

 [www.thereadingrooms.org](http://www.thereadingrooms.org)

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 [bookings@thereadingrooms.org](mailto:bookings@thereadingrooms.org)

 73 High Street, Billericay, CM12 9AS

 07917 076490 (Answerphone)

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

with Equal Opportunities Policy and Child / Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

*Note: throughout this document "You" etc. refers to persons or organisations hiring and using The Reading Rooms ("The Rooms"), and "We" etc. refers to The Reading Rooms Management Committee.*

### BOOKING

The Trustees have implemented a proprietary Online Booking System (Hallmaster). This makes it simple (and much quicker) for anyone with an Internet connection to request and manage a booking. If you are among the small percentage of people who do not have Internet access you may instead request a booking by phoning or writing to our Letting Officer. By making a booking you consent to us recording details of you and your booking in the Hallmaster system. See our Privacy Notice for further details.

**We do not accept bookings from people under the age of 18.**

**We do not accept bookings for birthday parties for children above the age of eight.**

### Agreeing to the Terms & Conditions of Hire and the Hire Agreement

As part of the booking process you must confirm that you agree to the Terms and Conditions of Hire and the Hire Agreement. It is therefore essential that you have read them before requesting your booking.

If you book via our Online Booking System you will confirm your agreement by ticking a box on the booking request page.

If you book by email, phone or post, you will confirm your agreement by either:

- emailing [bookings@thereadingrooms.org](mailto:bookings@thereadingrooms.org) stating that you agree, or
- signing and returning the Hire Agreement form to the Letting Officer by post.

This must be done within 7 days (or immediately if the booking is made less than one month in advance) Otherwise the booking may be cancelled without prior notice and offered to other hirers.

### Booking Confirmation

Once you have agreed to the Terms & Conditions of Hire and the Hire Agreement, you will be sent the Booking Confirmation, the Invoice and other paperwork. This will be emailed to you unless you are unable to provide an email address, in which case paper copies will be sent.

Please check the Booking dates, rooms and times and contact the Letting Officer if there is a problem.

### PAYMENT

Your invoice will identify the amount due. For a single booking, this will be the full hire amount. For regular bookings (typically those involving more than 20 bookings per year) you may be invoiced in stages through the year, by agreement with the Letting Officer.

Full payment of an invoice is required at least one month prior to the start of the booking, or immediately if the booking is made less than one month ahead.

In the case of short notice bookings all paperwork and funds must be with the Letting Officer at least 48 hours before the booking is due to commence.

You may either pay by Bank Transfer or cheque (payment details are shown at the foot of the Invoice).

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No booking is firm until the required payment has been received by the Reading Rooms. If payment is not made in time, the booking may be cancelled without prior notice and offered to other hirers.

## HIRING FEES

There are three booking rates for each room which depend on the type of hirer. The hire fee for the Committee Room is discounted 50% if the Main Hall is booked for the same period. Hirers who make more than 20 bookings per year receive a 10% discount. Current prices can be found on our website ([www.thereadingrooms.org](http://www.thereadingrooms.org))

The rates are:

Standard Rate	Commercial Hirers, Billericay 'for profit' hirers, or non-Billericay hirers
Billericay Rate	'Not for profit' events booked by Billericay residents (with CM11 or CM12 postcodes), or Billericay Clubs, Societies, Associations etc.
Charity Rate	Registered Charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs) or Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs). Note that the Registered Charity number and the Registered Charity name must be provided when booking.

## CANCELLATIONS

If you cancel or reschedule your booking less than one month before the event we regret we do not provide a refund.

If you cancel one month or more before the event, we will refund one third of the booking fee. Further, if we are subsequently able to re-let the cancelled session to another hirer we will refund the balance of the booking fee.

If you reschedule a booking one month or more before the event, then the booking fee can be transferred to the new date.

## ACCESS & SECURITY

Regular hirers may ask to hold a set of keys to The Reading Rooms, for which a deposit of £100 will be taken. No interest will be paid on this deposit. The deposit will be refunded when the hiring finishes and all keys are returned.

Occasional users must collect the keys from Kodak Express Billericay, 71 High Street, Billericay, either on the day of hiring (if the shop is open), or on the previous working day. Their opening hours are Monday to Saturday 9am to 4.00pm. They are closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Please ensure that the Reading Rooms are fully secured with lights switched off when you leave. Return the keys immediately to Kodak Express Billericay. If they are closed then please put the keys through their letterbox in a sealed, unmarked envelope. We will make a charge if keys are lost or not returned immediately.

## CAR PARKING

Public car parking is available in the Basildon Council operated pay and display car park, the entrance of which is adjacent to the British Heart Foundation shop, a few minutes' walk from The Reading Rooms. At

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the time of writing, the car park is free after 6pm on weekdays, but check notices in the car park to be sure.

There is parking for one or two vehicles (dependant on size) in a small area at the rear of The Reading Rooms, which also serves as vehicle loading and unloading area. This can be accessed via the driveway next to Kodak Express, but please do not block the driveway at any time as it serves the residential area behind.

You will have access to the parking area from 15 mins before your booking and you **MUST** remove your vehicle(s) and any waste from this area by 15 mins after the end of your booking, to allow access for the next hirer.

Note that the parking area gates must be unlocked when the Rooms are in use, as these form part of the emergency fire exit escape route. The gates must be locked before you leave.

## HEATING

The gas-fuelled heating system is controlled by a programmer in a locked housing within the storeroom, behind the kitchen. Radiators are thermostatically controlled and can be adjusted to increase or reduce the room temperature to a comfortable level. Please do not touch or alter the wall mounted heating system thermostat in the Hall.

## FURNITURE

A maximum of 60 chairs are available for use in the Reading Rooms (if both Rooms are booked). If only the Main Hall is booked, then the maximum is 48 chairs. Alternative limits may apply, according to the event. Some of the chairs are kept in the storeroom behind the kitchen which also houses a number of folding tables. After use, please return all furniture to where you found it, including back into the storeroom if applicable. In order to prevent floor damage, please use the provided chair trolley when moving stacks of chairs and then leave it in the Store Room at the end of your session.

## KITCHEN

The kitchen is available for your use. Please note the safety requirements listed in the SAFETY section below. The kitchen must be left clean after use, and crockery and utensils used properly cleaned and put away. You need to bring detergents, dishcloths, tea towels, and black waste sacks as we do not provide these. You must take away your own waste and refuse and nothing may be put into the bins at the rear of the loading area, as these are not the property of The Reading Rooms. Any food etc. left in the kitchen will be disposed of as soon as it is discovered. There will be a charge for disposal of food waste, rubbish, and for cleaning if necessary.

The kitchen shutter is operated electrically by means of a key on the wall in the kitchen beside the microwave to the right of the shutter. No attempt must be made to operate it manually. The shutter is linked to the fire alarm system (see the SAFETY section below) and will close automatically in the event of a fire. Therefore nothing must be placed directly under the shutter that would prevent it from shutting.

## PROJECTION FACILITIES

For films, slide shows etc. the hall can be blacked out by means of manual roller blinds on the two doors and an electrically operated blind across the skylight. This is controlled by a box mounted on the wall at the top right of the kitchen serving hatch opening. In addition, an electrically operated viewing screen is

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available, situated on the wall at the kitchen end of the hall. The control for this is wall mounted in the corner to the left of the kitchen hatch. Both the skylight blind and the screen are operated by pressing the < > arrow buttons, once to start, once to stop, in the desired direction

## SAFETY

### Fire

The fire alarm system is automatically controlled by a panel in the entrance corridor near the meter cupboard and is to remain in the 'Enabled' position. Should a fire occur, and the alarm not function automatically, then you must sound the alarm manually by breaking the glass on the red box in the hallway by the front door.

The **fire exits** are the main front door onto the High Street, and the back door at the end of the corridor leading from the back of the Hall. Note that the parking area gates must be unlocked when the Rooms are in use, as these form part of the emergency fire exit escape route. The gates must be locked before you leave.

In the event of a fire you must immediately instruct everyone on the premises to vacate the building in a calm and orderly manner, by either the front or rear exits. Turn right on reaching the High Street and assemble outside Caffe Nero. Children and vulnerable persons should be accompanied by able-bodied adults. You must phone the emergency services immediately by calling 999, and then notify the Letting Officer or a member of the Management Committee on the numbers shown in the CONTACTS section below. If there is no reply, please leave a message. Please note that The Reading Rooms is run by volunteers and so we are not able to provide a 24/7 support service.

Candles, fireworks or naked flames are not permitted in the Rooms, other than small birthday cake candles no more than 2½" high. These must be extinguished and removed from the Rooms when you vacate.

### First Aid

A small first aid kit is kept in the kitchen wall cupboard, but you are responsible for your own first aid arrangements and equipment. You must report any accident in the Register which is kept in the Kitchen by the microwave, and notify the Letting Officer during business hours.

### General Safety

The following general safety precautions must be observed:

**ALL EXITS MUST BE KEPT UNOBSTRUCTED AT ALL TIMES SO THAT THEY CAN BE USED AS EMERGENCY EXITS. THIS INCLUDES THE REAR GATES WHICH MUST BE KEPT OPEN WHEN THE ROOMS ARE IN USE.**

The safe maximum number of people in the kitchen at one time is four. Children should not enter the kitchen except under close adult supervision.

Electrical appliances or equipment brought in should have been recently verified as safe for use, e.g. via Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), and use of them must comply with electricity safety regulations.

The maximum weight for a child using the baby changing table is 50 lbs (22 kilos), and in the interests of hygiene users must remove nappies and other waste immediately.

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## GENERAL HIRING CONDITIONS

By agreeing to the Hiring Agreement you are accepting these Terms and Conditions which include our Equal Opportunities and Child / Vulnerable Adult Policies which are part of this document. These include accepting responsibility for being in charge of the premises during the hiring period, including if/when the general public are present, and for the behaviour of all persons using the premises, in whatever capacity. In particular, you are responsible for the reasonable control of children using the Rooms.

You may not re-assign your hiring to any other persons or organisations.

We will charge you for any damage caused to the premises, fixtures, fittings etc, and for any items or equipment missing after your hire.

Any items left on the premises are at the owners' risk.

### Your responsibilities:

You are responsible for indemnifying The Reading Rooms, and those acting on its behalf, against costs or expenses of any kind arising from claims or actions related to your use of the facility, such as (but not necessarily limited to) copyright infringement, defamation/libel/slander, discrimination, data protection.

You are responsible for undertaking your own risk assessments in respect of any activities taking place. We may require a copy of your public liability insurance policy certificate, prior to hiring commencing.

As a courtesy to the surrounding residents, please ensure that noise and disturbance is kept to a minimum, especially when arriving and leaving, particularly late at night. We reserve the right to enter the premises at any time during your hiring, and to suspend any activities we deem to be causing a nuisance. Any abuse directed towards our trustees, committee members, or employees will not be tolerated.

You must ensure that the Hall, Committee Room, Kitchen and Toilets are left clean and tidy after use. You must take away your own waste and refuse. If the Rooms are not left in a fit state for the next user you will be charged the cost of extra cleaning, waste removal, and compensation to subsequent hirer(s).

If you encounter any problems while using The Reading Rooms, please enter details in the Register (kept in the kitchen) or advise the Letting Officer by emailing [bookings@thereadingrooms.org](mailto:bookings@thereadingrooms.org).

### Please note that the following activities are NOT PERMITTED:

Consumption and/or sale of alcohol is not permitted unless you have obtained prior written permission from the Letting Officer. If you intend to sell alcohol, you are responsible for obtaining any required license and must provide a copy to the Letting Officer before permission will be granted.

Smoking / vaping anywhere on the premises is illegal. Sale or use of drugs or inflammable substances, and any other kind of criminal activity, is forbidden.

With the exception of registered assistance/guide dogs, no animals are permitted without prior written permission from the Letting Officer or another Trustee.

Ball games and inflatables (e.g. bouncy castles or similar) are not permitted.

Riding of bikes/scooters and the use of skates or other wheeled footwear is not permitted.

Playing darts is not permitted.

Under no circumstances may drawing pins, sticky tape or Blu Tack be used to attach decorations or notices. White Tack may be used, subject to all traces being removed at the end of the hiring.

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Letting Officer:

Email: [bookings@thereadingrooms.org](mailto:bookings@thereadingrooms.org)

Post: 73 High Street, Billericay, CM12 9AS

Tel: 07917 076490 (answerphone only). Monitored Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.

### Management Committee:

Michael – 07474 225040

Kevin – 07788 464779

Heather – 07532 304204

Please note that as we are volunteers we are not able to provide a 24/7 support service

### Key-holder:

Kodak Express Billericay: 01277 632029

### IN CASE OF PROBLEMS:

Please ring 07917 076490 (Answerphone). If there is no reply please leave a message. If urgent, you can try phoning the Management Committee numbers shown above.

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

Please contact the emergency services first and then try to inform the Management Committee on the numbers shown above, If there is no reply, please leave a message to advise us of the issue.

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## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Reading Rooms totally supports the principle of equal opportunities in all areas of its activities and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, particularly on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

**Policy Reviewed April, 2022.**

## CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

### Guiding principles.

The Reading Rooms Committee believes that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount. It is the primary responsibility of the Hirers/Carers who use the hall to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults when using the Hall, have the right to protection from abuse, whether physical, verbal, bullying, exclusion or neglect. This policy is in place to protect all vulnerable persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion or faith.

### Procedures

- All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. Any suspicions or concerns should be reported to the Secretary ([secretary@thereadingrooms.org](mailto:secretary@thereadingrooms.org)) who has the responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The hirer can of course report their concerns directly to the LADO at the following url: [https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Managing\\_allegations\\_in\\_the\\_Childrens\\_Workforce/Page/ManagingAllegationsInTheChildrensWorkforce.aspx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Managing_allegations_in_the_Childrens_Workforce/Page/ManagingAllegationsInTheChildrensWorkforce.aspx)
- The Committee recognises that a higher standard of safety is required to ensure the premises are safe when used by children and vulnerable adults.
- Organisations/Individuals hiring the hall for activities for children / vulnerable adults will be asked to provide a copy of their Child Protection / Vulnerable Adults policy.
- In addition, any unsupervised user hiring the hall to provide a facility for Children [playgroups, training groups, youth clubs for example] will be required to show their DBS disclosure certificate to the Letting Officer on request and the disclosure number will be recorded. Any delegation by that hirer to other people to supervise the children is the responsibility of the hirer and the Committee will not vet these delegates for DBS disclosure.
- When the hall is hired out for a private children's party or any other gathering of this nature, it is on the understanding and agreement that those hiring the hall and/or the parents and carers are always responsible for supervising their children. All Parents and Carers must be made aware of the Reading Rooms' Child / Vulnerable Adult policy (which will be supplied when they agree to the Hire Agreement) and understand that they are all responsible for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis at the Reading Rooms Annual General Meeting and when changes occur in National Legislation or Procedures. The reviewed policy will then be ratified during a committee meeting by all members.
- New Committee members will be provided with an understanding of their responsibilities in line with this policy.

**Definition of Abuse.** A violation of an individual's human or civil rights by any other person or persons (*No Secrets: Department of Health (2000)*).

**Definition of a Vulnerable Person.** A person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation. (*Who Decides: Lord Chancellors Dept. (1997)*)

**Policy Reviewed April, 2022.**

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## HIRE AGREEMENT

### By either:

- ticking the agreement box in The Reading Rooms' online booking system when requesting a booking online
- emailing my agreement to [bookings@thereadingrooms.org](mailto:bookings@thereadingrooms.org)
- completing, signing and returning a printed copy of this agreement

### I am confirming that:

- I have read, understand and agree to abide by the terms and conditions governing the hire of The Reading Rooms to the full satisfaction of the Management Committee
- I accept full responsibility for the cost of rectification of any damage to the Premises caused by myself, my organisation (if relevant) and those using the Premises or any part of them.
- I have completed a Risk Assessment to my satisfaction and note that the maximum persons permitted in the building at any one time is 60 for the whole building (or any lower limit that has been set by the Letting Officer when making my booking).
- I consent to The Reading Rooms holding my contact details (name, address, telephone number, email address) within its online booking system for the purpose of administering my hiring of the facilities. My details may continue to be held secure within the online booking system for the purpose of accounting legal requirements and facilitating future bookings, but will not be retained indefinitely. Details will not be shared with third parties. I understand that I am entitled at any time to see the information that The Reading Rooms holds about me, and I may direct that it be deleted from your records.
- I will comply with any Covid requirements that may from time to time apply.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_.

Name (block capitals): \_\_\_\_\_

Booking Date: \_\_\_\_\_-(first date only if booking covers a series of dates)

Booking Description: \_\_\_\_\_