

Advice for Village Halls & Community Buildings

The advice from Government is clear: People should stay at home except for one of the four reasons permitted.

- Shopping for basic necessities
- One form of exercise a day
- Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- Travelling to and from work when absolutely necessary
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Therefore, village halls and community buildings **MUST** close unless there is an essential service operating from the hall e.g pre-school that is open for children of key workers, food bank, medicine delivery – in which case precautions need to be taken – see below.

Village Hall Management Committees running charitable halls have a duty of care in providing a safe facility for the community to use. Therefore, if you are running an **essential service** and need to remain open, your committee must bear in mind that extra precautions need to be made as your hall may provide services for those groups who are most at risk from the virus.

Precautions include:

- Take notice of the Government and Public Health England websites and keep up to date with the ongoing situation
- Visitors to the hall **must** keep at least 2m distance (6ft) away from each other – If need be, mark this distance out so it is clear to everyone, especially if you have a queuing system in place
- Ensure the hall has a one in, one out policy
- Keep the Hall **very clean** and ensure that soap and/or hand sanitiser is available, paper towels are available and hand driers are working efficiently – one person to use the toilet at a time
- Avoid the use of hand towels for the time being
- Put up a notice about hand washing, particularly in toilets and kitchen areas. Poster available here: [Catch it bin it kill it](#)
- Advise visitors that they are expected to act responsibly and take notice of Government and Public Health England advice which includes who is and isn't allowed to be in public spaces

Regarding cancellation of any bookings follow the steps in their hiring agreement and activities in the event of the hall having to close, we suggest that you contact your insurance company to discuss what may be covered under your insurance policy regarding cancellation of events

The Government has indicated there may be help regarding loss of income for certain businesses. As yet we do not know if village halls and community buildings will be eligible. Further information will be supplied to halls once we have confirmation.

Village Hall Insurance Providers Statements

Norris & Fisher statement:

“Coronavirus Advice for Village Halls

We have received a number of enquiries as to whether Village Halls would be insured should they be forced to cancel activities or if hirers cancel their bookings owing to COVID-19. The Business Interruption cover under the policy would not provide cover for this type of loss so there is no insurance for loss of earnings. If there were to be a pandemic it would be beyond the capability of insurers to pay for such losses.

Some of our halls have asked their hirers to ensure that, if one of their members is ill, they should not attend the Hall. Should a visitor have been in contact with anyone suffering from the virus they should self-isolate. However, if an outbreak of COVID-19 were to be traced to the Hall it would not be possible for you to be held liable. In addition it may be best to ensure you have a good supply of soap, hand sanitisers and paper towels”.

Allied Westminster statement:

“Coronavirus and Village Halls:

- *Loss of revenue cover comes into force only after damage to property caused by an insured peril. It is designed to cover loss of income when the hall is closed for a period of time in order for repairs to be carried out. Unfortunately, if the hall has to be closed due to a breakout of the virus, no property damage has occurred so there is no business interruption cover in place.*
- *Property insurers would not cover closure due to pandemic.*

Halls will become unoccupied or operate on a significantly reduced level. Normally you would have to let us now, but this is the picture nationally. Allied Westminster (VillageGuard) will accept this as the norm for the moment for our clients, however you normally have to let your insurer know.

For Allied Westminster VillageGuard clients, please only notify us if the closure is previously planned due to works or the hall has been unoccupied more than 45 day. Other halls should refer to their insurers

- *There are some considerations that should be kept in mind to protect their assets and people:*
 - *Risk assessments must be carried out on the changing risk/lack of supervision in place*
 - *Heating left ‘ticking-over’ but other critical services powered down if not required, unless to support protection or detection systems*
 - *All external areas must be clear of waste and combustible materials*
 - *Consider waste build-up and the controls needed if waste collection services are affected*

- *All fire protection, detection, and security systems to remain active and monitored remotely where possible*
- *Maintenance on all protection and/or detection systems (where in place) must be a priority to protect the property*
- *All physical security and locking devices are working and in place*
- *There are no leaking fluids or spills*

Useful Resources

Public Health England have produced a range of sample posters and it would be wise to use one of these as the basis for putting on the front door a poster asking people who have possible Coronavirus symptoms not to come into the hall. Resources can be found at: **PHE Resources**.