



Village Halls Week

Did you know that village halls and community centres provide a wide range of health and wellbeing activities for people in their communities, providing organised sessions as well as more informal support and connection?

Village Halls Week is a national celebration that recognises the role these buildings play in their communities. Hundreds of halls and community buildings across the country take part by holding events, open days and activities that showcase what they offer. It is an opportunity to highlight the value of these spaces and to acknowledge the people who keep them running.

These centres are often at the heart of their towns and villages. In many areas, they are one of the few shared spaces available to local people. They are run by volunteers and aim to provide something for everyone. This can include children and young people, older residents, families and those who may otherwise feel isolated.

This year, the focus of Village Halls Week is health and wellbeing. This reflects the wide range of activities that take place in these buildings and the impact they have on people's day-to-day lives. Many halls host regular exercise classes such as yoga, Pilates and other fitness sessions.

Alongside physical activity, halls often provide opportunities for creativity and social interaction. Art groups, craft sessions and coffee mornings give people a chance to meet others, build confidence and reduce isolation. Parent and toddler groups are another common activity, offering support to families.

For young people, community buildings can provide a safe place to spend time, take part in activities and build relationships. Youth groups can make a difference, particularly in areas where there are limited services available.

Village halls and community centres also play an important role in supporting access to services. In some rural areas, they host food banks, post office services or visiting support organisations. Where local services have been reduced or removed, these buildings can help fill the gap. For people who do not drive or who have limited access to public transport, having services available locally can make a real difference.

The trustees who run these buildings are volunteers who give up their time to keep everything going. Their work is not always visible. Behind the scenes, they are responsible for managing the building, paying bills, organising maintenance and making sure the space is safe to use. This includes meeting legal requirements and keeping up to date with regulations.

Trustees also spend time managing bookings and making sure the building is used effectively. Regular income from room hire is often essential to keeping the building running. At the same time, many committees are looking for grant funding to carry out improvements, reduce energy costs or develop new activities.

Running a community building can be complex. Trustees need to balance the needs of the community with the practical realities of running a building. This can include rising costs, ageing facilities and the challenge of recruiting new volunteers. Despite this, many halls continue to adapt and find ways to remain relevant to their communities.

The theme of health and wellbeing highlights how these buildings support people. Activities such as coffee mornings and group sessions help reduce loneliness. Exercise classes support physical and mental health while community events bring people together to reduce isolation. They are often the hub that people go to in an emergency. During recent storms, when whole villages lost power for days, local people looked to community buildings to offer a place where they could access warm food and drinks and a place to charge devices.

They are also used for a wide range of events, from meetings and training sessions to weddings and birthday parties. This flexibility is part of what makes them valuable. They can respond to the needs of the community and provide a space for both everyday use and special occasions.

Village Halls Week is an excellent opportunity to support your local hall and see what is happening in your area. It is also a chance to learn more about what is involved in running a community building. You can find which halls in your area are taking part in Village Halls Week through the [ACRE Website here](#).

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a trustee of a charity, including a village hall or community centre, Durham Community Action offers [training](#) to help people understand what the role involves; you can also access online workshops through the [Elements Training Portal](#). Providing information and training can help people feel more confident about taking that step and supporting their local community.

If you require any support with running your community building, please email info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk