



The Village Hall with Endless Possibilities

Proposal to standardise the 2026 hourly venue hire fee

Objective:

To review our room-hire fees in comparison to other local venues to establish whether they are competitive and, review the current two-tier fee approach for room hire at the Reading Room.

Currently, our standard hire rates are based on an initial fee for the first two hours of room hire, followed by an hourly rate thereafter. The subsequent hourly rate is at a higher amount than the rate that makes up the initial two-hour hire. There is a different rate for each room and a rate for the whole building. The hourly rate that makes up the current two-hour initial hire forms the basis for the fees that apply to regular hirers. The subsequent hourly rate is used to calculate the local resident rate (currently includes a 10% discount).

This approach seems overly complicated and hard to explain to hirers and it appears to be out of synch with other local venues who all charge a flat hourly rate per room (with discounts for local residents and regular hirers).

Research:

Room hire rates of other local venues were compared to the current hire rates for the Reading Room to try to get a feel for where our hire fees stand when compared with other venues.

This research was based on venues in the surrounding towns and villages including Wickham, Botley, Swanmore, Durley, Boorley Green and Bishops Waltham.

The research showed that hire fees range from £18 to £24 for rooms similar in size to our Main Hall, from £14 to £18 for rooms of a similar size to the Billiard Room and from £5 to £13 for rooms of a similar size to our Committee Room (although, in the sample used for this exercise, most of the rooms used as comparisons were slightly smaller than our Committee Room).

To help determine an hourly fee that fits within this market, I looked at what the other facilities offered alongside the room hire such as access to a kitchen, onsite parking, a stage, and whether the venue had an onsite children's play area.

Findings:

It was challenging to compare like for like across the venues due to some information on room sizes and seating capacity not being available and not all venues having the same facilities to offer.

However overall, it seems that the fees for venue hire for the Reading Room are relatively competitive however, the two-tier approach hinders this assessment. This proposal is based on moving to an hourly rate to bring a more consistent approach with other venues in the locality and to apply this to all three rooms available for hire.

After taking into consideration the hire fees of other venues, it was clear that it would not be appropriate to simply change the hourly rate to either the rate used to calculate the initial two-hour hire or the subsequent hourly rate that we currently use.

For instance, current rates for the Main Hall are £41.50 for the first two hours (an hourly rate of £20.75) and £26.50 for every hour after that. Using this example, basing the hourly rate on £20.75 would reduce anticipated hire income by approximately £210 a year. This is based on an average occupancy of 3 private hires of 3 hours per month. The Charity is not in a financial position to be able to justify this reduction in hire income.

Basing the hourly rate on the higher fee of £26.50 would price the venue out of the market. In turn, this could deter people from making bookings due to there being cheaper venues to choose from potentially resulting in a reduction in hire income.

The table below shows the effect of applying the current hourly rates for the main hall as an example.

Comparison of income based on using current hourly rate (Main Hall)				
Hire Rate per hour	hours	hires per month	Monthly Income	Income per annum
£20.75	3	3	£186.75	£2,241.00
£26.50	3	3	£238.50	£2,862.00
two-tier approach	3	3	£204.00	£2,448.00
Difference between two-tier & applying £20.75 an hour				(£207.00)
Difference between two-tier & applying £26.50 an hour				£414.00

As a result, a new hourly rate is proposed based on the perceived market value of the Reading Room and what our hirers currently pay for 3- and 4-hours of hire. This approach allows for hourly rates to be established which seem likely to be attractive to potential hirers without causing a significant risk of a reduction in overall hire income for the Charity.

Proposal:

To implement standard hourly hire-rates of £24 for the Main Hall, £17 for the Billiard Room, £13 for the Committee Room and £30.50 for the whole building

This proposal applies to the hire fees for ad-hoc hires, the combined room packages for celebration bookings as well as the fees for any **new** regular hirers. Once these have been agreed by the Trustees and the Members at the AGM, a further review of current regular hirers and their fees will be undertaken.

The fees for current regular hirers are being kept separate from this proposal due to discounts that have historically been applied to ensure hire fees are relative to individual business models and market forces at the time that these discounts were agreed. As a result, their rates need more consideration to ensure that their businesses are not significantly impacted in a way that could create a risk of losing them as hirers and also, to ensure that they are fully consulted with before any reductions to the discounts are applied as a result of the subsequent review.

Based on these rates, the standard regular hire rates for new regular hirers and local residents would be £21.60 for the Main Hall, £15.30 for the Billiard Room, £11.70 for the Committee Room and £27.45 for the whole building (reflecting a 10% discount).

As a result of these proposed changes, the hourly rate for the combined room hires for the celebration package would change to £29.10 (Main Hall & Billiard Room) and £27.90 (Main Hall & Committee Room). This is based on the full rate for the Main Hall and 30% of the rate of the second room in the

combined booking. This discount reflects the administrative benefits of having one hirer using both rooms.

The weekend hire fee for wedding receptions remains unchanged at this time.

These rates would be effective from the 1st of the month following the date of the AGM (which has not yet been set but is likely to be in May).

Please see the tables on the following page for full details of proposed fees compared with current fees for your information.

Next Steps:

Please consider the proposal and the information supplied and advise whether you are in support of the proposal to remove the two-tier approach and adopt the hourly fees outlined above.



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	Current Fees (Min. hire of 2 hours)			
	Initial two-hour fee	Hourly rate thereafter	3-hour hire total	4-hour hire total
Main Hall	£41.50	£26.50	£68.00	£94.50
Billiard Room	£29.50	£20.00	£49.50	£69.50
Committee Room	£22.00	£15.00	£37.00	£52.00
Whole Building	£55.00	£32.00	£87.00	£119.00
Wedding Receptions	4pm Friday to 1pm Sunday (27 hrs)		£742.50 (£27.50 per hour)	
Celebration Package (Combined Room Hire)				
Main Hall & B/Room	£41.50	£36.00	£77.50	£113.50
Main Hall & C/Room	£41.50	£30.25	£71.75	£102.00

	Proposed Fees (Min. hire of 2 hours)			
	Initial two-hour fee	New Hourly Rate	3-hour hire total	4-hour hire total
	N/A	£24.00	£72.00	£96.00
	N/A	£17.00	£51.00	£68.00
	N/A	£13.00	£39.00	£52.00
	N/A	£30.50	£91.50	£122.00
Wedding Receptions	4pm Friday to 1pm Sunday (27 hrs)		Unchanged at £742.50 (£27.50 per hour)	
Celebration Package (Combined Room Hire)				
	N/A	£29.10*	£87.30	£116.40
	N/A	£27.90*	£83.70	£111.60

Regular Hire Fees		
	Current Hourly Rate	Proposed Hourly Rate**
Main Hall	£20.75	£21.60
Billiard Room	£14.75	£15.30
Committee Room	£11.00	£11.70
Whole Building	£27.50	£27.45

* Based on 30% of the hire fee for the combined room plus £24 per hour for the Main Hall: Celebration Packages Combined Room Hire.

** Based on proposed standard hourly fee less 10% discount for regular hire. The local resident discounted hire rate would mirror this fee.