

Hallmark Toolkit

A Quality Standards Scheme
for Village Halls

February 2017

HALLMARK

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Introduction

Background

The Hallmark scheme was launched by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) in March 2007 and currently operates in 19 counties across England. 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-based visits. The trained peer visitors use a system of checklists to identify performance and provide an external validation of achievement. The system is overseen by the Community Buildings Advisor at the participating Rural Community Action Network member organisation (Cheshire Community Action). This toolkit is designed to help you achieve the Hallmark quality standards. It sets out the procedure for applying for Hallmark along with the criteria you need to meet to reach each level.

Benefits

Why bother going through the time and expense of a Hallmark assessment? Well, the scheme has two main benefits. It provides funders and other organisations interested in village halls with a benchmark for a well-managed hall and it gives village hall volunteers confidence that they are running the hall in the correct way.

There are also other reasons why you should consider an assessment:

- It reassures the committee that they are up to date and correct with legislation and other requirements
- It can inspire confidence in hall users
- It can help to encourage new trustees onto the committee
- It may encourage more bookings for the hall
- It ensures funders of the hall's professionalism
- It is a nationally-recognised scheme with the same standards across each county
- You may be entitled to discounts from some insurers
- It enables halls to share best practice and learn from each other
- You get a certificate which you can display in your building to show how well it is being managed

Here's what some halls that have been through the process say about the scheme:

“The recognition that you have a well-run hall gives you extra credibility and you can use the logo mark to promote it. You can also get a discount on your insurance premium – we are looking into that now. We’re very proud of what we have achieved. It has taken a lot of hard work from all the committee members and I’d like to pay tribute to them. We’ve already done a lot to make it more attractive for group activities. We think we can now promote it more and bring in more people.” James Hoyles, Newton Village Hall, Fenland

“Obtaining Hallmark status highlighted the shortfall in the trustees’ procedures and legal obligations they were not aware of. We now have a structured line of responsibilities to manage the hall, which as a direct result we have secured grants of over £50,000 to refurbish our hall as well as a discount on the insurance premium and other benefits that Hallmark brings.” Isle Abbots Village Hall

How Hallmark works

Any charitable village or community hall in Cheshire (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 award will be valid for three years from the date of the visit.

- **Hallmark 1** focuses on charitable administration and management. It assesses whether the hall is complying with the requirements of its charitable status.
- **Hallmark 2** focuses on health, safety, security and licences. It assesses compliance with legislative issues.
- **Hallmark 3** focuses on community, social awareness, forward planning and development. It 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 and gain recognition for obtaining good standards in the management of the hall.

After a period of 3 years, a Hallmark award is not deemed to be valid. There will need to be a complete re-assessment if no other Hallmark is undertaken. This is important because of the implications of changes in legislation and possible changes of personnel at the hall. Progression to the next Hallmark is not possible if the previous Hallmark has lapsed.

When a hall is assessed for Hallmark 2 there will be a check of all bold items from Hallmark 1 (providing it has not lapsed). If these are in order, the Hallmark 1 award is deemed to be valid. If the hall also successfully achieves Hallmark 2, a common review date for 1 and 2 will be given. For example, a hall successfully achieves Hallmark 1 in May 2017 and goes on to achieve Hallmark 2 in May 2018. The hall will be awarded two certificates, Hallmark 1 and 2 both dated May 2018, valid for 3 years. When a hall is assessed for Hallmark 3, there will be a check of all bold items from Hallmark 1 and 2 (provided they have not lapsed). This then gives a common review date for Hallmark 1, 2 and 3, if Hallmark 3 is successfully achieved. Three separate certificates will be issued, valid for 3 years.

Renewals shall be clearly stated on the certificate. For example, if a hall achieves Hallmark 1 in May 2017 and then applies for Hallmark 1 again in May 2020, it will be stated on the certificate that it is a renewal.

It may be possible for a hall to be assessed for Hallmark 1 and 2 at the same time.

It is recommended that a full assessment of Hallmark 3 should not be taken at the same time as an assessment of Hallmark 1 & 2, unless it is a renewal.

Visits and Visitors

Visitors are volunteers, either members of other hall management committees in the county or people who have been closely involved with the work of village hall committees. They are asked to sign up to a code of conduct and to attend a training session that will be provided by CCA.

Either the Community Buildings Advisor or two visitors will attend each assessment, having received a copy of the hall's entry form and the relevant documents and checklists.

Assessment and Reports

To gain a Hallmark award all items in bold must be achieved and 70% of the remainder, excluding those that are not applicable to the hall. A report will be issued to the hall following the assessment, highlighting both areas of good practice and areas where improvements could be made.

If a hall is not successful, then a time frame can be agreed with CCA for rectifying problems or processes. In the majority of cases, this would not involve another visit.

Certificates

Certificates are issued by ACRE and should not be recreated in any format. Renewal certificates will state that the Hallmark award has been 'retained' and will include the date when the Hallmark award was first awarded

Accountability

CCA is ultimately accountable for the scheme. CCA's Community Buildings Advisor should have sight of all reports and documentation, including the trust deeds and accounts, and should sanction the awards. CCA needs to be satisfied that documents such as the trust deeds and accounts are in order for a Hallmark to be achieved.

The Assessment Procedure

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 Hallmark 1. 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 toolkit. 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 an entry form and returning it to Cheshire Community Action along with an administration fee of £20. If you are applying for a level one assessment, you will also need to enclose a copy of your latest accounts and constitution/governing document. If you need any assistance please contact Cheshire Community Action – details on back page.

Your hall will be assessed either by CCA’s Community Buildings Advisor or by two trained peer assessors (visitors); they will come to your hall and meet with you. You may be required to pay the visitors travel expenses. 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 CCA 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.

Each step is summarised in the table below:

Step 1	Seek agreement from your committee to work towards a Hallmark assessment
Step 2	Read through all the notes carefully, before requesting your assessment. 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
Step 3	Once you are in a position to meet the criteria, complete an entry form and return it, together with the £20 admin fee and a copy of your governing document and most recent accounts to: Hallmark, Cheshire Community Action, Queens House Annexe, Queens Road, Chester, CH1 3BQ or e-mail your documents to claire.jones@cheshireaction.org.uk
Step 4	On receipt, CCA will arrange the visit either by the Community Buildings Advisor or by two trained peer assessors. Please set out on your entry form the best time for the visit when all areas of the hall will be accessible

Step 5	Your community building will be assessed. At least 2 of your committee members should be in attendance and you will need various documents to hand
Step 6	Following the assessment, your assessor will complete a report and forward all necessary paperwork to CCA, including an expenses claim form, where appropriate. Their report will include any recommendations for attention so you can address any shortcomings
Step 7	CCA will inform you of the results of your assessment
Step 8	Where the criteria have been met and you have paid any outstanding expenses, CCA will contact ACRE, who will issue a certificate of achievement
Step 9	Celebrate! You may want to hold a celebration evening or issue a press statement. You are then free to promote your Hallmark status in any advertising or marketing strategy or in any funding applications

Appendices

- Hallmark One – Joining Instructions and hall checklist
- Hallmark Two – Joining Instructions and hall checklist
- Hallmark Three – Joining Instructions and hall checklist

APPENDIX 1

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 be helpful if one of these could be a representative from a user group.

Documentation to be made available to the visitors by the committee

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
5. A copy of the trust deed or Charity Commission scheme or community association constitution i.e. the governing document of the charity
6. Booking diary/calendar
7. Hiring agreement and returned booking form including any instructions to hirers
8. Insurance policy and certificate

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

Hallmark 1 Checklist for Village Hall Management Committee

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
8	Charity Commission CC3 The Essential Trustee is given to committee members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	
9	AGM is held annually - in or close to the 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 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 bookings and deposits which are used for all bookings

25	The policy on the practices and procedures for hiring the hall is recorded in a written policy
26	Tidy and organised booking diary

INSURANCE	
	Evidence of insurance:
27	Building
28	Public liability
29	Contents
30	Employers liability insurance certificate current and displayed, if appropriate
31	Insurance cover reviewed annually
32	Compliance with any insurance conditions

NOTICES	
33	Health and safety poster
34	Contact name/number for the hall
35	Premises Licence Summary or copy
36	At least one legible 'No Smoking' sign displayed at the premises
37	Community Action/Council membership certificate on view (<i>if applicable</i>)

MAINTENANCE : OUTSIDE OF HALL	
38	Evidence that outside of hall is well maintained e.g. free of litter, gutters free of debris, planted areas are well maintained, doors and windows in good condition

MAINTENANCE : INSIDE OF HALL	
39	Evidence that inside of hall is well maintained, clean and tidy, e.g. main hall decoration is in fair to good condition; kitchen is adequate and clean and the equipment is in safe condition; toilets are adequate and clean; furniture is in fair to good condition.

For more information on any of the above see ACRE Information Sheets (IS) or publications:

- IS 7: Village hall Insurance Cover
- IS 9: Entertainment in Village Halls
- IS 17: Trustee Roles and Responsibilities
- IS 40: Village halls, Governing Documents and Title Deeds
- IS 41: Accounting and Village Halls

Your Village Hall Management Committee
Maintaining your Hall
Model Hiring Agreement

APPENDIX 2

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 be helpful if one of these could be a representative from a user group.

Documentation to be made available to the visitors by committee:

1. Copy of Food Premises registration (if applicable)
2. Any employment contracts (if applicable)
3. Food Handlers notice
4. Accident record
5. Fire risk assessment
6. Records for maintenance, emergency equipment/doors/lights
7. Risk assessment record and safety rules
8. 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
9. Health and Safety policy
10. Inventory of equipment
11. End of session check list

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

Hallmark 2 Checklist for Village Hall Management Committee

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

CHECK	
1	Check 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 (where applicable)

HEALTH AND 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) where appropriate
8	Food handlers notice on display
9	First aid kit is well stocked, easy to find and accessible
10	Someone is responsible for keeping the first aid kit well stocked
11	Accident Record kept
12	Fire Risk Assessment has been undertaken
	Fire extinguishers are:
13	Checked annually by authorised person
14	Stored in allocated position
15	Correct emergency exit signs indicated by 'Running Man' sign
16	Instructions in case of fire
17	Evacuation procedure in place
18	There are instructions on how to use the lift in the event of a fire (if applicable)
19	Evidence that emergency lighting/doors checked as working
20	No emergency exit blocked by equipment or rubbish
21	Plan of premises on view showing fire exits, fire-fighting equipment, alarms etc.

MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY	
22	There is a building maintenance record which is kept up to date
23	Location of services is indicated e.g. electric/water/gas
24	An access audit has been carried out on the hall
25	Advice regarding energy efficiency has been sought or given to users
26	There is procedure for hirers to report damage/broken equipment.

27	Someone is appointed to take necessary action
28	Inventory of equipment (kept up to date)
29	There is a policy on money left on the premises
30	End of session check list is on view
31	Doors to rooms/stores are marked with their use
32	Items kept in the building are stored safely and tidily
33	There is a policy for hirers storing equipment at the hall e.g. must have committees permission, no inflammable substances
34	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:
35	Clean and sound work surfaces
36	Clean impervious floor covering
37	Wall decoration sound
38	Hot water to sinks
39	Hand washing basin with soap and hand drying facility (where applicable)
	Cleaning supplies and equipment are:
40	in good condition
41	stored safely
42	accessible for use by hirers
	Toilets are maintained as follows:
43	Toilets clean / toilet paper provided
44	Hand drying facilities
45	Hot water and soap to the basins
46	Appropriate waste bin/s provided
47	Floor surface in good condition and clean

LICENCES

	Halls that hold a Premises Licence should have:
	Premises Licence Summary (or a copy) on display
48	Evidence conditions are kept e.g. electrical, gas etc. checks done at a frequency required
49	by
	licence conditions or set out in operating schedule
50	List of activities licensed and relevant conditions of the licence to pass to hirers (through hiring agreement or additional information)
51	Temporary Event Notices (TENs) are used for all/some licensable activities
52	The committee have a record of the number of TENs that have been used by the hall
53	The hall complies with alcohol licensing regulations
54	Hirers including regular users are advised about the licence requirements for the sale of alcohol

55	If there is a permanent bar - the appropriate legal arrangements are in place
56	The hall has a Performing Right Society Licence (PRS)
57	The hall has a Phonographic Performance Licence (PPL) (Or has made alternative arrangements – If appropriate, demonstrate that the PPL is not needed)
58	If relevant the hall is registered as a food business

For more information on any of the above see ACRE Information Sheets (IS) or publications:

- IS 9: Entertainment in Village Halls
- IS 10: Alcohol in Village Halls
- IS 15: Health & Safety Legislation and Village Halls
- IS 20: Health and Hygiene in Village Halls
- IS 22: Managing Employees and Volunteers
- IS 37: Fire Safety in Village Halls

- Model Hiring Agreement
- Maintaining your Hall
- Village Hall Good Management Toolkit

APPENDIX 3

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 be helpful if one of these could be a representative from a user group.

Documentation to be made available to the visitors by committee:

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 magazines

4. Posters about events

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

Hallmark 3 Checklist for Village Hall Management Committee

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

CHECK	
1	Check of bold items in Hallmark 1 & 2 and action points from report

OVERALL VIEW OF THE HALL	
2	Hall is clearly signed
3	Clean, tidy approach to the hall
4	Entrance hall uncluttered
5	Tidy, informative notices (not too many 'Do not')
6	The equipment and facilities available are appropriate to the size of the hall and kept in good order

ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES:	
7	Details for booking the hall are accessible: Contact number displayed at the hall (visible externally)
8	It is easy to make a booking
9	It is easy for everyone to access the key
10	The needs of people with disabilities have been catered for, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a dedicated parking place for people with a disability • access to the building for people with disabilities • toilet facilities for people with a disability • induction loops and public address system • signs and notices are easy to understand, visible, and of sufficient number. They should be in a good sized print, with strong contrast between text and background
11	Baby changing facilities are available and there are clear instructions for disposal of nappies
12	There is somewhere under cover for baby buggies and walking aids to be left

HIRERS AND USER GROUPS	
13	There is a welcome pack/leaflet available
14	Regular communication with hirers and user groups ensuring that they are kept informed about hall matters and local community activities and events at the hall
15	Hirers are aware of the hall operating procedures
16	There is a regular agenda item for users reports/comments/feedback
17	There is evidence of encouraging new groups to use the hall

18	Organisations not represented on the committee are actively encouraged to appoint a representative
19	A new club/organisation has been established and has been using the hall within the last 3 years
20	Approved minutes of meetings are posted at the hall, or on the website

COMMUNITY	
21	Diary of events is publicly available e.g. local notice board, website, newsletter
22	There is evidence of open accessibility for new users (e.g. no one group denied access to use the hall)
23	The annual report is made available to the community
24	There are established working relations with other organisations in the area
25	There are established and varied communications with the community including promotional material and it is of a good standard
26	If there is spare booking capacity available there is evidence to suggest that the committee are addressing how to fill it
27 28	Social events are held regularly: for fund raising to bring the community together
29	Social events are well attended by a cross section of the community
30	There is an internet connection at the hall and it is used effectively

COMMITTEE	
31	The committee is representative of the community or evidence that effort has been made to widen the representation
32	Consideration been given to the inclusion of under 18s
33	New committee members are actively sought e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration being given to timings of meetings • Arranging lifts to meetings • Mentoring new members
34	An introduction pack is given to new committee members
35	Committee members are encouraged to attend training
36	There is an established policy to meet committee members expenses for training
37	The whole committee take active part in the management of the hall

ENVIRONMENT	
38	An energy efficiency audit been undertaken
39	Energy efficiency measures have been implemented
40	Hirers have been advised as to how they can save energy and recycle in the hall
41	There is a cycle rack to avoid car use

BUILDING MANAGEMENT	
42	There is a maintenance programme in place
43	There is a contingency fund for maintenance/improvements/equipment replacement
	Evidence of policies in place for:
44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finances (including Reserves)
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruiting new committee members/staff
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equal opportunities
47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fund raising
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hiring
49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and safety/hygiene
50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environment & energy efficiency
51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and vulnerable users
52	There is a regular review of the above policies with records available

FORWARD PLANNING	
53	A community/users survey has been conducted in the past 5 years in order to monitor the activities that take place in the hall
54	A community led plan has been undertaken and the committee have ensured that the role of the hall was included
	There are development plans:
55	for the building
56	for use of the hall
57	contribution to the community
58	There is a fundraising programme

For more information on any of the above see ACRE Information Sheets (IS) or publications:

- IS3: Providing Services in Village Halls
- IS5: Village Halls, Children and Young People
- IS19: Marketing Your Village Hall
- IS25: Making your Village Hall Accessible
- IS28: Creating a Business Plan
- IS42: Equality in Village Halls

Your Village Hall Management Committee



For all Hallmark queries, please contact:

Claire Jones
Community Buildings Advisor
Cheshire Community Action
Queens House Annexe
Queens Road
Chester
Cheshire
CH1 3BQ

Telephone: 01244 400222

E-mail: claire.jones@cheshireaction.org.uk