

Canford Cliffs Village Hall

Trustees' Covid-19 Policy Statement

Following the Prime Minister's statement made on 12 July confirming the move to Step 4 on 19 July, the trustees agreed that they should act cautiously in removing the Village Hall restrictions that they had introduced for the Step 3 re-opening.

In his statement (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-confirms-move-to-step-4>), the Prime Minister emphasised caution and personal responsibility. His statement included:

“Moving to Step 4 is a balance of risks and the public should continue to be cautious. The majority of covid restrictions will end on 19 July and guidance will emphasise personal responsibility.”

It took the Government several days to publish all their guidance for Step 4 and some guidance was withdrawn completely. It became apparent to the trustees that little had, in fact, been changed except that regulations had been replaced with recommendations and that more responsibilities had been placed on individuals and businesses.

In maintaining the Step 3 restrictions the trustees followed Government advice and also took into account their responsibilities for providing a safe environment for members of the public to visit, for their employee (the Caretaker/Manager) to work in and, as a landlord, for the Caretaker/Manager and partner to live in.

The Village Hall is quite unique in having an integral caretaker flat, but this means that measures have to be taken to isolate it as far as possible from the main hall in the event that an infected hall user causes a build-up of airborne virus particles in the enclosed space. Good ventilation is required so that the particles are dispersed quickly and safely outside the hall, otherwise they could accumulate and remain floating in the air for several hours before falling to the floor or dying. Unfortunately, the hall, which is nearly 100 years old, relies on natural ventilation which depends strongly on atmospheric conditions and the opening of windows for its effectiveness. Many other, more modern, venues have mechanical ventilation which is controllable and generally consistently more effective. It is likely that such venues can remove most restrictions if their staff can be adequately protected.

It should be noted that members of the public have a choice as to whether they enter the Village Hall. The same freedom of choice does not apply to a caretaker who is expected to clean the hall regularly and to maintain it when required.

The trustees continue to regularly monitor the coronavirus situation, but because case rates locally and nationally are so much higher than they were in late May they still do not consider that it is an appropriate time to remove any restrictions. When restrictions are eased, it is intended that it should be done gradually starting with a modest increase in the numbers allowed into the hall. As regards the New Hall (the former Bridge Club) the trustees intend to keep it closed for the time being as it would be safer for hirers to use the larger Main Hall whilst timetabling allows. The New Hall was not re-opened at Step 3 since social distancing and ventilation considerations would have reduced the capacity to around five people which would have been uneconomic for most hirers.