

Colton Village Hall

Role and Responsibilities of the Trustees

Colton Village Hall is a charity registered with the Charity Commission and managed through a Committee of Management. The trust deed which governs the administration of the charity sets out its objects as follows.

“(1) The object of the Charity shall be the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of the Parish of Colton (the area of benefit) without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes, and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.

(2) The said land and building shall be held upon trust for the purposes of a village hall.”

In accordance with our trust deed all members of the Committee of Management, including those representing village organisations, are trustees. The Charities Act 1993 defines trustees as “the persons having general control and management of the administration of a charity”. There is a requirement that all members sign a declaration of willingness to act according to the trust deed.

When appointed to the Committee, representative members must bear in mind that their first responsibility is to the village hall charity as a whole and not to their organisation or group.

The members of our committee are deemed to be Managing Trustees. These are their responsibilities.

- To act reasonably and prudently (e.g by not speculating with assets, by taking out adequate insurance, by complying with all legal requirements).
- To maintain proper records, especially the preparation and keeping of minutes and the preparation and submission of an annual report to the Charity Commissioners.
- To maintain accurate financial control, being regularly updated on the financial position, receiving year-end accounts and complying with all legal accounting requirements, including those related to the annual reporting to the Charity Commissioners.
- To ensure that any investments made are safe, not speculative, and that they are undertaken with regard to the long-term needs of the Village Hall and to the maintenance of its assets, especially land.

- To act together, especially in gaining committee approval for the issuing of contracts, as the action of one trustee may make all trustees liable and to claim ignorance of what was happening is no defence. (Where a trustee dissents from a decision taken by the majority his/her dissent should be recorded in the minutes).
- To avoid a conflict of interest, so that when there is any question of a trustee being personally affected by a decision of the trustees that trustee must declare his/her interest and withdraw from the discussion and/or vote.
- To take ultimate responsibility for the running of the Village Hall, even where limited powers of delegation have been exercised. Some decisions may be delegated to committees or sub-committees but the trustees will remain responsible for overseeing them; trustees can appoint experts where necessary and are entitled to rely on their expertise but the trustees must nevertheless retain control of the administration; the practical implementation of decisions can be delegated to specific officers, committee members or other designated persons acting as agents.
- To accept liability for problems that may occur, e.g resulting from acting in breach of the trust deed or the charity's objects; acting unwisely with the charity's assets, resulting in a loss to the charity; or acting illegally. NB where a trustee acts properly and in accordance with the wishes of all trustees that trustee should be able to be indemnified out of the charity's assets.

The trust deed and ACRE's Village Hall Information Sheet no. 17 on which these notes are based are lodged with the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary of the Committee. Trustees are urged to refer to them.

O B Lloyd, Chairman

October 2008