

MARLOW BOTTOM VILLAGE HALL FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into force on 1st October 2006, replaces most fire safety legislation with one simple order. It means that any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire. The Order applies to virtually all premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space. It applies to community halls and community premises and is relevant, therefore, to Marlow Bottom Village Hall.

This Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Order and having regard to the Government guidance on Fire Safety Risk Assessment in Small and Medium Places of Assembly.

The guide describes 5 steps to be taken when carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment:

- Step 1 – Identify fire hazards
- Step 2 – Identify people at risk
- Step 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk
- Step 4 – Record, plan, inform, instruct and train
- Step 5 – Review

The Fire Risk Assessment follows this structure and has been carried out for each of the principal areas of useable space in Marlow Bottom Village Hall:

1. Main entrance and foyer
2. Main Hall
3. Kitchen
4. Disabled & Men's & Ladies' toilets
5. Storage Room
6. Ex-boiler Room
7. Storage Shed
8. Garden
9. Side Area

For each of these areas an assessment has been carried out of sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen, fire detection, firefighting and precautionary equipment, escape routes, emergency lighting, signs and notices. The key findings of this assessment are contained on the following pages and key points discussed as appropriate.

1. FIRE HAZARDS: SOURCES OF IGNITION, FUEL AND OXYGEN

The main sources of ignition are the various items of electrical equipment located in the kitchen e.g. cooker, microwave and fridge. There is an electric heating/air-conditioning unit in the kitchen, a radiator in each toilet, a built-in electric heater below the lower cupboards in the prep area of the kitchen and electric heating/air-conditioning units in the main room. There is an electric hot water tank in the middle room. Other sources of potential ignition are portable appliances (e.g. kettle, urn, small electric heater), electric sockets and the lighting located throughout all the hall areas and in the large cupboard which is kept locked.

Principal sources of fuel are the furniture stored in the main hall and the storage shed, cleaning products in the kitchen (and those locked away in the cleaner's cupboard) and the books, toys, soft furnishings and paperwork stored in the large cupboard in the main hall and in the cupboards in the middle room. All cupboard doors would be highly combustible.

The main source of oxygen is the natural airflow through, doors and windows.

2. PEOPLE AT RISK

People who use the hall and may be at risk if there is a fire include:

- Hirers of the Village Hall (including children and the elderly)
- Contractors
- Cleaners

3. EVALUATE, REMOVE, REDUCE AND PROTECT FROM RISK

3. 1 The risk of fire occurring

It is considered that the risk of fire occurring is relatively low. The main sources of ignition comprise electrical equipment located in the kitchen and the heating/air conditioning units. Combustible materials are kept away from these sources and built-in equipment and heating units are regularly serviced and maintained in a good state of repair. Elsewhere, electric sockets and lighting are well maintained and portable appliances 'PAT' tested where appropriate.

3.2 The risk to people

An evaluation has been carried out of the actual risk to people identified above. The entire building is single storey and the four fire exit doors (one at the front of the building, two at the side – one leaving from the main hall, the other from the kitchen – and one at the back) all grant access to safety outside. The fire exit doors have clear signage and emergency lighting. The two fire exit doors to the side of the building both have a step down, the one at the front has steps and a slope. Once at the side of the building, a gate needs to be unbolted in order to access the front of the building. From the garden, the fire exit is through a gate into a footpath in the woods, this footpath joins the car park of the Village Hall at the main road. Users are instructed to carry the key to this padlock when they use the garden. A suitable muster point when all people are outside would be the Barn Club car park.

3.3 Removal/reduction of the hazards

The identified potential hazards comprise the range of electrical equipment contained in the kitchen which are an essential part of the facilities available to the users of the village hall. Removal would not be in the best interests of the village hall or its users and the potential hazards are reduced as far as possible through regular maintenance, inspection and servicing. Similarly, the heating and air conditioning in the hall and kitchen is essential for the comfort and well-being of users of the hall. Their potential hazards are

minimised through regular servicing. Chairs and tables stored by the Village Hall in the shed do represent a potential hazard but these are kept tidy and confined to a specific storage area. Marlow Bottom Village Hall operates a No Smoking policy in all areas of the building. Elsewhere potentially flammable materials are limited to curtains and furniture and are generally kept away from potential hazards.

3.4 Removal/reduction of the risks to people

The fire risk to people has been minimised as far as reasonably practical. Adequate fire escape signs are in place to assist people in the event of fire and to allow them to escape safely. Fire extinguishers are located in the kitchen, the middle room and the main hall, and are regularly inspected. A fire blanket is also located in the kitchen. There are four main escape routes available and are readily accessible from all parts of the hall. All are independent of each other. The main escape routes are (1) the main entrance (2) an external fire door off the main hall, (3) an external fire door off the kitchen and (4) an external fire door from the middle room into the garden and then through the gate into the woods. All external fire exit doors lead to the outside and provide open space for safe and easy evacuation of the hall. All fire extinguishers have operating instructions clearly displayed.

3.5 Installation, testing and maintenance

All fire prevention and firefighting equipment is maintained in effective working order through periodic servicing and maintenance. Sources of risk are also checked on a regular basis. Regular checks are made of the cooker, fridge, fire doors, lights and microwave. An annual check is made of the fire extinguishers and the heating/air conditioning units, and a certificate of inspection obtained. The electrical system is also checked on regular basis.

4. RECORD, PLAN, INFORM, INSTRUCT AND TRAIN

4.1 Significant findings and action taken

The main findings of the fire risk assessment including the actions taken to prevent fire occurring and to reduce the risk to people are contained in the preceding sections of this report.

4.2 Conditions of Hire

The conditions of hire of the VH state that fire and other exits must not be obstructed. Conditions of hire are shown on the Village Hall website.

4.3 Emergency plan

The village hall is a simple layout with clear well signed fire escapes and 3 fire extinguishers. Conditions of hire state that fire and other exits must not be obstructed.

5. REVIEW

This fire risk assessment has been carried out for Marlow Bottom Village Hall having read the 139 pages of HM Government's Fire safety risk assessment small medium assembly paper.

This assessment is kept under review particularly with regard to any potential new risks and the need to keep them under control, and also to ensure that the fire precautions are still working effectively. It is also available on the Marlow Bottom Website <https://www.marlowbottomvillagehall.co.uk/>