**Report: Recommendation to Introduce a Refundable Deposit for Evening Private Hire Functions**

**Background:**In April 2025, the village hall was hired for a private evening function. The hirer indicated on the booking form that no alcohol would be present, and was therefore charged the standard non-alcohol hire rate of £50. However, during and after the event, the following issues arose:

* Alcohol was clearly being consumed, despite the hirer’s declaration to the contrary.
* 12 bags of rubbish were left in the kitchen. This is a breach of the hall’s terms and conditions, which clearly state that a maximum of 2 bags of rubbish may be left behind, with all additional waste to be taken away by the hirer.
* The toilets were left in a poor condition.
* The event overran the agreed time by 45 minutes, meaning that the caretaker was left to wait.
* There was significant noise on departure, though fortunately no formal complaints were received.

As per the terms and conditions, the total cost associated with these issues (cleaning, extra staff cost and disposal of rubbish) was calculated at £99. However, because the deposit paid was only £50, the full cost could not be reclaimed, meaning that the hall was unable to recover the full cost incurred.

To safeguard the hall and promote responsible hire, it is recommended that a refundable deposit of £250 be introduced for all private hire functions taking place after 6pm, regardless of whether alcohol is declared.

**Deposit Policy Details:**

* A £250 deposit is to be paid in advance, in addition to the standard hire fee.
* The deposit is refundable in full, provided the hall is left clean, all rubbish is removed, the booking time is adhered to, and no noise, damage, or alcohol policy breaches occur as per the terms and conditions of hirer that the hirer agrees to at the time of booking.
* If additional cleaning, repairs, or unauthorised activities (e.g. alcohol consumption when not declared) are identified, these costs will be deducted from the deposit.

**Benefits:**

* Encourages honest declarations and responsible use of the hall.
* Deters misuse and reduces the risk of repeated issues.
* Helps cover additional costs incurred due to late running, excess cleaning, or breach of agreement.

**Recommendation:**That the committee approve the introduction of a £250 refundable deposit for all private hires after 6pm, with immediate effect or from an agreed date, to protect the hall and ensure fair use for all.