

# Information Sheet

## Re-opening Village and Community Halls post COVID-19 closure Issue 3 – Current at 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020

This information Sheet has been issued in anticipation that the coronavirus regulations will be amended by 4<sup>th</sup> July ready for halls to re-open on Saturday 4 July. 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. This third Issue aims to provide practical information to assist hall managers to comply with the Government Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities issued on 30<sup>th</sup> June and amendments to the Health Protection Regulations of 4<sup>th</sup> July.

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 and places of worship. 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 the changes made to the Public Health Regulations, after 4<sup>th</sup> July, and any subsequent government guidance.

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.

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.

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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 They may be adjusted or rescinded either nationally or, possibly, in certain parts of the country in the light of the situation. The re-opening of public buildings is scheduled to take place as part of Step 3, hopefully on 6<sup>th</sup> July.

In order for Step 3 to be implemented the Public Health Regulations need to be amended, which currently stipulate that a Community Centre must remain closed except where it is used to provide essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services or for early years childcare by a registered provider or indoor markets. That amendment is due to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

**Step 1:** From 13<sup>th</sup> 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. Guidance was published by DCMS – see section 6.

**Step 2.** The Government allowed nurseries and Pre-Schools to open to a wider group of children from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and indoor markets from 15<sup>th</sup> June.

**Step 3: The aim is that public buildings can open from, at the earliest, 4<sup>th</sup> 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 between individuals and groups of up to 2 households where possible and, where not possible, 1metre plus other mitigation measures. Bookings can be accepted for events 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.

**Do not re-open until you have identified the necessary safety, compliance, management, and operational issues 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 track and trace at Village and Community Halls**

**a) The Government Guidance on safe opening of community facilities emphasises the importance of ensuring "strict adherence to social distancing of 2 metres or 1 metre with risk mitigation (where 2m is not viable).** 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 people from the same or no more than 2 households, this offers a cautious approach. Different layouts will allow different capacities. See also section 2.5

**b)** 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. At this time, venues should not permit indoor performances, including drama, comedy, and music, to take place in front of a live audience." Weddings, wedding receptions and other life-event religious ceremonies (funerals, baptisms etc.) are limited at present to no more than 30 people. The need to prevent large gatherings (where social distancing and track and trace would be difficult) is clear from the last paragraph of section 2a: "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" and 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)** At an event, individual household groups are advised not to interact with anyone outside the group they attend with, i.e. in a group no larger than 2 households or 6 people if outdoors. For example, if a family quiz is held, people from a group of 2 households may sit at the same table; those from different household groups would need to be seated at tables a minimum of 2m apart. If holding fitness training or classes outdoors, everyone should either be socially distanced at 2m or in groups of no more than six which are socially distanced at 2m between groups. The aim is to contain risk of virus spread to small groups.

**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 may be a useful means of keeping within the capacity and recording contact details 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 on-line either at home or via laptop in another room.

**e) NHS Test and Trace:** All groups are asked to assist NHS Test and Trace by 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).

**f)** Some lapse in social distancing 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)** 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:** The [Government advice is that if you can, you should wear a face covering if in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible](#) and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet, which may include activities in a community hall. However, face coverings should not be taken on and off frequently, so while this is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas such as public transport for community halls the priority is that social distancing and good hygiene are maintained. Face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who would find it difficult to manage them correctly.

Government guidance for community facilities states: "Face coverings do not replace social distancing. Even if a face covering is used, staff and users of the space should continue to wash hands regularly and maintain social distancing. If users of the space choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and thoroughly wash hands before putting them on and taking them off".

A face covering may provide some protection for others you come into close contact with if you have become infected but not yet developed symptoms. Consequently, where, people will be working in close proximity, and with older and/or clinically vulnerable people, a face covering is advisable to protect those people. Examples include preparing food or drink in a small kitchen and serving older or clinically vulnerable people, eg at a coffee morning or lunch club, in a community shop or cafe.

**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.

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.

### **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 sanitizer for hirers to put out at every entrance/exit and in meeting rooms. (Soap and water is acceptable but sanitizer 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 used 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 (eg serving playing fields) to be opened but where they are Government Guidance for public toilets should be followed. Changing rooms must remain closed.

## 2.5 Hiring Arrangements

a) Halls should give priority to essential services and Pre-schools and 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, when venues can re-open for larger events e.g. theatres. 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. Two empty seats (a distance of 2m if possible, or at least 1m with mitigation such as good ventilation) should be provided between each person or household group if seated. Where possible hirers should encourage people to stay in groups, of say 6 to 8, to reduce transmission. Sedbergh People's Hall, Cumbria, have issued photos to help their hirers work out how to arrange their meeting rooms. 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) Hirers should be encouraged to have regard as to whether people attending their activity are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 and how they will address the need to keep them safe. At Step 3 it is expected that those over 70, who are more vulnerable and have been 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. 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. This is not a legal requirement, people are not obliged to provide their personal details but where they do that information should be kept securely so as to comply with GDPR e.g. a password protected phone or tablet, a locked filing cabinet.
- 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.

## 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.

## 2.7 Performances

The arts industry has been badly affected by COVID-19 and will welcome efforts to accommodate performances. However, currently live performances e.g. drama, music, comedy are not permitted. Guidance will be issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which will cover rehearsals and broadcast performances and, it is hoped, cast light on management of amateur performances.

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

Film shows appear to be permitted so for these ide-to-side seating should be used as it is less risky than seating face-to-face. Rows can be spaced further apart than usual. The audience is likely to be reduced for the time being to maintain social distancing, with individuals and household groups separated by two seats. Attendants should help ensure social distancing, e.g. ask people to occupy seats from the furthest point first and evacuate from the point closest to the exit first. A longer interval is likely to be required and an attendant present to invite people to use the toilets row by row.

In order to avoid cash payments and facilitate booking and ticket distribution the National Rural Touring Forum (NRTF) has suggested halls might try using <https://www.izettle.com/gb> or <https://sumup.co.uk/>.

## 2.8 Playgrounds and outdoor sports areas

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. This also contains guidance about social distancing, avoiding large gatherings and not holding live performances, as given in the Government guidance for community facilities (see section 2.2b above). See link in Section 6.

## **2.9 Catering**

Arrangements for catering are 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 household group by 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 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 COVID-19**

a) A space should be designated into which anyone will be moved who becomes unwell at the hall with suspected COVID-19 symptoms 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**

b) Other people that have attended the same activity should be asked for contact details and then to leave the premises. The Track and Trace service should be informed. (Provision of contact details should be encouraged but is not compulsory).

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). Disposable PPE equipment including gloves should be disposed of into a sealed, labelled or marked plastic bag and secured for 72 hours before rubbish is collected. The cleaner should launder all personal clothing worn on arrival home.

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

**From 1<sup>st</sup> 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 for certain activities, taking the view that slow start-up makes it easier to monitor. Some halls 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 you consider that the hall is unlikely to re-open 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 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. **Make sure you notify the insurer, as unoccupancy terms may apply soon after 4<sup>th</sup> July.**

**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 a 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.

**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, 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.

**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 (which may be a risk to some people) you could consider asking hirers to be extra vigilant about 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. 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. Unless there is a parent and toddler class using the hall after yoga, it is unlikely other hirers will touch the floor. **Note yoga is not yet permitted.**

**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) is available to charitable village halls and sports buildings from your Local Authority.** This can be used to meet such costs and 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. **Applications should be made as soon as possible.**
- 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.
- c) **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

**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/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>

### **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>

**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](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>

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

## Appendix A

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

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Done</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Advise the hall's insurers</b> whether/when the premises will be re-opening and check any requirements.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Check the security code or key logs are up to date.</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>If a Pre-school is using the premises, check</b> any adjustments to hire arrangements needed for other hirers e.g. arrival/departure times, access to kitchen or toilets. (See Section 3 above)	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Carry out a COVID-19 Risk Assessment in consultation with any employees, if you have any.</b> (See <b>Appendix F</b> ) Provide to hirers.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Consider whether additional cleaning is required, where and when.</b> 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.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Discuss with your caretaker/cleaner/contractor any changes in work patterns</b> 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.	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Ensure the caretaker/cleaner has appropriate PPE:</b> 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.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Flush through the water system, five minutes for each tap or shower head,</b> 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).	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Carry out the routine health and safety risk assessment</b> 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)	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Ensure the Fire Safety Risk Assessment and routine fire safety checks are up to date</b> 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)	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Provide hand wash and drying facilities:</b> 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.	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Consider “Engaged/Vacant” signage</b> 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”.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Provide signage:</b> 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 <b>Appendix C</b> ). 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)	
<b>14.</b>	<b>Think about social distancing arrangements in corridors and at entrance and exits:</b> 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.	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Prepare special hire conditions and instruct booking secretary</b> 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 <b>Appendices C, D and E</b> )	
<b>16.</b>	<b>Identify designated space for someone with suspected COVID-19</b>	
<b>17.</b>	<b>Consider Marketing and Communications:</b> Ensure the website has up to date information, including special conditions of hire. Advertise availability as appropriate. Ensure answerphone message is up to date.	
<b>18.</b>	<b>Review budget forecast for 2020-21.</b>	

## 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 by .....2020. 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? <b>Must include time for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>set up</b></li><li>• <b>pack away time</b></li><li>• <b>sanitisation of groups personal equipment stored at hall</b></li></ul>	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 sanitised 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

### 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 7 days** of visiting these premises alert Test, Track and Trace. Alert the hall cleaner on [insert a contact number] and alert the organiser of the activity you attended.
- 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. "Catch it, Bin it, Kill it".** Tissues should be disposed of into one of the rubbish bags provided. Then wash your hands.
- 7. 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.
- 8. 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.
- 9. Keep the hall well ventilated. Close doors and windows on leaving.**
- 10. 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 need 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 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 and take advantage of the warmer summer months; 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 points 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)? 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.
- Are the organisers willing to clean regularly used surfaces before the event, while it takes place and before leaving?
- Will very young children be attending, who would find social distancing difficult, and how will that be addressed?
- If activities are to be held outdoors what arrangements will be made in the event of rain or a cold snap, eg 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 for overnight accommodation such as cubs). The older age profile and difficulty complying with social distancing at tables has led the English Bridge Union to advise Bridge Clubs against re-opening for a period. Other national organisations may issue their own advice following consultation with Government eg re use of Cricket nets.

The following are all subject to social distancing, cleaning and hygiene being met:

## 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. Retail activities such as Community Shops and indoor markets (eg Farmers Markets, Craft Markets, Antique Fairs) 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 (providing they are not offering a service which is not yet allowed to re-open such as nails). 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. tennis, bowls, football training, keep fit type classes, dog training classes, dancing classes. Equipment should be cleaned regularly e.g. gate latches, handles, balls etc. DCMS guidance permits personal training or coaching if outside, if people are able to follow social distancing guidelines and provided no more than 6 people from different households are gathering. People who play team sports can now train together (eg hold fitness sessions) "but they must be in wholly separate groups of no more than 6 and follow social distancing guidelines". See link to DCMS guidance in Section 6.
- **Activities held indoors where smaller numbers of people attend:** For example: seated activities and meetings held in a large hall such as art classes, history group, dog training classes, weight loss groups, Parish Council meetings. While it is recommended that meetings continue to take place digitally rather than face to face, where possible, the Government Guidance for community facilities specifically permits meetings of civic, political or community groups (eg parish council, ward meeting of political party, charity board of trustees), MP or councillor surgery/drop in sessions. A combination may be feasible: A face to face meeting may help those who struggle with digital technology to participate or attend, while others participate digitally.
- **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

- **Small events providing catering:** e.g. coffee mornings, pop-up cafés or luncheon clubs, where seating may be out of doors and/or well-spaced. Takeaway drink or food can be provided from a room directly accessed from outside. Government Guidance for pubs, cafes and restaurants may be helpful in working out how to run these safely. Community cafes will be required to comply with that Guidance. NB Special arrangements should be made for vulnerable people in the shielding category who wish to attend, to enable participation and avoid their continued isolation.

- **Activities for children and young people:** e.g. cubs, parent and toddler activities, small youth clubs, railway modelling club, Sunday school, summer holiday playschemes, picnics or BBQs in outdoor areas. Fitness or sports activity should only be held outdoors. For activities with toddlers, soft toys should be avoided and parents can be encouraged to bring their own toys.
- **Public meetings and public consultation events (eg planning):** A one-way system can be created for exhibitions. For meetings attendees can be asked to use the furthest seat from the entrance first unless hard of hearing, handouts 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:** eg gardening club, film show, bingo, quiz night. Attendees should 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 similar life cycle religious ceremonies are permitted where attended by up to 30 persons. Recorded music is recommended. A musician may play a non-wind instrument. Any receptions should be limited to this number to avoid mass gatherings. See also Government guidance on Places of Worship. Government guidance for cafes and restaurants may be helpful in relation to catering.
- **Celebration events:** Government guidance is that community facilities should not facilitate large gatherings or celebrations so numbers at any such events would need to be carefully controlled. For private events numbers must be limited to 30, as for weddings. Note that loud music or broadcasts are not currently permitted, the purpose being to avoid aerosol dispersal.
- **Social Clubs and bars:** These may open in accordance with Government guidance for pubs. They may also provide takeaway refreshments from a room accessed directly from outside.

**Group 3: Not permitted at 4<sup>th</sup> July, awaits further Government guidance:**

- **Indoor sport and exercise classes:** Activities such as badminton, table tennis, Zumba, carpet bowls, dancing classes and School PE lessons are not permitted indoors: The Government Guidance for multi-purpose community facilities says indoor community facilities should “not permit sports activities that would typically take place in a gym, sports venue or a fitness or dancing studio”, which have not yet been permitted to open. ACRE have questioned whether this includes gentle exercise such as yoga, Pilates (where clients are well spaced in a large hall and the premises are well ventilated). However, to our regret, Government have confirmed that their Guidance does include them, these are not permitted owing to the risk of aerosol transmission of the virus.
- **Outdoor sports involving bodily contact or competitions, or a ball shared by many players:** e.g. football matches, cricket
- **Live Performances:** Including drama, comedy, music, choirs (owing to risk of aerosol transmission of the virus among performers and audience). Further guidance is awaited

**Group 4: “Grey Areas”**

**Rehearsals, broadcasts, solo performances etc**

Government guidance is expected about how performing arts activity can be safely managed in different settings, including rehearsing, filming and broadcasting without an audience. ACRE hopes that DCMS Guidance may clarify the situation, allowing carefully arranged rehearsals by amateur dramatics and panto groups and some kinds of band practices (eg without woodwind or brass instruments), as well as those performances which, in ACRE's view, are less "aerosol risky" when considered in the light of risk mitigation for an event as a whole, such as solo performers, those playing piano, guitar and other non-wind instruments, mime, children's entertainers (where a carefully arranged magic show, for example, can help keep young children socially distanced).

In the meantime, showing a film of the performance taking place earlier in the hall may offer a (less satisfactory) solution. (Cinemas and concert halls are permitted to re-open for film).

### **Indoor Bowls**

Bowling and croquet Greens are permitted to re-open so carpet or short mat bowls can be held outdoors. However, moving mats would be difficult. Bowling alleys are not yet permitted to re-open but offer a very different environment to indoor bowls. While Government guidance advises community facilities against permitting indoor exercise owing to aerosol transmission, indoor bowls represent an activity rather than exercise, owing to its gentle nature. The ability to socially distance would indicate that it could be permitted providing there is adequate ventilation. However, the age profile and possible clinical vulnerability of players would need to be considered. The English Short Mat Bowling Association are in discussion with Government about how safe play can recommence and guidance will be available on their website.

## Appendix E

### 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. (See also ACRE's Model Hiring Agreement)**

#### **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 have been provided with a copy.

#### **SC3:**

**EITHER:** 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.

#### **OR**

The hall will be cleaned before your arrive and you will be responsible for cleaning all regularly used surfaces during your period of hire (including tables, wash hand basins, door handles) using either the products supplied or your own ordinary domestic products.

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 7 days, and that if they develop symptoms within 7 days of visiting the premises they **MUST** use the Test, Track and Trace system to alert others with whom they have been in contact.

#### **SC5:**

You will keep the premises well ventilated throughout your hire, with windows and 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 [insert number] people attend your activity/event, in order that social distancing can be maintained. You will ensure that everyone attending maintains 2m social distancing while waiting to enter the premises, observes the one-way system within the premises, and as far as possible observes 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 [e.g. two] people 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 up to two households 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, and good ventilation. If tables are being used, you will place them so as to maintain a distance of at least 2 metres across the table between people who are face to face e.g. using a wide U-shape [insert or attach drawing or photo].

**SC9:**

You are asked to keep a record of the name and contact telephone number or email of all those who attend your event for a period of 3 weeks after the event and provide the record to NHS Track and trace if required.

**SC10:**

You will be responsible for the disposal of all rubbish created during your hire, including tissues and cleaning cloths, [in the rubbish bags provided insert location before you leave the hall] or [taking all rubbish away with you when you leave the hall].

**SC11:**

[You will encourage users to bring their own drinks and food] or [You will be responsible, if drinks or food are made, for ensuring that all crockery and cutlery is washed in hot soapy water, dried and stowed away. You will bring your own clean tea towels, so as to reduce risk of contamination between hirers, and take them away. We will provide washing up liquid and washing up cloths.]

**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 [ ]. 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 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:** Live performances e.g. drama, music are not permitted at present. This is in order to avoid risk of aerosol or droplet transmission. For the same reason 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 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's cupboards].

E.g. [The hall is equipped with passive infra-red detectors which means that lights and taps come on automatically in the following areas:                      Please remind people not to touch these switches or taps.]

E.g. [You will not attempt to clean the following items, which will be the responsibility of the hall cleaner]

**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.**

- **Social distancing of 2m MUST always be maintained (or 1m with risk mitigation where 1m 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.**