

Information Sheet

Re-opening Village and Community Halls post COVID-19 closure Issue 7 – Current on 30th September 2020

Those responsible for managing halls are advised to make sure they are on their local [ACRE Network](#) member's mailing list. Also, to keep monitoring their ACRE Network member website and social media channels for any updates or check the gov.uk coronavirus website. This will ensure they are alerted to changes in Government guidance.

ACRE has been working as far as possible with relevant Government departments so that hall managers have confidence they are working to "joined up" guidance. It aims to provide practical information to assist hall managers to comply with Government guidance and the Health Protection Regulations. Where temporary local lockdowns are in force, those will take precedence over information contained here e.g. certain activities may be curtailed

Village and Community Halls are multi-purpose premises so it is based on interpretation, as far as possible, of Government guidance published for Community Facilities and - where relevant - that for re-opening of Playgrounds, Outdoor recreation areas, bars and cafes, indoor markets, places of worship, gym/leisure facilities and grassroots sport, performance and out of school settings. However, it is not possible to go into the detail of all the relevant Government guidance and links are given in Section 6. This Sheet may be updated in accordance with any subsequent government guidance.

The term "managers" is used here to describe those responsible for managing a village hall, community centre, church hall, parish hall or similar multi-purpose community facility, whether volunteer trustees, committee members or paid staff. Please note that any advice or information provided here should not be taken as a substitute for professional legal or other advice.

Changes in Version 7: Changes have been made to the following appendices, not the main body of the Information Sheet.

- **Appendix C**, The Sample Poster, point 6, has been revised to reflect the wording required in new Regulations covering the display of a poster requiring the wearing of face coverings.
- **Appendix D** has been revised to reflect the reduction in permitted attendance at weddings and civil partnerships and receptions from 30 to 15 and that only funerals are permitted a group of 30; and a summary of the new legal requirements on bars, members' clubs, cafes and similar hospitality venues (eg closing times, no dancing, group limit of 6, table service only).
- **Appendix E**, Special Condition of Hire SC9, has been amended to reflect the new legal requirement for hirers to keep records of contact details of those who attend activities and encourage use of a NHS QR poster at the hall.
- A new **Appendix M** has been added which explains the new legal requirements for display of a NHS QR poster and keeping of records for Test and Trace.

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1. The Step by Step approach

The Government has laid out its recovery plans in 'Our Plans to Rebuild' (see link at end). These plans are contingent on the "R" rate of COVID-19 infection not increasing. They may be adjusted or rescinded either nationally or in certain parts of the country in the light of the situation.

In order for each Step to be implemented the Public Health Regulations need to be amended. When specialist venues (e.g. shops, gyms, theatres etc) are permitted to re-open, the activities they usually hold are permitted in multi-purpose community halls, so these have gradually extended.

Step 1: From 13th May certain outdoor facilities were able to be used by members of the same household and one other person, e.g. tennis courts and bowling greens.

Step 2. The Government allowed nurseries and Pre-schools to open to a wider group of children from 1st June 2020 and indoor markets from 15th June.

Step 3: Public buildings have been allowed to open from 4th July. Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities (see link in Section 6) has been published which makes clear that "each community facility should apply relevant guidance listed here, locally, depending on circumstances including size, type of activities, users and how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated". **Step 3 is the subject of this Information Sheet.**

2. Planning for re-opening

2.1 The COVID-19 Secure Guidelines: Trustees, managers and any staff need to be aware that the following 5 key points apply. These underpin COVID Secure status and this Information Sheet and arrangements should reflect them:

- **Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell: Nobody** should attend the premises if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household.
- **Clean your hands often:** Sanitiser or soap and water should be provided at entry and exit points, sanitiser and/or running water, soap and paper towels or hot air driers in toilets and kitchens.
- **Respiratory hygiene:** Everyone needs to be encouraged to avoid touching their mouth, eyes, and nose. Tissues need to be disposed of into a bin, then hands cleaned. A "**Catch it, Bin it, Kill it**" poster is available (see end for link).
- **Regular cleaning of surfaces that are touched frequently:** including door handles, handrails, tabletops, sinks, toilet areas, kitchen surfaces. Ordinary domestic products can be used.
- **Maintain social distancing where possible:** Social distancing guidelines currently require at least 2 metres (3 steps) to be maintained where possible between individuals or groups, which can be no more than 6 people, and, where not possible, 1metre plus other mitigation measures. Bookings can be accepted where social distancing can be maintained and contacts below 2m are minimised and transitory, but certain types of events cannot yet be held. See 2.2 below and Appendix D.

Do not re-open until you have identified the necessary safety, compliance, management, and operational issues through a COVID-19 risk assessment and established a plan to address and mitigate them. You are not obliged to re-open immediately and it would be unwise to do so if you have not been through that process.

Appendix A provides a checklist of tasks likely to be needed prior to re-opening, of which compliance with COVID-19 secure guidelines is just part.

Hall managers will need to engage with their regular hirers to ensure that the 5 COVID-19 Secure Guidelines requirements above are clearly understood. Trustees appointed by organisations which use the premises have an important role to play in communicating these requirements to their members and in ensuring the special hire conditions which will need to be introduced are followed. See 2.5 below and **Appendix E**.

As part of opening after lockdown, self-certification should be displayed that halls are complying with COVID-19 Secure Guidelines. This will also help users feel confident about using the premises. See **Appendix C** for a sample certificate/poster.

2.2. Social Distancing, capacity and test and trace at Village and Community Halls

a) The Social Distancing requirements: Government Guidance on safe opening of community facilities emphasises the importance of ensuring adherence to social distancing of 2 metres or 1 metre with risk mitigation (where 2m is not viable), such as face coverings, good hygiene and ventilation. The size and layout of the premises will determine the maximum number of people that can be accommodated while also facilitating social distancing. In order to achieve social distancing requirements, as far as possible, managers will need to work out the capacity of rooms and set limits on the number of people permitted to use a particular hall or room at any one time. As a starting point, this might be around one quarter of the seating or (for non-seated activities, dancing) capacity set for fire safety purposes or the size of the room in square metres divided by 4 (the answer may not be the same, because the fire capacity is usually based on the number of fire exits). As this method will be based on individuals attending, rather than groups of no more than 6 people, this offers a cautious approach. Different layouts and activities will allow different capacities. See also section 2.5.

b) Larger events: Community facilities which are COVID-19 Secure will be able to hold more than 30 people, subject to their own capacity limits. However, where gatherings have more than 30 people, the Government guidance says “those operating venues should take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place”. Weddings and other life-event religious ceremonies (funerals, baptisms etc.) are limited at present to no more than 30 people. Seated wedding receptions, for no more than 30 people, are allowed. Outdoor events are limited to 30 people unless organized by a charity, business, public body or political organisation. The need to prevent large gatherings (where social distancing and track and trace would be difficult) is clear from the Government Guidance: “Local authorities should avoid issuing licenses for events that could lead to larger gatherings forming and provide advice to businesses on how to manage events of this type”, with a reminder that venues can be closed. For events with more than 30 people more attention therefore needs to be paid to e.g. stewarding, and this is reflected in **Appendix E**.

c) The rules on social interactions for groups from 14th September: Section 2a of the updated Guidance for Safe Opening of Community Facilities explains: “Community facilities following COVID-19 secure guidelines can host more than 6 people in total, but no one should visit or socialise in a group of greater than 6”. Key points:

- The regulations allow groups of up to 6 to socialise together at an activity within their group. These do not have to be members of the same household, and a group could be made up of individuals from 6 different households.
- The limit of 6 does not apply to a single household group or support bubble which is more than 6 people, or to members of a "linked household". A "linked household" is one which has been formed from one adult with children with another household. These groups are called "qualifying groups". Government's FAQs advise that venues should continue to accommodate groups larger than 6 who are "qualifying groups".
- Different groups should be separated by 2m (or where not possible 1m with mitigation measures) so that social distancing is maintained between them. People in groups of one, ie individuals, need to be socially distanced from other groups.
- Mingling between different groups (or mixing of groups) is not permitted. The guidance advises that activities where there is significant likelihood of different groups interacting, and therefore breaking the law, should not take place in a community facility.
- At an event, people are advised to limit social interactions with anyone outside the group they attend with as far as possible: They must not mingle or mix. The aim is to limit risk of transmission to small groups.
- Organisers must not place people together in groups of more than 6, unless an exception applies to the event/activity or they are in a "qualifying group".
- Organisers of activities are not required to enquire about household arrangements or challenge a group of people arriving together, but need to arrange activities so as to avoid mingling between groups.
- The advice to individuals is that they should limit their social interactions with anyone they do not live with. Consequently, if friends attending in a group of 6 or less are from different households they may still require sufficient space for social distancing from others within their group.
- There are a number of activities which are excepted, including: pre-schools, out-of-school activities, supervised youth activities, children's playgroups, organised sport and exercise classes, voluntary or charitable services.
- For weddings, seated wedding receptions and funerals the limit is 30, and these are the only events at which that limit now applies.

See also **Appendix D**

d) User groups may not know at the outset how many people are likely to attend activities. A booking system is not required but for larger events it may be a useful means of keeping within capacity, the group limit of 6 or less and recording contact details, which is required for NHS Test and Trace. A booking system would be inappropriate for community activities which are important for mental and physical health, as attendance is often dependent on last minute factors. It would be preferable to ask groups to think about how they will deal with any excess, which may depend on the nature of their activity and the facilities at the hall e.g. "first come, first served", using other space to increase capacity e.g. garden, kitchen, entrance hall, committee room, re-running an activity later or on another day, some people joining in online either at home or via laptop in another room.

e) NHS Test and Trace: All groups are required to assist NHS Test and Trace by having a system for keeping a temporary record of who attends for 21 days and to provide that data to NHS Test and Trace if needed. (It is not compulsory for people to provide information but could help contain outbreaks.) The Government Guidance for Places of Worship gives a sample consent form at the end.

f) Lapses in social distancing: Some lapses may be difficult to avoid, e.g. where people pass in internal corridors. Government guidance indicates that such transitory contacts are lower risk and it will be for hirers to try and arrange their activities to avoid these risks if possible, particularly for older or medically vulnerable people.

g) Pinch points: Arrangements will need to be made to manage people at “pinch points” e.g. arriving for an activity and exiting afterwards, in toilets, kitchens and corridors. There is a risk entrances could become congested owing to multiple user groups, or people lingering to read notices or chat; so a socially distanced queueing system is required, e.g. tape on the ground outside and inside the entrance hall, with signage. Staggered arrival and departure times may help.

h) Implementing a one-way flow in and out of the premises should help avoid congestion, particularly where multiple activities are held at the same time. Usually entry would be via the main entrance, with people leaving via fire exits. For security, fire exits would need to be closed by the last person to leave the building, who then leaves via the main entrance. Appropriate signposting will be needed. Any changes to entrances, exits and queues should, however, consider the needs of those with physical disabilities. It may not be possible to implement one-way flow internally, as people may have to cross an entrance hall to reach the toilets or kitchen, so it may be necessary to stagger access to such facilities e.g. a longer interval.

i) Face Coverings:

From 8th August face coverings are required to be worn inside village and community halls. The Department of Health and Social Care has confirmed to ACRE that:

“On entering a village hall, you will be required to wear a face covering, and will be required to keep it on, unless you are covered under a ‘reasonable excuse’. This could be for a gym class, if you need to eat or drink something, or if you have a health or disability reason to not wear one”

The exceptions to wearing face coverings are listed below:

- children under the age of 11 (Public Health England do not recommend face coverings for children under the age of 3 for health and safety reasons)
- people who cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- employees of indoor settings (or people acting on their behalf, such as someone leading part of a prayer service)
- police officers and other emergency workers, given that this may interfere with their ability to serve the public
- where putting on, wearing, or removing a face covering will cause you severe distress
- if you are speaking to or assisting someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to yourself or others - including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in an activity.

Trustees and managers are not able to enforce wearing face coverings. However, hirers can be required to encourage those attending activities to do so and/or to comply with the relevant guidance for their sector.

The requirement for people to wear a face covering may help people feel more comfortable about attending activities, but there may be circumstances where it does not appear appropriate. For example, when singing in a choir, where someone wears glasses which mist up, interfering with their ability to see a presentation, use kettles, knives, scissors or needles safely.

Bear in mind that the requirements are designed to limit transmission in venues indoors attended by numbers of people at the same time, and the general advice that it is most important in crowded areas or in areas where people are in contact with others they do not usually meet. They are specifically required in retail spaces such as indoor markets and community shops.

It is unlikely resources will be available for enforcement in village and community halls, but peer pressure and social media will hopefully aid general compliance.

A risk assessment approach would indicate that where people are working at or visiting the hall on their own, or in a separate area, they would not need to wear a face covering e.g. behind a screen in a reception office, a Parish Council office, cleaning or carrying out maintenance work, fire safety checks etc.

j) Consultation with regular user groups will be important as some reorganisation may be inevitable. Some groups may not return for some time but want to retain their usual "slots" while it may be necessary to hire the premises in different ways. For example, groups may need to use the main hall rather than a committee room to achieve social distancing, which may mean substantially re-arranging timings for main hall use. A committee room may need to become a "kettle point" for any offices so that staff do not need to use the kitchen when a hire is in progress. Some groups may be able to continue running activities online to make way for others. **Appendix B** is a sample questionnaire for users, kindly shared by Witcham Village Hall, Cambridgeshire.

k) In case of emergency it is important to prioritise safety: In the event of fire or accident people do not have to stay 1 or 2m apart if it would be unsafe to do so.

2.3 Risk Assessment for COVID-19

Village hall trustees must consider the COVID-19 Secure guidelines (see above) and should undertake their own COVID-19 Risk Assessment to ensure that their staff (cleaner, caretaker) and trustees are safe. See **Appendix F** for an example.

If this cannot be done i.e. because hall officers or staff are shielding or otherwise not available, the responsibility for risk assessment and implementation of actions can be delegated to a competent individual or company engaged to carry this out. Bear in mind that Government guidance on performance says: "Risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace." Going through a Risk Assessment process and working out the areas of greater and lower risk will hopefully enable a "common sense" approach to which hirers can adapt. It is rarely possible to eliminate risk entirely, your aim should be to do the best to minimise it.

Employers and organisations have a duty to consult workers and volunteers on health and safety so listening and talking to them about how you will manage risks from COVID-19 will show that you take their health and safety seriously.

2.4 Cleaning and encouraging good hygiene

All surfaces which are frequently touched should be cleaned regularly using standard cleaning products. A decision will need to be made on how frequently cleaning should take place, based on an assessment of risk, and use of the building. Some halls have the resources (staff, finance) to clean regularly used surfaces and equipment before hirers arrive, which is ideal. If that is the case, the cleaner might post a sheet showing when the hall was last cleaned, as a comfort to users.

Many village and community halls, however, have part time or self-employed staff e.g. with other cleaning

jobs, who work only a few hours per week, or no staff (users clean before and after activities), particularly halls serving rural areas which are used less frequently. This means that hirers let themselves in, are often responsible for putting out and stowing away the equipment they use and for cleaning the hall after use. Experience is that not all hirers clean up after themselves satisfactorily and trustees have expressed concern that not all hirers will comply with carrying out a higher level of cleaning on leaving.

a) **All halls** should:

- Provide sanitiser for hirers to put out at every entrance/exit and in meeting rooms. (Soap and water is acceptable but sanitiser often more practical).
- Post notices at every entrance/exit showing what is expected of users. Erect the "Catch It, Bin It, Kill It" poster and posters encouraging frequent handwashing, see Section 6. If the poster at **Appendix C** is laminated, the time can be given when the hall was last cleaned, but this is not compulsory.
- Advise the cleaner/caretaker as to the extra cleaning required if someone is taken unwell on the premises with a suspected case of COVID-19. This requires disposable PPE and double bagging of PPE and cleaning materials afterwards, which must be stored for 72 hours securely prior to collection: See the link in Section 6 for decontamination in non-healthcare settings.
- Advise hirers bringing or using their own equipment which is stored at the hall that they will need to clean this for each session and before stowing it away, or ask their group members to bring their own clean equipment and avoid sharing it.

b) **Where a hall cannot arrange cleaning before every hire**, the appropriate way of discharging the trustees' responsibility and encouraging compliance is likely to be to:

- Require each hiring group to clean surfaces that their group might use **before** their own users arrive, to clean regularly used surfaces such as tabletops and sinks during the hire and to clean them again before they leave. Hirers could be asked to sign a record sheet confirming e.g. "I have cleaned before leaving all surfaces in the rooms used during hire", with the time.
- For the hall to ensure the hall's usual cleaning routine is followed e.g. for floors, with particular attention to keeping hand wash basins, door and toilet handles clean and provide cleaning supplies for use by hirers. This means the cleaner/caretaker (or volunteers or another contractor) will need to provide and check/replenish hand sanitiser, cleaning materials (including cleanser, spray disinfectant, washing up liquid, cloths or paper roll) and tissues and the cleaner or hirer removes waste to outside bins before the hall is next used. Supplies of soap and paper towels must be provided at toilet and kitchen sinks. Make clear to hirers how often the cleaner attends.
- Limit cleaning of some areas to staff and/or provide instructions to hirers, e.g. where there is a risk of damage or electrical apparatus is involved. For example, switches should be cleaned by cloth, not sprayed with disinfectant, rubberised or glued surfaces and upholstered surfaces can be damaged by frequent sprays or vigorous rubbing.

c) **Wash clothes regularly:** It is best to encourage people to wash clothes after attending an activity or event to reduce the risk of transmission.

d) **Use of toilets:** Inside toilets do not have to be made available to the public (which may conflict with safeguarding requirements and social distancing) or kept open when the hall is not in use. It is not compulsory for any public toilets (e.g. serving playing fields) to be opened but where they are Government Guidance for public toilets should be followed.

2.5 Hiring Arrangements

- a) Halls should give priority to essential services, Pre-schools and schools should endeavor to arrange other hires around these. If that is not feasible without compromising COVID-19 Secure guidelines the hall may have to remain closed for other hirers.
- b) Instruct booking secretaries to allow longer between hires, to allow either the cleaner/caretaker to clean before their arrival or hirers to arrive up to half an hour earlier in order to pre-clean for their own use.
- c) The cleaner/caretaker will need to be given expected arrival times for each hirer or other arrangements made to check sufficient supplies of sanitiser, soap, paper towels and cleaning materials.
- d) During Step 3 social distancing will need to be maintained and vulnerable people protected. It is therefore unlikely that the full range of normal use will be possible. The committee will need to decide which hirers can begin to use the hall pending Government guidance that Steps 4 and 5 can be implemented. This will demand a risk-based approach. Points to help you work out which hires are permitted, not yet permitted or may require more management are given in **Appendix D**.
- e) Hirers will need to be given instructions, guidance and responsibility via special hiring conditions which should be attached to their usual hire agreement. These should be issued in writing and signed or accepted by the hirer in all cases. An electronic signature or email confirmation of the conditions is acceptable. See **Appendix E** for sample special hire conditions.
- f) Hirers should be encouraged to seat or stand people side-to-side, rather than face-to-face, whenever possible. A distance of 2m (two or three empty seats) should be provided between each individual or group if seated. Space should also be allowed so that people can also socially distance from others in their group, if required. (see 2.2c above). Sedbergh People's Hall, Cumbria, have issued photos to help their hirers work out how to arrange their meeting rooms. Barnham Community Hall, Sussex has issued a video. Drawings could be posted on noticeboards.
- g) Hirers should be encouraged to keep the hall well ventilated, opening doors (except internal fire doors) and windows as far as possible, and will need to remember to close them all for security on leaving. It may therefore be necessary for the caretaker or a volunteer to check the premises at night for the first few weeks, to ensure everyone is remembering. Fresh air is preferable to mechanical ventilation.
- h) Since 1st August those who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 are no longer being advised to shield. Hirers should therefore be encouraged to have regard as to whether people attending their activity are clinically vulnerable and how they will address the need to keep them safe. Those over 70, who were required to self-isolate for 12 weeks, but not in the shielding category, will wish to attend their usual community activities, so particular attention should be paid to the need to maintain social distancing with them. This is reflected in the Special Hiring Conditions at **Appendix E**.
- i) Hirers should be provided with a copy of the hall's COVID-19 Risk Assessment. You may wish to ask to see a copy of their own COVID-19 Risk Assessment. The sample at **Appendix G** can be shared with user groups, to help them think through preparing their own Risk Assessment. It is not compulsory that users complete their own – it is the premises and any play equipment which must be subject to a COVID-19 Risk Assessment.
- j) You and your hirers may wish to encourage those attending to bring their own Food and Drink e.g. water bottles for the time being, rather than making food and drink on the premises, to reduce work cleaning the kitchen. Users should also be encouraged to bring their own equipment where possible,

e.g. crafts, keep fit, and can be encouraged to bring their own personal hand sanitiser, wipes, and tissues.

- k) Hirers should be asked to keep a note of the names and telephone number for everyone attending their activity and retain this for 3 weeks so that, in the event of a case, NHS Test and Trace can contact everyone the individual was in contact with. People are not obliged to provide their personal details. Information should be kept securely so as to comply with GDPR (e.g. a password protected phone or tablet, a locked filing cabinet) and then destroyed.
- l) Government guidance asks venues to take steps to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other, e.g. playing music at loud volume so that normal conversation is difficult, so as to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus from aerosol and droplet transmission. This is addressed in **Appendix E**.
- m) Where part of the premises is leased to another organisation, or subject to an Occupation Licence, that occupier would normally have the responsibility for the management of their facilities in accordance with the relevant Government guidance and will be expected co-operate with the hall managers to achieve safe use of communal areas.

2.6 Employees, self-employed people, and volunteers

a) Organisations have a specific duty of care to employees and, as they also have a duty of care to self-employed staff and volunteers, it is recommended that they are afforded the same level of protection as employees. Government guidance has been issued for Employers and that for offices and contact centres and 5 steps to working safely are the most appropriate for community halls (See links in Section 6). The key point for halls is that, in addition to carrying out the hall's ordinary risk assessment before re-opening, the hall should follow HSE advice for an Employer's Risk Assessment for COVID-19, in discussion with staff, which involves:

- Identifying what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus.
- Thinking about who could be at risk.
- Deciding how likely it is that someone could be exposed.
- Acting to remove the activity or situation, or if this is not possible, control the risk.

These points are addressed in the Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment at **Appendix F**.

b) HSE guidance is that no one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment and that in the risk assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. If that is the case with your hall cleaner/caretaker, you may need to make alternative arrangements for the time being.

c) BEIS guidance and other references in Section 6 may help you address questions or concerns from employees or self-employed contractors about COVID-19.

d) If the hall has a resident caretaker, consider whether there are any implications when carrying out the COVID-19 Risk Assessment.

- e) If staff are on the premises when the hall is used by others a record of staff working patterns should be kept for a period of 21 days to assist NHS Test and Trace contain outbreaks.

2.7 Performances

The arts industry has been badly affected by COVID-19 and will welcome efforts to accommodate performances. Key points in the Guidance issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are given in **Appendix J**.

The National Rural Touring Forum has advised that in autumn 2020 promoters commit to advance sales only for rural touring arts, to avoid potential box office queues and facilitate social distancing.

2.8 Playgrounds, indoor exercise and outdoor sports areas

Aside from organised sports those using outdoor areas (eg for informal recreation) should be in groups of 6 or less, unless for an activity organised by a business, charitable, philanthropic, benevolent institution or public body.

Playgrounds/play equipment and outdoor gym equipment must be subject to a COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigation measures before re-opening. Mitigation may include provision of a COVID-19 secure poster. The risk of COVID-19 may need to be weighed against the risk to unsupervised children ignoring signage or climbing over fencing if it remains closed. A sample poster is attached at **Appendix I**. See Section 6 for a link to the Government guidance.

Separate Government guidance is published for providers of outdoor sports and recreation facilities and for grassroots sports and gym and leisure facilities, which is reflected in **Appendix K**. See links in Section 6.

Sport and exercise should take place in accordance with guidance issued by the relevant governing body for the sport or activity to deal with COVID-19 risks. ACRE recommends village and community halls require hirers to comply with such governing body guidance, rather than try to adapt their own hiring conditions and policies for each type of activity.

2.9 Catering

Arrangements for catering will depend on the size and nature of the activity and the size and facilities of the kitchen. Common sense should be applied to achieve social distancing. For example, for short meetings people might be encouraged to bring their own water. For longer, small events, such as an art class, people might each use the kitchen to make their own refreshments and clean after themselves. Where refreshments are usually served from a hatch, such as WI or coffee mornings, a decision will need to be taken as to whether it is easier to manage social distancing through inviting people's household group to a hatch or buffet table or by table service (both may be required). For an interval bar, e.g. at a quiz, drinks might be pre-ordered and collected by household group by group. Community cafes and luncheon clubs for the elderly are advised to check Government guidance for cafes and restaurants.

2.10 Procedures if someone becomes unwell with suspected COVID-19

a) As a matter of good practice space should be designated into which anyone will be moved who becomes unwell at the hall with suspected COVID-19 symptoms, so that they are away from other people until transport home or to hospital is available. Tissues and a bowl of warm soapy water for handwashing and paper towels should be provided. Tissues and paper towels should be disposed of into a plastic bag, which is sealed and placed in a secure place for 72 hours before being disposed of into the general rubbish collection. See **Appendix H**. (The contents of a Covid-19 first aid box do not replace the need for an ordinary first aid box).

b) Other people that have attended the same activity should be asked for contact details if not already available and then to leave the premises. These details should be provided to NHS Test and Trace if requested..

c) A decontamination clean should be carried out in those parts of the premises they have used, in accordance with PHE guidance (see reference section). The minimum PPE to be worn is disposable gloves and an apron. Disposable PPE equipment including gloves should be disposed of into a sealed, labelled or marked plastic bag and placed in a secure place for 72 hours before rubbish is collected. The cleaner should wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing PPE and launder all personal clothing worn on arrival home.

3. The re-opening of Pre-schools – Step 2

From 1st June – Pre-schools and nurseries were able to re-open and begin welcoming back all children below statutory school age. Separate guidance about this has been issued by ACRE. For hall committees who hire to Pre-schools and nurseries within the building, this will mean a more careful re-opening of the hall to other hirers or members of the public in order to address the anxiety of pre-school staff, parents and other hall users.

Points which need to be borne in mind when opening halls used by Pre-schools to other activities, are set out here:

Government guidance on wider opening of childcare settings advises them to avoid other people attending the premises unless essential: Within Pre-schools, children are encouraged only to mix with a group of up to 8 other children and one or two staff members, to minimise spread in the event of a COVID-19 case. "Limit external visitors to the setting and ensure they only come into the building when strictly necessary, for example if providing an essential service or essential support for a child's health and wellbeing." The usual safeguarding procedures also apply.

While the extent of the premises which are used by a Pre-school vary from hall to hall and cleaning or attending to safety issues in that part of the premises used by Pre-school could be regarded as an essential service, it's best if such tasks are carried out when Pre-school are not on site, though that may not always be possible.

Where common areas serve other parts of a hall which are used by other hirers or the public at the same time as Pre-school is in place (such as entrance lobbies, corridors, kitchens, toilets), timing of arrangements will clearly need to be discussed with the Pre-school. For example, cleaning and servicing of these areas might be carried out when Pre-school staff and children are elsewhere on the premises. Hirers' arrival and departure times will either have to be changed so that they do not coincide with the staggered arrival and departure times implemented by Pre-schools, or a separate entrance/exit used e.g. fire exit or a separate waiting/queueing arrangement created outside.

Responsibility for cleaning door handles, basins and working surfaces by organisations or individuals not connected with the Pre-school will have to be established if common areas are used.

Where the space used by Pre-school during the day is normally used by another organisation later in the afternoon or evening, arrangements for cleaning within that area will have to be established. The Pre-school may prefer to undertake cleaning before children arrive, and other hirers may also prefer to do so themselves, if the hall's cleaner cannot attend before they do so.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will our hall have to re-open when the Government says it can?

A: No – see Section 2.1 above. Some are only opening parts of their premises or certain activities, taking the view that slow start-up makes it easier to monitor. Some halls, e.g. with Pre-schools, have taken the view that wider re-opening in July would be too difficult, others the view that it would not be economic, others are using the closure period to complete maintenance works. If your hall is unlikely to re-open until e.g. September your trustees would need to meet (online or by phone) to take a decision that it would not be in the best interests of the charity to re-open in July when allowed to do so. Minute the reasons why, so that you can show that the matter has been carefully considered in the event of challenge e.g. by a local community group. In taking such a decision you should take into account the effect on vulnerable residents whom the hall is there to serve, their mental and physical wellbeing, your ability to provide safe premises and the financial implications for the charity. You may want to discuss the range of hirers in your hall, how they have supported it in the past and may in the future. What is the impact on them not being able to offer their activity or service either for their users or their income?

Make sure you notify the insurer, as unoccupancy terms may apply after 4th July.

Q: Will our hall have to close if there is a temporary local lockdown in our area?

A: So far community halls have not had to close but certain activities have been suspended. If there is a local lockdown contact your ACRE Network member for information or see the link in section 5 to government guidance about local lockdown areas.

Q: Our hall has fan/hot air heaters. Is the airflow likely to cause a risk?

A: If the system is a heat-recovery ventilation system, which maintains a constant supply of fresh air from outside, or otherwise draws air from outside the answer is no. If air is drawn internally but not near head height the risk reduced.

Q: If an outbreak of COVID-19 is traced to our hall, will we, trustees, or staff, be held liable?

A: If those responsible for managing the hall use reasonable endeavours to ensure the hall is cleaned and maintained in accordance with the COVID-19 Secure Guidelines, have prepared a COVID-19 Risk Assessment, **see Appendix F**, and have written records of the action taken this should reduce very substantially the risk of being held liable. Providing this is the case, and any insurer requirements met, any liability should be addressed in the usual way by the hall's public liability cover and legal expenses cover. Not only would a claimant have to prove the committee had been negligent and that they caught the disease at the premises, they may be held to bear responsibility themselves by putting themselves in harm's way.

Q: Hirers want to use the hall but pay a reduced fee because their numbers will be lower, and they will be doing more cleaning. We cannot afford this, because we have fixed costs to pay and are having to arrange more cleaning too. Do we have to allow it to open at a reduced fee if it is going to cost us more than the income?

A: It is up to trustees or committees responsible for managing charitable halls to determine what is in the best interests of their hall charity in the light of these exceptional circumstances and predicted financial situation. See also Section 5 as to grants and funding.

Q: What do we do if someone wants to hire the hall for an event at which we think social distancing might not be observed, such as an 18th birthday party?

A: You will be entitled to refuse the booking. You might accept a booking for a future date with the caveat that it is subject to cancellation if Government guidance at the time would not permit it or it appeared requirements then in force would not be met. See **Appendix D**.

Q: Where can we obtain a disposable apron and quantities of cleaning materials at low cost?

A: If your usual suppliers, supermarkets, pharmacy, DIY stores or internet shopping cannot provide these try asking your local authority or ACRE Network member for the contact details for the local authority bulk purchasing arrangements for your area, which should be available to charitable, voluntary and community organisations. For decontamination purposes, a plastic apron without sleeves is adequate but halls have found cheap overalls from DIY outlets a good alternative.

Q: We are confused. When should sanitiser, soap and water or antibacterial wipes be used?

A: Provide what is most appropriate. Sanitiser tends to be more easily dispensed at entrances and exits, whereas soap and water easily used in kitchens and toilets. For general cleaning disposable cloths used with and warm, soapy water, paper rolls or spray disinfectant are adequate. If you are concerned that sanitiser will disappear, large bottles may avoid the problem and you could store it (in a cool place) and require each hirer to put it out or provide it. People can be encouraged to bring their own sanitiser, antibacterial wipes and tissues, because everyone is encouraged to wash their hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing their nose. Wipes must not be flushed down toilets, bins should be provided.

Cleaning:

Q: Our chairs have upholstered backs, seats, and arms, cleaning them between use would damage them and we are told sanitiser spray may leave a sticky residue. Should we buy plastic chairs instead? They are not so comfortable. Should we use a "misting device"?

Q: Our Pre-school asks if we should clean the walls before others use the hall, as children tend to touch them?

Q: Our yoga teacher asks if she needs to clean the floor after the class? They bring their own mats, but people tend to touch the floor, put their water bottle on it.

Q: The room used by our Pilates class has a carpeted floor. Should we disinfect the carpet between each use or replace it?

A: These are all a matter of risk assessment. The emphasis is on cleaning **frequently touched surfaces and cleaning hands regularly**. These surfaces all tend to be touched less frequently than, for example, tabletops, door, and toilet handles. Rather than going to the expense of buying new, less comfortable chairs or a misting device or changing flooring you could consider asking hirers to be extra vigilant about asking people not to attend if unwell, regular use of hand sanitiser, especially before getting out and stowing these chairs, to use plastic gloves, or rotating their use (so there is a day or two between use of each chair). Some fabrics are dry clean only, so a sanitiser spray should not be used on them. What benefits would a misting device have i.e. would it save wiping regularly used surfaces or staff time? How long is required before rooms can be used again, particularly by anyone with an allergy or asthma, might the chemicals affect them? Pre-schools are encouraging children to wash hands regularly and other hirers are unlikely to touch the same part of a wall as a small child. Those attending yoga and Pilates should bring their own mats, reducing contact with the floor. Unless there is a parent and toddler class using the hall after yoga or Pilates, it is unlikely other hirers will touch the floor. If someone developed Covid-19 symptoms who had recently been at the class, it would then be necessary to consider cleaning the carpet or closing the room for 72 hours.

Q: Our cleaner/volunteers are aged over 70, so in the vulnerable category who are recommended to stay at home as far as possible. What should we do?

A: It is essential to risk assess and discuss the situation with them in the light of their circumstances. You must take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household. For paid people loss of income will be an issue so perhaps you can arrange duties to avoid contact with others e.g. cleaning when no or few people are on the premises. For volunteers, social contact with other people may be very important after lockdown so it will be essential to ensure everyone maintains 2m social distancing and good hygiene when they are present.

Q: Do we need to ask every hirer to complete their own Covid-19 Risk Assessment?

A: This is not compulsory, but it may help everybody feel safer if they do so.

Q: Do we need to clean the hall if it has not been used for 72 hours?

A: A Risk Assessment may indicate not as the virus is not thought to survive longer than this on surfaces. However, it would encourage a hirer to maintain a good cleaning routine if they were to clean regularly used surfaces before starting.

Q: We are keen to avoid using disposable gloves and aprons for ordinary cleaning. Can we use washable/wipeable items?

A: Yes. Disposable ones are only required if cleaning after a suspected case.

5. Finances

- a) **Charitable Community Halls and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs):** Additional cleaning, provision of sanitiser etc will incur costs and income may be reduced for a considerable period as the usual pattern of hire may not be resumed until 2021. **The Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant (RHL Grant) of £10,000 (£25,000 for premises with a rateable value over £15,000) was available to charitable village halls and sports buildings from local Authorities but has now closed.** This can be used to meet any costs incurred in re-opening, as well as fixed costs incurred during closure. Under the Extended Retail Discount (ERD) charitable halls should also receive 100% rate relief for 2020/21. Please contact your ACRE Network member if you have any queries about accessing such support.
- b) **Church Halls and Parish/Town Council Halls:** A hall which is ineligible for the RHL Grant or ERD e.g. a church hall or parish council run hall may seek Discretionary Grant support from their local authority. **Applications should be made as soon as possible** because some authorities are applying time limits.

Forward Planning: In view of the long term effect on hire income it will be particularly important that managers revise budgetary projections to the end of the 2020/21 financial year in order to identify whether the RHL Grant will be sufficient to cover any deficit. This needs to be done at an early stage because, if its own free reserves are insufficient, the hall will need to allow time for approaches to be made for financial support. Note that any restricted funds held by a charity are unlikely to be available for this purpose, such as donations or grants received for capital works. Financial support may be available from parish and town councils or from local charitable or National Lottery funds where a charity is facing financial hardship and risk of closure because of COVID-19. A crowdfunding campaign might be launched.

6. Government Guidance and other references

Our Plan to Rebuild

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

The Government roadmap and COVID-19 Secure Guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Guidance for the Safe Use of multi-purpose Community Facilities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

Guidance for the public on the phased return of sport and recreation

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>

Guidance for performing arts

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>

Guidance for the safe re-opening of outdoor play areas

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>

Guidance for Community Shops and Indoor Markets<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

Guidance from the Dept for Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-educational-and-childcare-settings-to-prepare-for-wider-opening-from-1-june-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

Guidance for employers:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/5-steps-to-working-safely>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Guidance for cleaning premises contaminated by suspected COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Poster certifying an employer has taken steps to ensure premises are COVID-19 secure:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb963fcd3bf7f5d39550303/staying-covid-19-secure-accessible.pdf>

“Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” Poster:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf>

Legionella risk:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>

<https://legionellacontrol.com/guidance/regular-flushing-control-legionella/>

<https://www.cieh.org/media/4208/legionella-guidance-covid-19.pdf>

Face Coverings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home#face-coverings>

Guidance for social distancing and vulnerable people:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs>

Guidance for re-opening municipal public toilets

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/896040/Joint_letter_Simon_Clarke_MP_and_Rebecca_Pow_MP

Out of School settings

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Guidance about local lockdown areas

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

Thank you to Louise Beaton, ACRE Board member and Community Halls Consultant for producing this Information Sheet for ACRE.

We are grateful to ACRE Network members and hall committees who have kindly shared their own documents for contribution to this Guidance. Also, to all members of the ACRE team for their support.

All comments regarding this Information Sheet are welcome.

[Deborah Clarke](#), ACRE

Appendices

You are free to reproduce the appendices to use for your hall, please contact the ACRE Network member in your county for word versions, <https://acre.org.uk/in-your-area/network-members/>

Appendix A

Before re-opening the hall, go through the following checklist:

	Task	Done
1.	Advise the hall's insurers whether/when the premises will be re-opening and check any requirements.	
2.	Check the security code or key logs are up to date.	
3.	If a Pre-school is using the premises, check any adjustments to hire arrangements needed for other hirers e.g. arrival/departure times, access to kitchen or toilets. (See Section 3 above)	
4.	Carry out a COVID-19 Risk Assessment in consultation with any employees, if you have any. (See Appendix F) Provide to hirers.	
5.	Consider whether additional cleaning is required, where and when. Consider arrangements for moving, stowing and cleaning equipment. A thorough clean of the hall should be undertaken before it re-opens and the subsequent cleaning regime to follow will need to be identified. Ordinary household products can be used.	
6.	Discuss with your caretaker/cleaner/contractor any changes in work patterns required to ensure the hall meets the COVID-19 Secure guidelines. HSE provides a leaflet of things to discuss with an employee. Agree any changes in writing with cleaners/employees.	
7.	Ensure the caretaker/cleaner has appropriate PPE: Ordinary overalls and plastic gloves are usually sufficient. The overalls should be taken off when leaving and washed. A set of disposable PPE is also needed in case decontamination is required. Contractors should use their own equipment, but an employee should be provided with the necessary equipment.	
8.	Flush through the water system, five minutes for each tap or shower head, to remove any risk of legionella or other bacterial build up and ensure U bends are full. Keep clear of spray (place showerheads in a container of water while flushing to avoid spray) and wipe up afterwards with household disinfectant. Check hot water system is set at a minimum 50C. (See Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers guidance, link in Section 6).	
9.	Carry out the routine health and safety risk assessment of the whole premises. Check the electrical inspection (required every 5 years) and PAT testing are up to date and visually check leads. Ensure any fridge/freezer is working at correct temperature, the heating and hot water system operational. Ensure internet is working. Cut grass. Identify and address any items requiring	

	attention e.g. light bulbs failed, trip hazards. (For more information see ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 15: Health and Safety legislation and Village Halls)	
10.	Ensure the Fire Safety Risk Assessment and routine fire safety checks are up to date e.g. fire exit doors are clear, not sticking, fire extinguishers serviced, emergency lighting system and any alarm system are working. (For more information see ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 37: Fire Safety in Village Halls)	
11.	Provide hand wash and drying facilities: Hand sanitiser needs to be provided at entrance and exit routes. Tissues, soap, toilet rolls, paper towels or hand driers and cleaning products, including disposable cloths or paper roll, should be provided.	
12.	Consider "Engaged/Vacant" signage at the entrance to male and female toilets to limit the number of people within these areas at any one time and similar signage at other "pinch points".	
13.	Provide signage: The certificate that the premises comply with COVID-19 secure guidelines and that people should not enter if they have symptoms should be displayed at entrances (see Appendix C). The PHE posters encouraging frequent, good handwashing techniques and hygiene "Catch It, Bin It, Kill It" available on the HSE and PHE websites should be displayed. (See Section 6)	
14.	Think about social distancing arrangements in corridors and at entrance and exits: Consider using tape to mark out a 2m distance outside and inside the entrance, and outside fire exits, to encourage people to wait their turn to enter and exit the hall.	
15.	Prepare special hire conditions and instruct booking secretary as to any changes in the Hall's hire policy during re-opening, i.e. which bookings can be accepted, any changes to charges, and to provide hirers with a copy of the COVID- 19 secure poster. (See Appendices C, D and E)	
16.	Identify designated space for someone with suspected COVID-19	
17.	Consider Marketing and Communications: Ensure the website has up to date information, including special conditions of hire. Advertise availability as appropriate. Ensure answerphone message is up to date.	
18.	Review budget forecast for 2020-21.	

Appendix B

COVID-19 Re-opening Questionnaire Adaptation of document shared by Witcham Village Hall, Cambridgeshire

In order for Trustees to make a robust plan of action in readiness for any proposed opening of Village Halls by the Government, it would be extremely helpful if you could complete and return the following questionnaire by2020. This can either be via email or paper versions can be left at:

Name of Group

Name of person completing form:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Home Tel:

Mobile Tel:

Please tick appropriate answer		
1	How likely are you to return to use the hall?	Yes No Maybe
2	If you wish to return when would you consider returning?	July Aug Sept Oct Later
3	When you return would you wish to hire the hall for normal sessions or would you like something different?	Normal Different
4	Which day of the week do you prefer to hire the hall?	
5	What is your preferred time for hire? Must include time for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• set up• pack away time• sanitisation of groups personal equipment stored at hall	From To
6	Can you be flexible with hire times?	Yes No
7	If only a morning, afternoon, or evening slot available which would you prefer?	Morning Afternoon Evening
8	Which rooms are required? Please note – rooms not required will be secured from entry	Main hall Small room Kitchen Toilets Store

9	Premises equipment needed. Specific numbers will enable efficient use of cleaner's time.	Number of Chairs Number of Tables List specific kitchen equipment Use of dishwasher
10	All equipment stored at hall will need to be sanitised before and after use and will be the responsibility of the hirer to ensure this takes place after every session.	Name of person taking responsibility
11	Will Group require use of Car Park/ garden or field? Please state which area(s)	Yes No
12	Any further comments: -	

PLEASE NOTE:

- a) The hall will be: [thoroughly sanitiser between hires by cleaner] [cleaned once per day by the hall cleaner – regularly used surfaces and toilets] [cleaned thoroughly once a week by the hall cleaner, including floors]. The hiring group will be responsible for cleaning surfaces used regularly during and at the end of hire. Sanitiser or soap and water will be available on entry and exit to the hall
- b) Access will only be allowed during the specific time of hire.
- c) Persons waiting to collect hall users should adhere to social distancing at front of building or remain in vehicle.
- d) Optional [A group risk assessment will be required for hall usage; a sample is provided]
- e) Isolation facilities will be available in [the changing room area] at back of hall.
- f) The hire charge of the hall will remain the same as before the outbreak for a period of [weeks]. All organisations and groups will be given due warning of any increase.

To comply with Government advice, the Village Hall Trustees wish to ensure all users can be assured of a safe and sanitised environment in which to return and access our facilities. A risk assessment will be available but may be subject to change at any time in line with Government and Village Hall Guidelines.

The Village Hall uses personal data for the purposes of managing hall bookings, finances, events, and publicity.

Please tick box to indicate that you agree to us holding your data for booking purposes

Appendix C

Sample Poster

HELP KEEP THIS HALL COVID-19 SECURE

- 1. You must not enter if you or anyone in your household has COVID-19 symptoms.**
- 2. If you develop COVID-19 symptoms within 48 hours** of visiting these premises alert NHS Test and Trace. Alert the hall cleaner on [insert a contact number] and alert the organiser of the activity you attended. You must seek a COVID-19 antigen test.
- 3. Maintain 2 metres social distancing as far as possible:** Wait behind the marked lines as you go through the entrance hall to your activity and observe the one-way system marked.
- 4. Use the hand sanitiser provided** on entering the premises. Clean your hands often. Soap and paper towels are provided.
- 5. Avoid touching your face, nose, or eyes.** Clean your hands if you do.
- 6. Face coverings MUST be worn** unless an exemption applies to a person (eg for health reasons, those aged under 11) or a person has a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering (eg when taking part in an activity to which an exemption applies). This is a legal requirement.
- 7. "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it".** Tissues should be disposed of into one of the rubbish bags provided. Then wash your hands.
- 8. Check the organisers of your activity have cleaned door handles, tables, other equipment, sinks and surfaces before you arrived.** Keep them clean. We [do our best to/cannot] clean all surfaces at the hall between each hire.
- 9. Take turns to use confined spaces such as corridors, kitchen and toilet areas.** Standing or sitting next to someone is lower risk than opposite them. Briefly passing another person in a confined space is low risk.
- 10. Keep the hall well ventilated. Close doors and windows on leaving.**
- 11. Wash your clothes when you get home** to reduce risk of transmission.

This hall was last cleaned at [insert time]

am/pm/eve on [insert date]

Appendix D

Management of Social Distancing at Community Facilities and Activities A Risk Based approach

Following the end of lockdown community groups have needed to know whether or not they can once again use community facilities to hold their usual – or a version of their usual – activities and, if so, what conditions may be appropriate so as to reduce the risk of spreading infection and address fear.

The rules on social interactions for groups of up to 6

This Appendix has been reviewed and updated substantially to reflect the regulations on gatherings of 14th September 2020.(see also Section 2.2c of the Information Sheet and below, part B).

The Government Guidance for Community Facilities confirms activities hosting more than 6 can take place at community halls, within a hall's own capacity limits, providing people who attend in groups are in groups of up to 6, socially distanced from other groups. It also says (the bold italics are ACRE's insert): "Only where there is a ***significant likelihood*** of groups mixing and socialising (and where it would be difficult to prevent mingling and therefore breaking the law) should activities not take place in a community facility".

While some activities are listed as examples, that is a flag for organisers to take particular care if people attend or rehearse in groups. Activities such as WI and amateur choirs are important for the wellbeing of individuals, particularly those who have been isolated from the company of friends and family over the last six months. The emphasis in Government Guidance is clearly on the need to conduct such activities safely, not to discourage them. It may be preferable for those organising activities which are likely to be attended by older or clinically vulnerable people to ask everyone not to attend and seat themselves in groups, but individually (or in a support bubble of 2), so that normal social distancing requirements apply to everyone and confusion is avoided.

A. Which activities can now take place?

The following takes a risk-based approach to a complex situation, bearing in mind: the hundreds of different kinds of organised activities which take place in or around village and community halls and playing fields; the important need to address isolation, loneliness and mental health issues; the needs of families with young people; the need to enable people to remain fit and healthy; and the need for people who normally earn a living around community facilities to do so. This note cannot cover every situation and is intended only as a guide to help halls draw up their own policy towards accepting bookings, with tips shared by halls, so that the Booking Secretary knows how to respond to requests.

The following should be considered in risk assessing whether each potential hirer can meet the COVID-19 secure guidelines.

- Can attendance at indoor activities be limited to the capacity figures the hall sets and will the organiser be able or willing to comply with social distancing requirements (see Section 2.2)? The regulations now allow groups of up to 6 to socialise together at an activity, as can larger groups from the same household, "bubble" or a linked household (making a "qualifying group" – see section B below), but mingling between groups is not permitted. (For brevity, reference below to groups of up to 6 includes "qualifying groups").
- What arrangements would be made if more people attend than the room has capacity for? A meeting which usually takes place in a committee room may need to be moved to a larger space to allow social distancing.
- The likely age of those attending. If 70 or over, or if clinically vulnerable, can arrangements be made to ensure 2m social distancing **throughout** their use of the premises, including when using

toilets. (Shielding for the clinically vulnerable was paused on 1st August but their social interactions need to remain low and within the new group limit of 6).

- Are the organisers willing to clean regularly used surfaces before the event, while it takes place and before leaving? Are they willing to ensure compliance with the requirement to wear face coverings and recording details of those attending or use of NHS QR codes (see Appendix M).
- If activities are to be held outdoors what arrangements will be made in the event of rain or a cold snap, e.g. tents, umbrellas?
- Will other organisations be using the premises at the same time? If so, what arrangements will be made to avoid contact between the different groups e.g. staggered start/finish times, Occupied/vacant signage for toilets?
- If an activity will take place outside, will it require access to toilets? If so, a charge would be reasonable to help defray cleaning and other costs such as water rates and insurance.
- Will it comply with any Government Guidance for specific activities (eg places of worship if a religious ceremony is to take place, guesthouses and hostels if overnight accommodation such as cubs).
- Organisers may be following guidance issued by their own governing bodies (eg for sports), which may be more specific to their activity and should provide reassurance. If there is a slight difference between that guidance and the information here, it will be for the organiser to decide which to follow, bearing in mind changes in Government Guidance.

The following are all subject to relevant social distancing requirements, cleaning and hygiene being met. If an activity is not covered here, we suggest you look at the closest match:

Group 1: Permitted

- **Activities which provide essential services, or otherwise already permitted:** e.g. Pre-schools, food and medicine distribution, making PPE, Pop-Up COVID-19 testing, services by voluntary and charitable organisations. Retail activities such as Community Shops and indoor markets (e.g. Farmers Markets, Craft Markets, Antique Fairs, Xmas Fayres) must comply with Government Guidance for the retail sector.
- **Use by Schools:** Guidance has kindly been provided by the Charity Commission, which is available from your Network member if required.
- **Office and certain other forms of employment:** e.g. Building work to the hall, Parish Council, or other office, hire by local companies or organisations for training events, distribution purposes, video recording/transmission. A hairdresser or health therapist. The relevant Government Guidance for that type of employment should be observed.
- **Activities which can be held outdoors and where social distancing can be readily achieved:** e.g. dog training classes, a concert or Christmas market. As with indoor activities organisers will need to arrange activities so as to enable people to comply with the requirement that any groups are only up to 6 people, although there is an exception for organised sports and exercise classes. Events in public outdoor spaces organised by businesses, charitable, philanthropic or political organisations, and public bodies can take place provided they take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidance, and including completion of a risk assessment. Any other gathering in an outdoor space must not be any larger than 6 people. Equipment should be cleaned regularly e.g. gate latches, handles, balls etc. DCMS guidance permits personal training or coaching if people are able to follow social distancing guidelines. People who play team sports can now train together (e.g. hold fitness sessions). See **Appendix K** and link to DCMS guidance in Section 6.

- **Activities held indoors where smaller numbers of people attend:** eg: meetings or seated activities held in a large hall such as art classes, history group, dog training classes, weight loss groups, Parish Council meetings, WIs. While Government recommend that meetings continue to take place digitally rather than face-to-face, where possible, meetings are permitted of civic, political or community groups (e.g. parish council, ward meeting of political party, charity board of trustees), MP or councillor surgery/drop in sessions. Age and vulnerability may affect local attitudes about meeting in person so this may differ from place to place and change. A combination may be feasible: A face-to-face meeting may help involve new members and enable those who struggle with digital technology to participate, while others participate on line or by phone.
- **Libraries and book lending schemes:** Users should be asked to clean hands on arrival, regularly if browsing and when leaving. Returned books should be placed in a box for 72 hours before placing back on display, cash donations placed in a bowl and handled by one person wearing gloves.

Group 2: Requiring more careful management by organisers

- **Small events providing catering:** e.g. coffee mornings, pop-up cafés or luncheon clubs. Table service only should be provided. A distance of 2m is required between tables (unless other measures such as back to back seating are in place). Groups of up to 6 only should be allowed at each table. Takeaway drink or food can be provided. Government Guidance for pubs, cafes and restaurants should be consulted to work out how to run these safely. Community cafes will be required to comply with that Guidance. NB Special arrangements should be made to ensure social distancing for vulnerable people and those in the shielding category who wish to attend, to enable participation and avoid their continued isolation.
- **Activities serving mainly older people:** eg Veterans groups, senior groups: The greater vulnerability of those over 70 will require careful attention to social distancing. Consequently it may be appropriate to encourage people to attend either as individuals who social distance from everyone else as far as possible, or in smaller groups of, say, two or three household members, so that mingling between groups of more vulnerable people is avoided.
- **Playing games at tables:** While the older age profile and difficulty complying with social distancing at card tables (normally 67cm) has led the English Bridge Union to advise Bridge Clubs against re-opening for a period, an informal local group may be able to arrange social distancing if groups of up to 6 play together and do not mix with other groups, and slightly larger tables are used. Using new cards or cleaning them is advisable. For games such as scrabble, tiles would need to be cleaned and not touched by other players.
- **Activities for children and young people:** e.g. cubs, youth clubs, railway modelling club, Sunday school, picnics or BBQs in outdoor areas. Supervised activities for children are an exception to the requirement for groups of up to 6 (see below). For holiday playschemes and before or after school activities Government guidance for out-of-school settings applies. For activities with toddlers, soft toys should be avoided, parents can be encouraged to bring toys which are not shared with other children. Requirements on Pre-schools to keep children in small, consistent groups have been relaxed in favour of minimizing mixing (eg between different age groups) so these type of arrangements may be appropriate i.e. focus on hand cleanliness, arranging the room into small groups and the Government Guidance for "early years" may be helpful. However, it has to be recognised social distancing will be difficult so arrangements may be needed for any families with clinically vulnerable close relatives who attend.

- **Public meetings and public consultation events (e.g. planning):** A one-way system can be created for exhibitions. For large meetings attendees can be asked to use the furthest seat from the entrance first unless hard of hearing, leaving two seats between groups of people on either side. Handouts can be provided at the end rather than at the beginning. Contact details should be taken (for NHS Test and Trace) by one person so attendees do not share a pen. Digital participation can also be encouraged.
- **Other larger events including those with seated audiences:** e.g. gardening club, film show, bingo, quiz night. Attendees can be asked to use the furthest seats from the entrance first unless hard of hearing. A booking system can be encouraged to manage numbers and obtain contact details for NHS Test and Trace.
- **Weddings and wedding receptions:** Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are permitted where attended by up to 15 persons (excluding those working eg caterers). An exception from the group social interaction limit of 6 applies (see below). Musicians may play and a small group of singers perform, but guests may not sing and recorded music is recommended. The bridal couple are not required to wear face coverings and only they may dance. Sit down wedding receptions are permitted for no more than 15 people (excluding caterers). See also Government guidance on Places of Worship and on Weddings. Government guidance for cafes and restaurants should be followed in relation to catering.
- **Other celebration and life cycle events:** While an event to “mark a person’s death or celebrate their life following a death, such as a funeral” can be held for up to 30 people, government guidance suggests that families consider deferring a celebration or memorial service until it can be held safely and that community facilities should not facilitate large gatherings or celebrations at present. Consequently, while funerals can take place for up to 30, wakes are not advisable because people would need to keep within groups of up to 6 and this type of event could give rise to mingling between groups, which is unlawful. Baptisms and other life cycle or religious events must comply with the group limit of 6. At funerals, baptisms and similar life cycle or religious events relatives and friends may, however, have travelled a distance to attend so it may therefore be appropriate to hire a hall for the purpose of providing refreshments and toilet facilities before or after, but only for those people attending the event. Any refreshments should be provided in accordance with guidance for cafes and restaurants (see below) ie there should either be “table service” or, if caterers are not engaged, people should be seated in order to eat and drink, in groups of up to 6. Loud music or broadcasts are not currently permitted, the purpose being to avoid aerosol dispersal as people raise their voices to be heard, and must be restricted to 85db(A) at the source of play (except for live music)

A hall should not be hired for teenage or adult birthday parties. Hiring for small celebrations such as small wedding anniversary lunches is now more difficult, though small events permitted if compliant with social distancing, keeping to groups of up to 6, refreshments in accordance with Guidance for restaurants. If there is any likelihood of a larger gathering than 30, or mingling between groups, the hall should not be made available.

- **Social Clubs, bars and cafes:** These may open in accordance with Government guidance for pubs, cafes and restaurants (the hospitality sector). Service of food and drink must close by 10pm. There is a legal obligation to ensure people are not admitted in groups of more than 6 and that they do not mix. Table service only is permitted and tables must be 2m part (or with other mitigation such as back to back seating). Any **singing on the premises by customers in groups of more than six or dancing by customers must be stopped**. They may also provide takeaway refreshments. Music must not be louder than 85db(A) at source, except for live music. Games such as darts and snooker are discouraged in the Government guidance for pubs. However,

they can be permitted if not played in a Social Club or bar but as an activity in their own right or e.g. at a Youth Club.

- **Indoor sport and exercise and dancing classes:** Activities such as yoga, keep fit, badminton, table tennis, indoor bowls, dancing classes, and School PE lessons are permitted. These should be held in accordance with the Government guidance, summarized in **Appendix K**, and any guidance issued by the relevant governing body for sport (which may recommend a lower limit on numbers than the hall capacity). Energetic activities such as Zumba and circuit training are subject to tighter capacity and ventilation requirements.
- **Indoor Performances, Rehearsals, broadcasts:** Rehearsals, filming and broadcasting of music, drama and dancing is now permitted, including professional touring performances, amateur dramatics, pantomime groups, children's entertainers, band practices, orchestras, choirs, whether amateur or professional. These should be held in accordance with the Government guidance for performing arts, summarized in **Appendix J**. Children's entertainers need to get back to work and will have plans for managing social distancing and encouraging hand washing, so offer a good option for organised activities for children and young people, eg at half term or before Christmas, particularly if a Xmas panto is not being held. Performances are encouraged to close by 10pm, but are permitted to finish later.
- **Outdoor Performances and events:** See **Appendix J**.
- **Children's birthday parties:** Many families do not have the space for this at home. Large gatherings or celebrations are not permitted, neither is loud music or activity which would encourage shouting or singing. While children's birthday parties are not banned, it is unlikely that keeping children in groups of 6 or less which do not mingle could be achieved, so currently not advised unless organised by someone used to managing this in a school or pre-school. A children's party is permitted, however, if limited to one "qualifying group" or 6 or less people.

Group 3: Not permitted, awaits further Government guidance:

- **Outdoor events:** If 30 or more people will attend and the event is not organised by a business, charity, benevolent or philanthropic or political organisation, public body, in compliance with Covid-19 Secure guidelines.
- **Dances and discos:** Nightclubs are not permitted to open. Loud music is not permitted. Performers are advised not to encourage impromptu dancing by audiences.
- There should be no **group singing by worshippers or audiences**. Places of worship should take account of the Performing Arts guidance.

There has been some concern by trustees about responsibilities and confusion about the way different Government Guidance applies.

The following may help:

1. **Trustees** of Village Halls are unlikely to be at risk if they have undertaken and followed a COVID-19 Risk Assessment before re-opening their Halls, unless the activity is on the specific 'banned' list that is referred to in Regulation 4 (and regularly amended).
2. Risk under the 'crisis regulations' falls to the **event organiser**. If a **hirer, the event organiser**, does not feel the Hall is in a condition that enables them to comply, they should not make the booking. Obligations on the **event organiser** include keeping records for NHS test and trace and taking steps to avoid groups of people mingling at activities.

3. **Trustees and managers of Village Halls** will, of course, want to ensure that their premises make it as easy as possible for both hirers and individuals to comply with relevant Guidance through the provision of adequate handwashing, signage, spacing/capacity guidelines, multiple small tables etc. specific to their Hall. The manner or extent to which managers choose to do this is unlikely to alter the risk for them under the regulations.
4. **Hirers** must commit themselves to operating in a COVID-19 Secure way by following the Government's Guidance in force for their activity. The Government guidance says: "if organising an activity, you should carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment to identify actions which could minimise the risk of transmission".
5. **Trustees and managers of Halls** should follow good practice themselves and avoid creating the conditions for the spread of COVID-19 in their community. For this reason, they will want to avoid letting to any **hirer** where there may be an obvious risk of the Guidance being hard to comply with.
6. In order to assure themselves on 4, above, trustees of Halls should ensure **hirers** inform all participating **individuals** that they must adhere to social distancing guidelines and the face covering requirement. *The responsibility rests with the individual to comply and with the hirer (the event organiser) to have carried out a risk assessment and operated the event under COVID-19 Secure guidelines to make it possible* e.g. by laying out seats or tables so as to enable individuals or groups to achieve social distancing from the next individual or group.
7. The Government guidance for **individuals** advises: "you should not hold or attend celebrations of any size (such as parties) where it's difficult to maintain social distancing" and "limit social interaction with anyone outside the group you are attending a place with".
8. **Event organisers** should arrange activities so as to avoid groups of up to 6 "mingling", ie mixing with other groups. The group limit does not stop people saying hello, waving, smiling, or conversing briefly in the way many are now used to doing while social distancing in the street, shops or at work. However, an **individual** in one group may not join another group during an activity or event, just as people in restaurants may not join another table. An **event organiser** should ask **individuals** who attempt to mingle with another group to stop. Common sense can be applied.

B. Group social interaction requirements:

The aim is to contain risk of virus spread to small groups. In general people are therefore being advised to only socialise in a group of up to 6, following social distancing guidelines as far as possible. Covid -19 secure Community Halls can host more than 6 people, subject to their own capacity limits. If people attend in groups, or groups of up to 6 are formed at an activity, they must not mingle (or mix) with other groups.

Those in single adult households can form a support bubble with another household. A "linked household" can be formed between a single adult with children and another household, but cannot be changed.

"Qualifying groups" can be larger than 6 where a "support bubble" or "linked household" has been formed with another household, or a single household is composed of more than 6 people.

Space requirements may be difficult to determine in advance of occasional events, whereas for regular activities this is likely to be less of a problem: This is because there is a tension with the advice to individuals, which is that they should limit their social interactions with anyone they do not live with. Consequently, even if people attend in a group of up to 6, if those in the group are from different

households they may still require sufficient space for social distancing from others within their group, especially if over 70 or shielding. Organisers can therefore ask whether social distancing is needed *within* a group, so that when an activity is being booked or people are being seated, sufficient space is made available.

The exceptions are listed below. The limit on group size of 6 has, however, been introduced to limit the spread of infection. Consequently, even where an activity may potentially be exempt organisers should consider whether it would help limit the risk of spread of infection to adjust their activities and operate in groups of up to 6. For example, Men's Sheds provide a voluntary service, and are wisely advising local groups to operate in groups of up to 6.

- for work, or the provision of voluntary or charitable services
- registered childcare, education or training
- supervised activities provided for children, including wraparound care, youth groups and activities, and children's playgroups
- providing support to a vulnerable person
- providing emergency assistance, and to avoid injury or illness or to escape risk of harm
- for arrangements where children do not live in the same household as both their parents
- fulfilling a legal obligation such as attending court or jury service
- weddings and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions – up to 30 people, in a public place
- funerals – up to 30 people. This does not include wakes, other than for religious ceremonial purposes.
- other religious and belief-based life cycle ceremonies – up to 30 people, in a public place. This only covers the ceremonies, and does not include celebrations of these events.
- Outdoor organised sport or exercises classes or physical activity. This does not include informal sport or fitness activity with family or friends – this must be limited to a group of 6.
- elite sporting competition and training
- support groups – formally organised groups to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support. This includes support to victims of crime, recovering addicts, new parents, people with long-term illnesses, those facing issues relating to their sexuality or gender, and those who have suffered bereavement. May continue to meet in groups up to 15.
- protests – if organised in compliance with COVID-19 Secure guidance

Where a group includes someone covered by one of these exemptions, they are not counted as part of the gatherings limit. This means, for example, that a tradesperson can go into a household of six without breaching the limit if they are there for work. (Ref: GOV.UK FAQs. What you Can and Can't Do. 14th Sept 2020).

Note:

Businesses: While there is an exception for those at work, it is unlikely to apply to those people attending an activity which is run as a business, such as a weight loss group, only to the person at work. Social distancing must be maintained anyway and some people attending may be in the vulnerable category. Those people who wish to do so might attend in groups of 6 or less, and socialise between themselves, and if they do they must not be allowed to mingle (ie mix) with others.

Support groups: It would be unwise for an activity to call itself a "support group" in order to avoid the limit on group size. It would be better to think whether group working might help members or clients cope better with the Covid restrictions.

Managing the social interaction requirement for groups of up to 6 – examples

Activity or Event	Managing groups of 6 or less or “qualifying groups”	Can Face Coverings be removed? (Other exceptions also apply)
Sewing group:	People attend with one or two friends with whom they wish to chat as a group. They do not live together and most people being over 70 they wish to sit socially distanced. Large tables are put out by the organiser/caretaker. Groups can choose to be side by side 1 - 2m apart at one large table or have individual tables set apart from other groups.	To take refreshments (seated) or if they interfere with the activity. If glasses steam up, they should be removed for safety (sharp scissors, needles).
Quiz:	Most people attend in family or friendship groups. They can be asked to book in advance. Some tables will have groups of 4 – 6 family members closely seated, other groups of up to 6 will need larger tables so friends can sit together but socially distanced. One or two tables may have a larger “qualifying group” closely seated. At the interval remind people not to mingle between groups, especially if children attend who may want to mix with friends. Invite people from each table to use toilets one by one.	To take refreshments, when seated.
Art class:	12 people usually sit socially distanced. Only the instructor moves round the room. They can remain as they are or the class can form groups, eg 2 x 6 or 3 x 4. Members of groups would then be able to chat and move within their group during the class and coffee break, but not with other groups. The tutor would still need to interact with each group, with attention to social distancing, but being at work is excepted and does not count towards each group limit.	To take refreshments, when seated. If it would interfere with the activity (eg glasses steam up).
Bingo:	Each group needs to be socially distanced from other groups. If people don't book in advance, someone would need to take them to a row of seats or table large enough for their group. They could be separated from other groups by both a 2m wide gangway and the table separating them from those in rows behind or in front.	To take refreshments, when seated.
Public meeting or talk	Seats might be placed in forward facing rows eg 8 on each side of a 2m gangway, each group or individual separated from the next group or individual by empty seats in the row or sitting in a different row. Someone should be available to help seat people so as to achieve social distancing.	To take refreshments, when seated. If it would interfere with the activity eg by a speaker. A PA preferable if available.
Film show	Barns Green Village Hall, Sussex, held 2 shows, with advance bookings. Limiting group sizes to 4, empty seats between, gave a capacity of 46. They can continue this way or raise the group limit to 6. The seats are the refreshment area, people bring their own.	Once seated during a film show face coverings can be removed, and replaced before leaving.
Wedding reception	Up to 15 people can attend a wedding and a seated reception without adhering to the group limit of 6. The hirer should be asked if there are people who need to socially distance from others, and the tables set out accordingly.	Not required by the bride and groom. Guests may remove them once seated for the meal.

Coffee morning	People attend to socialise with others, but arrive singly or in pairs, and may not have pre-arranged to sit with (ie form a group with) particular people. The organisers may allocate or allow them to join a table of up to 6, socially distanced, and should explain they must not mingle or move to another table.	To take refreshments, when seated.
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30 September 2020

Sample Special Conditions of Hire during COVID-19

Note: These conditions are supplemental to, not a replacement for, the hall's ordinary conditions of hire.

SC1:

You, the hirer, will be responsible for ensuring those attending your activity or event comply with the COVID-19 Secure Guidelines while entering and occupying the hall, as shown on the attached poster which is also displayed at the hall entrance, in particular using the hand sanitiser supplied when entering the hall and after using tissues.

SC2:

You undertake to comply with the actions identified in the hall's risk assessment, of which you will be provided with a copy.

SC3:

You will be responsible for cleaning door handles, light switches, window catches, equipment, toilet handles and seats, wash basins and all surfaces likely to be used during your period of hire **before** other members of your group or organisation arrive and to keep the premises clean through regular cleaning of surfaces during your hire, paying particular attention to wash hand basins and kitchen sinks (if used), using either the products supplied (which will be in a clearly accessible location) or your own ordinary domestic products. You will be required to clean again on leaving.

Please take care cleaning electrical equipment. Use cloths - do not spray!

SC4:

You will make sure that everyone likely to attend your activity or event understands that they **MUST NOT DO SO** if they or anyone in their household has had COVID-19 symptoms in the last 48 hours, and that if they develop symptoms within 10 days of visiting the premises they **MUST** use the Test and Trace system to alert others with whom they have been in contact. They must seek a COVID-19 antigen test

SC5:

You will keep the premises well ventilated throughout your hire, with windows and doors (except fire doors) open as far as convenient. You will be responsible for ensuring they are all securely closed on leaving.

SC6:

You will ensure that no more than [30] people attend your activity/event in the Main Hall and (15) in the Small Hall, in order that social distancing can be maintained. You will ensure that people attending do so in groups of no more than 6 (unless they are a "qualifying group") and that such groups do not mingle. You will ensure social distancing of 2m between individuals or groups is maintained by everyone attending as far as possible, including while waiting to enter the premises, that they observe the one-way system within the premises, and as far as possible observe social distancing of 1m plus mitigation measures when using more confined areas (e.g. moving and stowing equipment, accessing toilets) which should be kept as brief as possible. You will make sure that no more than [one] persons use each suite of toilets at one time.

SC7:

You will take particular care to ensure that social distancing is maintained for any persons aged 70 or over or likely to be clinically more vulnerable to COVID-19, including for example keeping a 2m distance around them when going in and out of rooms and ensuring they can access the toilets, kitchen or other confined areas without others being present. For some people, passing another person in a confined space is less risky, but for older people that should be avoided.

SC8:

You will position furniture or the arrangement of the room as far as possible to facilitate social distancing of 2m between individual people or groups of six or less people or 1m with mitigation measures such as: seating side by side, with at least one empty chair between each person or household group, rather than face-to-face, face coverings and good ventilation. If tables are being used, you will place them so as to maintain social distancing across the table between people from different household groups who are face-to-face e.g. using a wide U-shape.

SC9:

You MUST keep a record of the date and time the activity started and the name and contact telephone number or email of all those who attend your event (or a member of any group of up to 6 people who attend together). This can be done either by operating an advance booking system which collects these details, or by asking everyone who attends to use the NHS QR poster at the hall entrance to register their attendance and by keeping a record of any who do not register using their smartphone app and the hall's NHS QR poster or your own NHS QR poster.

SC10:

You will be responsible for the disposal of all rubbish created during your hire, including tissues and cleaning cloths, in the rubbish bins provided by the main entrance before you leave the hall. All other rubbish should be taken away with you when you leave the hall.

SC11:

Users are encouraged to bring their own drinks and food. If food or drink is being served (as distinct to being made on a DIY basis) it must be served only at tables or as a takeaway service. Provision of food or drink MUST cease before 10pm (i.e. be cleared away by then). If food and drink is served at tables you MUST ensure there is no mingling between groups at different tables, which must be seated in accordance with SC6.

SC12:

We will have the right to close the hall if there are safety concerns relating to COVID-19, for example, if someone who has attended the hall develops symptoms and thorough cleansing is required or if it is reported that the Special Hiring Conditions above are not being complied with, whether by you or by other hirers, or in the event that public buildings are asked or required to close again. If this is necessary, we will do our best to inform you promptly and you will not be charged for this hire.

SC13:

In the event of someone becoming unwell with suspected Covid-19 symptoms while at the hall you should remove them to the designated safe area which is [Committee Room]. Provide tissues and a bin or plastic bag, and a bowl of warm soapy water for handwashing. Ask others in your group to provide contact details if you do not have them and then leave the premises, observing the usual hand sanitising and social distancing precautions, and advise them to launder their clothes when they arrive home. Inform the hall cleaner on [insert contact no:].

SC14: For events with more than 30 people (when allowed) you will take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public in relation to COVID-19 and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place, for example by operating a booking system or providing attendants or stewards who will ask people to seat themselves furthest from the entrance on arrival, to exit closest to the exits first and invite people to use toilets in the interval row by row.

SC15: In order to avoid risk of aerosol or droplet transmission you must take steps to avoid people needing to unduly raise their voices to each other, e.g. refrain from playing music or broadcasts at a volume which makes normal conversation difficult.

SC16:

Other special points as appropriate.

E.g. Where a sports, exercise or performing arts activity takes place:

[You will organise your activity in accordance with guidance issued by the relevant governing

body for your sport or activity]

E.g. Where a group uses their own equipment:

[You will ask those attending to bring their own equipment and not share it with other members]
or [You will avoid using equipment, which is difficult to clean, as far as possible. You will ensure that any equipment you provide is cleaned before use and before being stored in the hall].

SC 17:

You will encourage all those attending your activity to wear a face covering unless an exemption or other government guidance applies to the activity. A face covering is not required when people are eating or drinking but they should be seated.

SC 18:

Closing: Provision of food and drink MUST cease by 10pm. Any bar, dinner or similar activity MUST close by 10pm.

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Appendices' F & G are available as separate documents

Appendix H

Covid-19 First Aid Box

Contents list kindly provided by Ashenground Community Centre, Sussex

- Face mask (covering) & pair of plastic gloves x 2 – each set in a plastic bag (for responder and patient)
- Plastic face shield – for the responder
- Pocket pack of tissues
- Hand soap in pump dispenser
- Small hand sanitiser gel
- Disposable apron e.g. plastic sleeveless or cheap overalls
- Small packet anti-bacterial wipes
- Rubbish bags x 2 (so disposables can be double-bagged). The outer one marked e.g. "Covid waste".
- Washing up bowl for handwashing

A plastic chair has been placed in the isolation space with a notice above.

Laminated instructions for how to respond are attached to the box and a laminated copy of this sheet is in the box.

All hall users are made aware of this box when they first use the facilities.

Appendix I

Help Keep this Playground and Play Equipment COVID-19 Secure

This Playground is not supervised, and equipment is not regularly cleaned.

- **Do not use this equipment if you are unwell.**
- **Social distancing of 2m MUST always be maintained (or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not possible).**
- **Only one child is allowed on each piece of equipment at a time.**
- **No eating or drinking in the playground.**
- **Parents/Carers: You will need to clean the equipment before your child uses it. Use hand sanitiser or wipes to clean your children's hands before and after use.**
- **Do not touch your face. Remember to cough or sneeze into a tissue. Take tissues home or put them into the bins provided (use an arm if a tissue is not available).**
- **Children's clothes should be washed when they get home.**
- **Families with clinically vulnerable members: Do NOT use the equipment without first cleaning it.**

Appendix J

Performances in Village and Community Halls

This Appendix contains key points from the Government guidance as they relate to performance activities in village and community halls. The important 5 points of the COVID-19 Secure guidelines set out in Section 2.1 of the ACRE Information Sheet should be in place and are not repeated here.

A village hall which has undertaken a COVID-19 risk assessment and is following the steps identified to minimise transmission should satisfy most points in the Government guidance for performance, the full text of which is contained here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>.

DCMS have developed a **five-stage roadmap** to bring performing arts back safely, as follows:

- **Stage One** - Rehearsal and training (no audiences)
- **Stage Two** - Performances for broadcast and recording purposes
- **Stage Three** - Performances outdoors with an audience (pilots for indoor performances taking place in some locations)
- **Stage Four** - Performances allowed indoors and outdoors (but with a limited socially distanced audience indoors)
- **Stage Five** - Performances allowed indoors / outdoors (with a fuller audience indoors)

From, 15th August Stage 4 applied, allowing indoor performances to recommence (including children's entertainers, touring arts and amateur performances), subject to audiences, performances and venues maintaining social distancing requirements. Prior to that **film shows** were permitted, **Musicians, dancers and actors and technical teams were able to resume training, rehearsals and recorded performances, whether amateur or professional, Dancing classes were allowed to reopen,** following [guidance for providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities](#).

Both professionals and non-professionals can now engage in singing and playing wind and brass instruments in line with the performing arts guidance.

Small groups of professional or non-professional singers can sing in front of worshipers, outdoors and indoors. Singing in groups should be limited to a small set group of people and should not include audience participation.

Who Might be at risk?

In the context of a village hall this could be somebody taking part in a performance, a related activity or an audience member, a visiting professional e.g. in a touring company.

If clinically vulnerable or higher risk individuals would normally take part or attend, consider whether they can do so from home, e.g. in rehearsals or by recording performances.

Alternatively, they might be given the safest roles or seating which enable them to maintain social distancing (preferably 2m, or 1m with robust risk mitigation). If they cannot maintain social distancing this may not involve an acceptable level of risk.

Key Points

1. **Risk assessment:** Bear in mind that the Government guidance on performance says: "Risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace."

2. **Singing** There should be no **group singing by worshipers**. Places of worship should take account of the Performing Arts guidance. Otherwise singing is allowed subject to risk assessment and mitigation measures.
3. **Communicate with those using the hall or outdoor areas for performance activities** to ensure the COVID-19 secure guidelines are met. Providing a copy of the hall's own COVID-19 risk assessment showing the measures you are adopting (e.g. your cleaning, entrance/exit, "pinch point" control arrangements) should help them work out what additional measures they need to take, if any.
4. **Communication to the public:** Provide clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene to visitors before arrival, for example by email when purchasing tickets, and on marketing and websites.
5. **Food, drink and retail purchases:** Consider allowing guests to pre-order and collect refreshments at designated points to reduce queues and pinch points or adopting seat service at intervals. Consider providing programmes in digital format. See also the [guidance for restaurants and bars](#).
6. **Noise:** When the public are attending performances, organisers should ensure that steps are taken to avoid audiences needing to unduly raise their voices to each other. This includes avoiding playing music or broadcasts at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult, e.g. during performance intervals. This is to avoid increased risk of transmission from aerosol and droplet transmission.
7. **Cleaning:** Performances should be scheduled to allow sufficient time to undertake cleaning before the next audience arrives.
8. **Where performances or events are likely to have more than 30 people**, the organisers need to take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place. The Government guidance for performing arts should be consulted to ensure appropriate measures are put in place. Note that gatherings of more than 6 people outdoors are currently only permitted where organised by businesses, charities, public bodies, or political groups.
9. **Those organising performance activities** need to ensure social distancing can be maintained by working out the maximum capacity that is appropriate. It may differ if the activity is static, such as a band rehearsal, or requires movement, such as a ballet class. They may need to consider whether a stage is big enough to rehearse, pay attention to ventilation and sufficient circulation space e.g. between any teachers and classes.
10. **A booking system will be needed to manage attendances or ticket sales**, preferably online or by phone. The National Rural Touring Forum (NRTF) has suggested halls might try using <https://www.izettle.com/gb> or <https://sumup.co.uk/>.
11. **Areas may need to be marked out temporarily** to help people achieve social distancing.
12. **Attendants and Toilets:** Sufficient attendants will be required to manage queues, seating, toilets etc. A longer interval is likely to be required and an attendant present to invite people to use them row by row, to manage numbers.
13. **Space outside for queuing** needs to be available, and safe. People may need protection from traffic by routing them behind physical structures such as bollards or putting up barriers. It may be necessary to liaise with neighbours or local authorities.

14. **The needs of disabled individuals and those who are frail or have sensory disabilities** need to be considered at entrances, exits, in queue management and seating arrangements. Arrangements need to be communicated effectively.
15. **Where social distancing guidelines cannot be followed** in full, all appropriate mitigating actions should be taken to reduce the risk of transmission between people. Social distancing may be impractical where one professional works with groups e.g. in a dancing class, for dancing, costume-fitting, make-up, intimate/fighting scenes. Mitigation measures include, for example:
- increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning,
 - keeping the activity time as short as possible,
 - using back-to-back or side-to-side seating or working (rather than face-to-face),
 - reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others),. These teams should not mingle with each other in a non-socially distanced manner.
 - using screens or barriers.

Managing Seating:

Seating needs to be provided in a way which ensures social distancing can be maintained between individuals or groups, which should be no more than 6 unless they are a "qualifying group" (see Appendix D for explanation of a qualifying group). Village halls, with removable seating, are at an advantage over theatres with fixed seating. Consider measures such as:

- Spacing rows further apart than usual, providing 2m spaces (or 1m plus mitigation such as good ventilation) between seating for groups, providing one or two empty (marked) seats between household groups.
- Providing allocated seating and managing seating plans through ticketing systems to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Provide attendants to help with social distancing e.g. to ask people to occupy seats from the furthest point first and evacuate from the point closest to the exit first.
- Encourage people not to bring bags and coats where possible to reduce clutter at seats.
- Remind those accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines, not mingle with friends in other groups.

Handling props, musical instruments, technical equipment etc

To avoid transmission through contact:

1. Instruments and other personal kit should be kept clean by the owner, and not shared with others. Name labels on equipment will help identify an owner or designated user. People should avoid sharing scripts, scores and personal items such as phones, chargers, pens etc. A drop off and pick up point should be created rather than passing equipment such as props and microphones hand to hand.
2. Any equipment which has to be shared should be regularly disinfected and always between users.
3. Waste and belongings should be removed at the end of a class, rehearsal or performance.
4. Use a consistent pairing system if people must work in close proximity, e.g. for handling heavy equipment.

Organisers of outdoor performances should also consider:

Consulting the guidance on delivering outdoor events, particularly where such performances are not typical to their operations. Points here are only a summary.

- Managing groups who start to mingle with other groups or individuals, which is unlawful and, in doing so, may encourage others to cluster in a similar manner. Communication is key to this.
- Planning car parking to allow sufficient spacing for social distancing in case people need to visit their vehicles to collect chairs, coats, drinks etc. or gather around vehicles.
- Discouraging activities likely to encourage audience behaviours increasing transmission risk, such as clustering, communal dancing, singing and physical contact outside of groups.

Local authorities can provide advice on how to manage outdoor events. They will avoid issuing licenses for events that could lead to larger gatherings forming. If appropriate, the Government has powers under Schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to close venues hosting large gatherings or prohibit certain events (or types of event) from taking place.

Appendix K

Indoor and outdoor exercise and sport

This Appendix contains key points from Government guidance relating to sport and exercise in village and community halls and associated outdoor areas. The important 5 points of the COVID-19 secure guidelines set out in Section 2.1 of the ACRE Information Sheet should be in place and are not repeated here (social distancing, cleanliness, handwashing etc).

A village hall which has undertaken a COVID-19 risk assessment and is following the steps identified to minimise transmission should satisfy most points in the Government guidance for providers of grassroots sport and gym facilities, the full text of which is contained here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>

Organised team sports can be played outdoors, including cricket, and outdoor sport and physical participation events held, outdoor gyms used.

Indoor gyms, fitness and dance studios, indoor sports facilities are now able to open, which means that activities which would be held there, such as yoga and Pilates, dance classes, badminton, table tennis, indoor bowls etc can be held in village and community halls.

Key Points:

1. **Governing body guidance:** Sport and exercise should take place in accordance with guidance to deal with COVID-19 risks issued by the relevant governing body for the sport or activity. ACRE recommends village and community halls require hirers to comply with such guidance, rather than trying to adapt hiring conditions and policies for each specific activity.
2. **Changing facilities:** People should be encouraged to arrive ready changed and, where possible, travel home to change/shower. If needed, use of any changing rooms should be managed in a similar way as for toilets.
3. **Payments:** Cash transactions should be avoided – online payments and booking used where possible to manage demand.
4. **Capacity figures and ventilation** may need attention by some hirers: Doors should be fixed open where possible for ventilation (except fire doors), use of outdoor space encouraged where possible. Capacity may be reduced below that already reached for social distancing where high intensity exercise activity takes place, activity is not static, equipment is involved, or an instructor needs to move between groups of socially distanced people. For high intensity exercise (e.g. Zumba) 100% fresh air is required, air should not be recirculated from one space to another, and the capacity of 100 sq. ft (9.29 sq. m) net indoor facility space available per person (including changing rooms, toilets, entrance etc) should be used (section 5 of the guidance).
5. **Dance and exercise:** Temporary floor markings are encouraged to define spacing per individual (e.g. chalk)
6. **Equipment:** People should avoid use of shared objects unless they can be cleaned between users, should bring their own equipment such as mats as far as possible and their own water bottles.
7. **Social distancing:** The usual social distancing requirements between individuals from different households normally apply and there is an exception for organised sports and exercise classes from the limit of 6 for groups. Instead, where needed, the number of people each person has contact with should be reduced by using “fixed teams or partnering” or creating distinct groups which always work together.
8. **Parents and spectators:** Social distancing among spectators such as waiting children or parent chaperones will need to be managed if there is insufficient room in the hall, e.g. waiting in the entrance hall, car park, or car. Outdoors, spectators should be in groups of 6 or less (unless they are “qualifying groups” – see Appendix D”).

9. **Instructors running classes or clubs in several venues:** The instructor needs to take particular care to avoid risk of transmission from one class or venue to another. Halls should check the steps they are taking to avoid transmission and how many facilities they are operating in.
10. **Amateur sports clubs:** A phased approach to return is recommended in consultation with volunteers, supported by training for volunteers around compliance with COVID-19 Secure guidelines and according to guidance from the governing body. When running activities for children the guidance for out-of-school-settings should also be used:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>

Outdoor sports facilities

The relevant guidance for outdoor sports is:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation/guidance-for-providers-of-outdoor-facilities-on-the-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>.

Businesses, charities, philanthropic and benevolent organisations, public bodies, political organisations and venues following COVID-19 Secure guidelines can host larger groups in outdoor spaces, provided they take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidance and including completion of a risk assessment. Any other gathering in an outdoor space must not be any larger than 6 people, aside from the exception for organised sport and exercise classes.

Appendix L

COVID-19 treatment plan

In the event of someone becoming unwell with suspected COVID-19 symptoms while at the hall you should:

- a) Send them home immediately
- b) Ask other members of your group to provide their contact details if you do not have them
- c) Ask the rest of your group to leave the premises, observing the usual hand sanitising and social distancing precautions
- d) Advise them to launder their clothes when they arrive home
- e) Inform** *insert name and contact number*
- f) If the unwell person needs to wait for a lift: -
 - (1) Remove them to the safe waiting area, which is *insert details* – a chair and washing bowl should already be there
 - (2) Put on a mask, face shield, gloves & apron to protect yourself
 - (3) Provide them with tissues, a plastic rubbish bag, a bowl of warm water & soap for handwashing & paper towels
 - (4) Once they have been collected: -
 1. Remove gloves, apron and face mask to the rubbish bag*
 2. Leave face shield on top for disinfection
 3. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm soapy water
 4. Wait for *insert responsible committee member* to arrive.
 5. Once home - launder all your clothes and wipe down disinfect your car

*Note that the waste should be double bagged and kept for 72 hours before being collected.

NHS Test and Trace QR code

From 24 September the Regulations for the Collection of Contact Details require **every hirer or organisation using a community hall** to comply with the obligation to either collect individual contact details of their participants or ask participants to scan the QR code displayed at the hall.

The hall is expected to register for an NHS QR code and display the official NHS QR poster at or inside the entrance. A hall must also keep records of hirers' contact details. A hall will also need to either collect contact details of participants at their own meetings and events or ask participants to scan the QR code displayed at the hall.

For practical purposes this means that **the premises** must [register for an official NHS QR code](#) and display the official NHS QR poster, although some hirers may choose to obtain their own code and poster, which they display at the entrance of the room or hall that they are using before their activity starts. For some halls with only a few hirers who are willing to do this, that responsibility could be placed on hirers. The important principle to remember is that the system is intended to capture information about with whom people have been in close proximity, not necessarily very precise details of the place where that contact took place.

Official NHS QR posters can be [generated online](#). Click the links to register and generate a poster. There is more information about NHS QR codes and how to generate them on the [NHS COVID-19 app website](#).

Village and community halls need to reinforce the obligation on hirers to keep records through the Special Conditions of Hire (Appendix E of v6 of the Information Sheet). Clause SC9 should be adjusted to read:

SC9:

You **MUST** keep a record of the date and time the activity started and the name and contact telephone number or email of all those who attend your event (or a member of any group of up to 6 people who attend together). This can be done either by operating an advance booking system which collects these details, or by asking everyone who attends to use the NHS QR poster at the hall entrance to register their attendance and by keeping a record of any who do not register using their smartphone app and the hall's NHS QR poster or your own NHS QR poster.

The guidance is at: [Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#).

Further points:

1. The aim is that those attending can use the QR code if they wish to do so.
2. Village and community hall committees and managers organising activities at the hall will have to comply, including for their own committee meetings.
3. Community halls with no postcode can use that for the nearest available property.

4. Halls with several rooms in use for different activities will need to consider how to avoid the same code being used for two or more activities happening at the same time. This will be covered if hirers have their own QR code for the activity they are running.
5. Organisers of activities can decide how to collect and keep contact details, which should be collected at the point visitors enter the premises if not collected in advance. If on paper it needs to be kept out of public sight and securely stored. People who choose to 'check in' using the official NHS QR code do not also need to provide their contact details. Use of the NHS QR code cannot be made a precondition of entry (individuals have the right to choose how to provide their contact details).
6. If there is an outbreak associated with a venue, a message will be sent to the relevant app users with the necessary public health advice.
7. Places of worship, including when the venue is used for community activities, are not included but are strongly encouraged to maintain staff and visitor logs and to display an official NHS QR code poster. Consent should be sought from individuals entering.
8. If a visitor interacts with only one member of staff (eg, a hairdresser), the staff name should be recorded alongside the name of the visitor
9. A record of all staff working on the premises on a given day, the time and contact details must be kept. This covers anyone providing a service or activity including volunteers. This would include cleaners, caretakers and those working in offices such as Parish Council staff.
10. Booking systems can serve as the source of information collected. (Visitors can still scan the official NHS QR code if they wish, to help remind them where they have been if asked by NHS Test and Trace.)
11. The NHS COVID-19 app is only able to scan official NHS QR code posters. If another QR code system is being used to collect contact details, you should switch to the official NHS QR code system.
12. If someone does not wish to share their details, entry does not have to be refused but visitors should be encouraged to share their details to support NHS Test and Trace. The accuracy of the information provided will be the responsibility of the individual who provides it. However, entry must be refused to cafes (including community cafes), bars and Social Clubs, when the police can be called if required.
13. Exempt visits: Details are not required from: A police officer or emergency responder on duty, suppliers or contractors making a delivery or collection, those under the age of 16, if someone does not have the mental capacity to provide their contact details.
14. **Failure to comply with collecting details and maintaining records is punishable by a fine.** The first fixed penalty is £1,000.
15. Records should be maintained for 21 days then securely disposed of or deleted, unless also collected for another purpose. All collected data must comply with GDPR.

16. NHS Test and Trace or Public Health Officers will ask for these records only where necessary eg if the premises have been identified as the location of a potential COVID-19 outbreak. This information must not be shared with anyone else, so as to respect individuals' privacy. You must share the requested information as soon as possible to help minimise the onward spread of COVID-19. If you receive a request for information from NHS Test and Trace, this does not mean you must close the hall. NHS Test and Trace will, if necessary, undertake an assessment and work with you to understand what actions need to be taken.
17. If a staff member or visitor tells you they have tested positive for COVID-19, you should tell them to stay at home and self-isolate as soon as possible (along with the rest of their household) and encourage the individual to inform NHS Test and Trace of their recent contacts. You must not use the information you have collected to contact people. If you identify that there is more than one case of COVID-19 on your premises, you should contact your [local health protection team](#) to report the suspected outbreak.
18. A poster bearing the same QR code will be required at other entrances to the same premises, such as changing rooms, but not at exits such as fire doors. Clubs providing team sporting activities which have their own premises (eg a pavilion) will need their own poster. A poster is not required for a public toilet serving an outside area such as a recreation field.

30 September 2020