

Mileham Village Hall

Equal Opportunities Policy v1.1

This policy applies to all users of the Mileham village hall including, but not limited to, the Mileham Village Hall Committee members, members of the public who use or visit the premises and any service providers. For ease of reference, throughout this policy the term 'user' will be used to mean any member of the above groups.

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to clearly state that the Mileham Village Hall Committee will not support the hall being used for any unlawful purpose or in any way that includes or encourages any unfair discriminatory practices.

It sets out how the Committee seeks to achieve this and how an investigation may be taken if a breach of the policy is suspected.

All users of the village hall undertake to actively comply with the provisions of this policy.

Breadth of Policy

Subject only to the overriding rule of law or any other applicable policy of the Mileham village hall which is designed to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements, or to safeguard the needs of vulnerable children and adults, this policy will apply to all users in order to ensure that they are not unfairly discriminated against on any of the following grounds:-

Age, nationality, country of origin, ethnicity, gender, gender assignment or reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, creed, faith, perceived social status or disability status.

Use of Mileham Village Hall

All users who seek to book the village for any lawful and acceptable purpose will be treated equally with regard to the processing of their applications. Generally bookings will be accepted on a 'first come first served' basis without unlawful prejudice or favour. However, the Committee reserve the right to refuse any booking that it deems unlawful, not in keeping with the family focus of a community facility or which may potentially result in undue noise or nuisance to neighbouring properties.

Any user who books the hall for an activity such as a class or educational event is fully and personally responsible for ensuring that any criteria that they apply to accepting attendees is completely fair, justifiable and transparent. Failure to do so may result in the booking being cancelled.

Physical Access to Mileham Village Hall

The Committee seeks to ensure that any physical constraints that might affect users will be mitigated as far as reasonably possible. The hall currently has disabled access, a designated toilet facility and external ramps leading from from the fire exits. The Committee will regularly review the suitability of the hall for use by all members of the

disabled community, with a view to improving the facilities available as and when possible.

Tenders for Suppliers of Goods and Services to Mileham Village Hall

On occasion it may be necessary for the Committee to seek tenders, estimates or quotations for the supply of goods and/or services necessary to ensure the safe operation of the premises. The Committee will seek to ensure that any invitations to submit tenders, estimates or quotations and any decisions on which to accept, are made in line with legal requirements. All such decisions will be made without favouritism or prejudice and based on a clear combination of the fulfilment of the specification, economic factors, performance parameters and time-scale considerations.

The Committee will seek to ensure that in specifying or awarding any order or contract they do not attach any discriminatory or prejudicial conditions. Equally, any supplier or contractor bidding for or accepting work from the Committee will be required to ensure that they act in full accordance with the necessary legal requirements with regard to equal opportunities in the supply of goods and services. This will include, where applicable, any legislation relating to employment practices.

Election of Mileham Village Hall Committee

The Committee is elected on an annual basis. The nomination of potential members and the election of members takes place at an annual general meeting that is fully open to all members of the public. This meeting is advertised in advance using medium such as the village hall notice board, the local Church and Village publication and via the village website. All attendees are welcome to nominate members (including self nomination) and to vote on the outcome.

All Committee members are unpaid volunteers. They give their time freely as a service to the community, as do many other people associated with the village hall but not necessarily acting as Committee members.

Any attempted or actual intimidation, bullying, prejudice or harassment against a Committee member or any other volunteer will not be tolerated and will be subject to investigation and potential action as set out below.

Breach of Policy

Any suspected breach of this policy should be immediately reported to any member of the Committee. Whilst a written statement outlining the specific concerns being raised is preferable, it is recognised that some people may be reluctant to provide this or that information may even be received anonymously. All claims should be investigated, as far as is reasonably possible, irrespective of how they are received.

All members of the Committee should be informed of the nature of the complaint. The Committee shall then decide how and by whom the complaint should be investigated along with the time-scale for the completion of the investigation.

Whilst it is recognised that the form of the investigation will need to be tailored to the allegations, the following will need to be adhered to in all cases

- Any allegation involving a breach of equalities legislation should be reported to the police and their advice sought on how to proceed further;
- Any investigation should be completed as swiftly and discreetly as possible;
- If an allegation is made against a Committee member then that individual undertakes to co-operate fully in the investigation, as required by the other Committee members, but not to be involved in the final decision;
- The outcome of the investigation should be reported back along with recommendations for action (if any). Except as stated above, the Committee must then vote on what action (if any) to take and how this shall be communicated to all relevant parties;
- Where any recommended remedial action is required it should be clear who is to lead on this and the time-scales for successful completion;
- The investigation, its recommendations and the final outcome(s) must be fully documented.

Remedial Actions

Where legal proceedings are not involved and any remedial actions are for the Committee to determine, then the following should be duly considered.

The Committee will at all times seek to foster good community relations. In the case of any allegation made in good faith but subsequently proved to be the result of a misunderstanding, the Committee will work with the parties involved to seek to avoid any similar situation arising in the future.

Where the Committee has cause to believe that unjustifiable discrimination has taken place then action must be taken to ensure that this does not occur again. An example of this would be if an individual is excluded from joining a class at the village hall for reasons that cannot be justified as being fair and non prejudicial. In this case, either the criteria for admittance to the class must be amended so that they are fair and inclusive, or the booking must be cancelled.

Committee members are held to the same level of account as non Committee members and in the case of innocent oversight they should not be overly penalised. However, where an allegation is proven against a Committee member, who knowingly and wilfully acted in an unfair and prejudicial manner, then that member should be excluded from the Committee.

Policy Adoption and Review

This policy was formally adopted by Mileham Village Hall Management Committee on the 31st January 2017 and was last reviewed and updated on the 10th January 2019.

All policies of the Mileham Village Hall Management Committee are available to the public via the Mileham website at www.mileham.info