

Village halls and childcare provision

Many rural pre-school and nursery provisions are located in the Village Hall. The availability of the Village Hall often provides the only means whereby this type of childcare provision can be provided locally. However, it is not without its own issues and can be seen by village hall committees as quite burdensome for a number of reasons.

Government requirements on pre-schools and nurseries for the delivery of childcare have changed and grown in recent years. For example, the introduction of new welfare requirements and the curriculum entitled the Early Years Foundation Stage. These expectations have put pressure on the relationships between pre-schools and village hall management committees, who need to make their buildings accessible to the whole community. This autumn children will become entitled to 15 hours a week of free provision, instead of 12.5 and the new Vetting and Barring Scheme, *see explanation on page 13*, will begin to come into effect this summer, potentially increasing the strain on relationships.

Good understanding and communication between pre-schools and village halls is even more vital and where this is achieved it helps both organisations thrive together.

AirS has three publications which can help and with support from West Sussex County Council Early Childhood Service, is now working up a model Occupation Licence, specifically

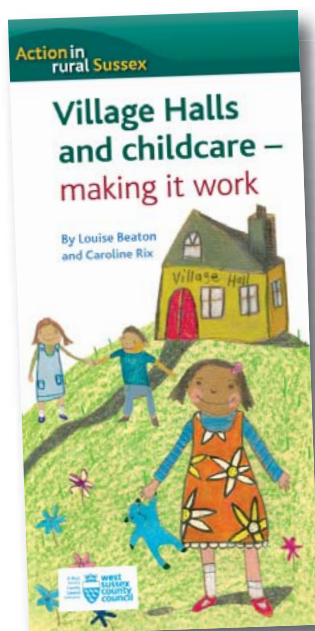
for use between pre-schools and village halls. This will assist pre-schools needing to obtain external funding and is more suitable than most standard hiring agreements.

The useful publications are:

ACRE Village Halls Information Sheet 5 – *Village Halls and Children*

Village Halls and Childcare – Making it Work, also available on AirS website Rural Childcare

For Pre-schools – *The Childcare Committee Support Pack* available on our website Rural Childcare



For more information about these, please contact Nicola Dudley on 01273 407301 or email: Nicola.Dudley@ruralsussex.org.uk
See also page 12 for more on rural childcare

Dial Post Village Hall



The new Dial Post Village Hall is now in use. The Hall is a Sussex Barn building supplied by Scandicom Timber Frames Ltd. It was designed following local consultation and has been built at an economic cost of £339,000 thanks to considerable practical voluntary effort. A formal opening is planned once the meeting room is completed, which was delayed by the Icelandic Banking problem.

The Village raised £29,500 from village events and local private donations along with donations from Knepp and South Lodge Estates. Other funding was provided by Biffa, Virador, West Sussex County Council, Horsham District Council, West Grinstead Parish Council, Leader, Garfield Western Foundation and the Co-op. All the local contractors and suppliers have been very generous and plaques are being prepared for display in the Foyer in appreciation of the support given.

The new underfloor heating system is run from an extremely efficient and quiet Air Source Heat Pump. The old wooden hall had structural problems and could not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

Dial Post Village Hall Association is extremely grateful to Louise Beaton, Action in rural Sussex Village Halls Policy Adviser, who gave a huge amount of moral and practical support.

Bookings can be made via Pauline Saunders on 01403 710908 or Alan Childs on 01403 710388