shown around by the hall manager.

### **Deposits**

A £50.00 non-returnable booking deposit, payable upon receipt of the invoice, is required to secure a booking.

Additional returnable deposits may be required, at the discretion of the hall manager, against cleaning and/or damage.

Regular hirers will not be required to pay a deposit.

### **Payment**

The preferred method of payment for all transactions to Benenden Village Hall is by bank transfer:

Account Name: **Benenden Village Hall**

Sort Code: **20-54-25**

Account No: **23610837**

Payments can also be made by cheques made payable to Benenden Village Hall or by debit / credit card in person at the Community Office during office hours.

Hirers are requested to include their invoice number as the reference for all transactions and communication.

### **Hall hirers' Handbook**

A guide containing useful information for hirers has been produced by the hall manager. Copies are available at the hall and a link to an online version will be provided to hirers. It is recommended that hirers familiarise themselves with this handbook and its contents prior to their event.

## Cancellations

Cancellation of a booking by a hirer must be made in writing or by email and will only be effective after confirmation by the hall manager.

Refunds will be paid as follows:

- 8+ weeks prior to the event: full refund (excluding booking deposit)
- 4+ weeks prior to the event: 50% refund (excluding booking deposit)
- 2+ weeks prior to the event: 25% refund (excluding booking deposit)
- Less than 2 weeks prior to event: no refund

Cancellation of bookings by regular hirers with less than 7 days' notice will be charged at the discretion of the hall manager.

Benenden Village Trust reserve the right to cancel or amend a booking by informing the hirer in writing, or by email, in the event of:

- the premises, or part thereof, being required for use as a Polling Station for a Parliamentary or Local Government election or by-election.
- it is reasonably considered that a breach of licensing conditions, legal or statutory requirements or unlawful or unsuitable activities will take place at the premises as a result of the booking.
- the premises becoming unfit for the use intended by the hirer.

In the event of a booking being cancelled by Benenden Village Trust, the hirer shall be entitled to reimbursement of such monies paid by the hirer. The trust shall not be liable to meet any other costs or make any further payment to the hirer.

As part of the agreement to offer discounted rates to regular hirers it is accepted that there may be occasions when the hall is unavailable and it may be necessary for bookings to be amended, moved or cancelled.

## Building Access & Security

Benenden Village Hall has a state-of-the-art facial recognition system for accessing the building via the main entrance. Regular hirers can have their image added to the system to allow access at permitted times by having their face recognised by the door entry system. Other hirers will be provided with their own temporary QR code together with instructions a few days prior to their event.

Hirers are responsible for controlling access to the building during their event and may be liable for any loss or damage caused by persons accessing the building during their period of hire.

Hirers are responsible for ensuring that the building is secure when they leave or may be held liable for any subsequent loss or damage.

## Hirer's Liability

Hirers must comply with all Health & Safety Regulations made in respect of the premises. Nothing should be done that will endanger the safety of persons or render invalid the insurance policies relating to the hall and its contents.

By reading and accepting these **regulations and conditions of hire**, hirers undertake to reimburse to the village hall, all costs, charges or expenses which may be incurred as a direct result or consequence of such damage or loss. In the event of an insurance claim being made under the trust's policy for loss, damage or liability, the hirer shall pay the excess charge.

Hirers are advised to arrange insurance cover for the period of hire to meet any claims for which they may be held liable.

## Safety and Supervision

Hirers must be present during their event and are responsible for ensuring that the premises are only used for the purpose described in the booking agreement and may not sub-hire or allow the premises to be used for any unlawful purpose.

During the hire period, hirers are responsible for the supervision of the premises and the care of its fabric and contents, to ensure safety from damage. Hirers are also responsible for the supervision of the behaviour of all persons using the premises during the event.

Children should not enter the kitchen except under careful supervision. Avoid overcrowding in the kitchen.

Close supervision of children is also required on the stage and in the car park.

The main hall balcony area is usually kept locked but may be used by hirers (when hiring the main hall) or may allow parents of children attending an event to do so. Children must be supervised at all times in the balcony area. Location of the key to the balcony gate is available from the hall manager.

## **First Aid**

A basic First Aid kit is situated in the kitchen. The Accident Book kept with it should be completed if any accident occurs. Certain types of accident or injury must be reported on a special form to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Incident Contact Centre. Please contact the hall manager for further information.

The nearest defibrillator is located on the far side of the village green at Wheelwrights House, The Street, Benenden, Kent, TN17 4DJ (see poster by first aid kit).

## **Fire Safety**

Hirers are responsible for ensuring that they, and persons at their event, are familiar with the location of the fire exits, fire assembly point, evacuation alarms and fire extinguishers. In the event of a fire, however slight, the hirer should ensure that everybody evacuates the building as a priority and the Emergency Services contacted. Hirers must ensure that emergency exit doors and evacuation routes are clear from obstructions at all times.

Hirers organising events should ensure that there are sufficient nominated 'fire wardens' present who are familiar with the processes to be followed should the need to evacuate the building arise. Further advice is available from the hall manager prior to the event.

Hirers must not use and pyrotechnics, haze, smoke or fog machines without permission from the hall manager as they may be considered to be a fire hazard or activate the fire alarm.

Hirers must not use candles in the hall without permission from the hall manager. Liquid petroleum installations of any kind, gas lamps, oil lamps, candle lamps shall not be used within the premises.

Electric appliances and equipment used within the stage area should be sited so that they are not liable to come into contact with the curtains, drapes or scenery.

Fireworks and Chinese lanterns are not permitted in any circumstances.

## **Electrical Equipment**

All electrical equipment brought into the hall must be Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) and approved for use. The Trust does not accept any responsibility for equipment belonging to the hirer used in the hall during a hiring, nor any damage however caused. Such equipment is the sole responsibility of the hirer. Do not operate or touch any electrical equipment where there are signs of damage, exposure of components or water penetration.

## **Discos, Bands & Music**

Benenden Village Hall holds a premises licence for licensed activities between the hours of 09:00 and 23:00 permitting plays, films, indoor sporting events, live music, recorded music, dance performances, and the sale and supply of alcohol. Such activities are not permitted outside of these hours.

An additional fee is required to use the hall's alcohol licence for the sale of alcohol on the premises.

The hall is equipped with a 100-decibel sound limiter that automatically operates to control noise levels.

Hirers should ensure that doors and windows are kept closed while amplified music is being played and that the function does not cause a nuisance to neighbours.

## **Food Health and Hygiene**

If preparing, serving or selling food, hirers should ensure that all relevant food health and hygiene regulations are observed. Children are not permitted in the kitchen except under careful supervision and particular care should be taken when using any kitchen or cooking equipment. All food is to be removed at the end of the hire period by the hirer.

## **Safeguarding & Compliance with The Children Act 1989**

Hirers shall ensure that any activities for children comply with the safeguarding provisions of The Children Act 1989 and that only fit and proper persons have access to the children.

Children should not be allowed outside the building during an event unless supervised by an appropriate adult.

Hirers should ensure that only authorised persons have access to the building during an event.

## **Sale of Goods**

If selling goods on the premises, hirers, and any persons attending their event, must comply with fair trading laws and any codes of practice applicable in connection with such sales.

## **Alcohol**

If there will be alcohol available at an event, hirers are responsible for complying with licensing legislation and ensuring:

- a) the hall manager has been notified.
- b) no person under the age of 18 consumes alcohol.
- c) persons becoming unruly or incapable are removed from the premises.
- d) no nuisance or damage is caused to local residents or their property.

- e) no alcohol is served or sold after 23:00.

The hall manager and representatives of Benenden Village Trust reserve the right to enter the building at any time during an event to ensure compliance with these **regulations and conditions of hire**.

Failure to comply with these conditions, or if minors are found to be consuming alcohol on the premises, may result in immediate cancellation of the event without notice, refund or compensation.

Hirers are able to use the hall's alcohol licence at a cost of £25.00. Alternatively, hirers can obtain a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) from Sevenoaks District Council. If obtaining a TEN, the hirer needs to allow 10 working days for the licence to be issued. A copy of the TEN must be provided to the hall manager in advance of the hall hire date.

### **Changing Rooms**

Changing rooms, located to the rear of the stage, are available to hire. The changing rooms are equipped with two electric showers in each with adjacent toilets. There are also small fridges in each changing room that hirers are welcome to use.

Use of the changing rooms, if available, is included with hire of the entire venue. The changing rooms can also be hired for use with the recreation field and accessed independently from the hall.

Please notify the hall manager if you intend to use the changing rooms during your event.

### **Heating and lighting**

Heating and lighting are included as part of the hire charge.

The main hall heating is controlled by a schedule and thermostat. The hall manager is responsible for setting the times and temperatures for heating the main hall. Hirers may adjust the thermostat to suit their own needs. It is not necessary to reset the thermostat after use as it will automatically reset as per the programmed schedule.

The small hall / meeting room is heated independently to the main hall by two wall-mounted electric heaters. Hirers may use these as required but must ensure that both heaters are switched off before leaving the building.

Several portable electric heaters are available in the event of any issues with the heating. Please contact the hall manager if these are required.

### **Accidents and Damage**

Benenden Village Trust reserves the right to make an additional charge, or retain any additional deposit paid, to meet the cost of replacement of any broken items, or reparation to the building.

Hirers may be liable to pay for all damage (including accidental damage) to the premises or to the fixtures, fittings or contents and for any loss of contents.

Any damage or breakages should be brought to the attention of the hall manager as soon as possible.

All spillages must be cleaned up immediately.

### **Preparing, Setting Up and Clearing Away**

The times for which the hall is hired must include any time required for setting up and clearing away afterwards.

No alterations or additions may be made to the premises, nor may any fixtures be installed or other articles be attached to any part of the premises without the prior approval of the hall manager.

Tables and chairs are available for hirers to use in both the small hall / meeting room cupboard and the main hall cupboard. Take care moving them and use the trolley provided when moving the chairs. Please clean, stack and return all tables and chairs to the appropriate cupboard after use.

Please do not allow your guests to flush sanitary products and nappies down the toilets (use the sanitary bins provided). Please ensure the toilets are left in good condition at the end of your event.

On leaving, all lights should be turned off, and the building should be left in a clean condition with all rubbish and articles removed. Please leave quietly so as not to disturb nearby residents. If hirers do not leave the hall by the agreed time, an additional charge may be made.

A checklist is displayed in the foyer to assist hirers when clearing up after an event.

### **Temporary Seating**

If rows of seating will be used at an event, there are minimum recommended widths (1050 mm) for gangways to comply with the guidance for fire risk assessments and evacuation plans. It is therefore recommended that there are no more than 12 chairs in a row with gangways either side, or 10 chairs (5 either side) if there will also be a centre gangway.

Government published guidance on the use of temporary seating states:

**If temporary seating is provided, these should be secured in lengths of not fewer than four seats (and not more than 12). Each length should be fixed to the floor.**

Whilst it is impractical for rows of chairs to be fixed to the floor, it is recommended that chairs are joined together to reduce the hazard that unsecured seating may cause in the event of an evacuation.

### **Personal Belongings**

Benenden Village Trust accepts no responsibility for any equipment or other personal belongings brought onto or left on the premises by hirers or other persons attending an event, and all liability for loss or damage is hereby excluded.

All equipment and other property brought onto the premises must be removed at the end of each hiring unless otherwise agreed with the hall manager. An additional fee may be charged to the hirer in relation to items left on the premises. Benenden Village Trust reserves the right to request that hirers remove their equipment at any time.

Benenden Village Trust reserves the right to dispose of any items of found property after an appropriate period of time.

Last Updated: December 2025