

MELLS TITHE BARN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Registered Charity no. 304581

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MELLS BARN - AMPLIFIED MUSIC/NOISE MANAGEMENT

The Mells Tithe Barn has been a valued village amenity for nearly six hundred years. However, as with most village halls in the country, its future use by the village is under some threat by recent government legislation on licence criteria. Whereas many village halls have tried to survive with the much reduced 'Temporary Event Notice' allocation (now only 12 a year) the Mells Barn Management Committee believed that, in order to meet the aspirations of the village, it was important to take out a full licence.

This licence is, however, a fragile privilege. If we, as licensees, fail to meet very strict restrictions on noise, alcohol sales and times of operation, then the Barn will be closed down by government inspectors and the village will lose a very valuable and treasured amenity. Ironically, our problem is that the Barn is in a very quiet and peaceful country village. Noise nuisance levels are measured against ambient levels. In the city the background noise level is fairly high due to traffic and other city noises. In Mells the background noise level is silence! This means, unfortunately, that the inspectors could close us down for sound levels that, in a city environment, would be hardly noticeable. To meet the government noise levels village halls throughout the country have been forced to install a noise limiter. This is a device designed to turn off power supplies to amplification equipment if you continuously exceed the government noise levels. The indicator is situated high up on the second beam in front of the stage. If noise levels are reaching the maximum permitted levels, the device will flash yellow. It will flash red when the level has been exceeded and this warns you that you have 5 seconds to reduce the noise level or the power will be cut off. Once the power has been cut off, it resets in 5 minutes.

If the event you are organising is heavily dependent upon loud music then we strongly recommend that you try out the facilities before committing yourself to the hire. The Barn simply may not be suitable. Some previous hirers had by-passed the noise limiters, a situation now not possible without potential loss of all electricity, but this had led to immediate complaints and we are now under very close scrutiny by local government environmental inspectors. It will be immediately obvious if you have by-passed the system and we must warn you that, by so doing, you could open yourself to prosecution and that if this led, subsequently, to the loss of our licence you could also be liable for loss of earnings on Barn business, and that would be a sizeable compensation claim.

Please be assured that if you follow the simple rules laid down in the Hire Conditions then there will be no problems and we can all continue to enjoy the facilities of this very special amenity. If you decide to go ahead, we sincerely hope that you will enjoy using the Barn.