



Please reply to: Bookings Secretary,

To:

Date:

Dear

## Letter to Church Organisations - Reopening of Shildon Methodist Community Hall

[Government guidance](#)<sup>1</sup>, and [guidance from the Methodist Church](#)<sup>2</sup>, has indicated that churches can now begin to reopen their premises for Worship and for other community activities. Some activities cannot yet restart and those that can will have to work within restrictions imposed by the Government. It is important, therefore, that organisations using Shildon Methodist Church premises continue to adhere to Government guidance, restrictions and regulations. Organisations must ensure they monitor, and comply with, the published guidance.

In preparation for reopening the Community Hall, from the week beginning 7 September 2020, the Church has carried out a Risk Assessment and produced a live Action Plan as required under Government legislation. These documents can be viewed on the [Church website](#)<sup>3</sup>.

Prior to reopening the Community Hall, the Church has:

- Ensured the Community Hall has been cleaned.
- Taken the decision to close the Ladies and Gentleman toilets in the Community Hall. The Accessible Toilet will be available for Community Hall users.
- Reviewed the size of each of the Community Hall rooms to determine the maximum number of people that can be accommodated within social distancing guidelines.
- Taken the decision to close the Epworth Room as it is not possible to safely social distance in this room. (Any organisation that has hired the Epworth Room will have the opportunity to use one of the larger rooms at no additional cost.)
- Placed signs and posters around the Community Hall to:
  - build awareness of good handwashing technique,
  - remind users of the need to increase handwashing frequency,
  - remind users to maintain social distancing,
  - remind users to make use of hand sanitiser, and
  - indicate which rooms are closed.
- Ensured suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap are available in the kitchen and toilet.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/coronavirus-guidance-for-property/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.shildonmethodistchurch.org/special\\_events.htm](http://www.shildonmethodistchurch.org/special_events.htm)

- Provided a wall mounted hand sanitiser in the Community Hall entrance way.
- Provided anti-bacterial wipes and spray for users to ensure toilet and kitchen areas can be cleaned before and after use.
- Provided hand drying facilities (paper towels) in toilet and kitchen areas.
- Provided extra bins for users to dispose of face coverings and wipes etc.
- Ensured additional supplies are available in the Community Hall for users to “top up” if required.

All organisations<sup>4</sup> which make use of the Community Hall facilities are responsible for the safety of those running and attending their groups. However, in the current situation we feel it is prudent to set out for organisations what is expected of them to ensure the premises remain COVID-19 secure for all community users. **Annex A** sets out in detail what is expected of organisations should they wish to continue using our premises. We are asking all organisations to carefully consider the requirements and confirm by signing the declaration that they will comply with them.

I am sure you understand that in the current climate we all must do what we can to protect ourselves and others. If you feel you are unable to comply with the requirements in **Annex A** I am afraid we will not be able to allow you to continue using our facilities.

Yours sincerely

Bookings Secretary

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<sup>4</sup> Organisations includes church and non-Church organisations whether or not they hire the premises under a Licence agreement

## **Annex A - Shildon Methodist Church – COVID-19 - Requirements for organisations to use the Community Hall**

1. Organisations which make use of the Community Hall facilities are responsible for the safety of those running and attending their groups. They need to have their own risk assessments and procedures in place. They should take account of any guidance relevant to their specific activity or sector. They must ensure that the areas of the premises which they use are kept clean and sanitary for each session.
2. Licence holders are NOT permitted to enter or use the Community Hall at any day and/or time other than what is specified in the “Permitted Hours” section of their Licence agreement. Church organisations are NOT permitted to enter or use the Community Hall at any day and/or time other than those agreed by Shildon Methodist Church Council.
3. Prior to reopening, and in accordance with Government and Church requirements, organisations are required to produce a Risk Assessment. A copy of the Risk Assessment should be sent to Shildon Methodist Church Bookings Secretary two weeks prior to the organisation reopening.
4. Organisations are required to support the NHS Test and Trace system and will, therefore, need to ensure they have appropriate systems in place to:
  - a. record contact details for everyone who attends each of their sessions
  - b. to retain the information for 21 days, and,
  - c. comply with data protection requirements.
5. More information on Government requirements can be found in [Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace](#)<sup>5</sup>.
6. Before beginning their session, an organisation must:
  - a. Ensure seating (if being used) complies with social distance requirements.
  - b. Ensure hand sanitiser in hallway is filled and also hand sanitiser is available for use in the Main Hall (there will be some available at the kitchen hatch in the Main Hall).
  - c. Ensure door handles, light switches, toilet cistern handle and toilet wash basin taps are wiped with anti-bacterial spray.
  - d. Ensure anti-bacterial wipes are in toilet area and bin is empty.
  - e. Ensure toilet has sufficient paper towels and liquid soap.
  - f. If you use the kitchen, ensure work surfaces and kitchen taps are wiped with anti-bacterial spray.
7. During the course of an organisation’s session, an organisation must:
  - a. Keep reminding those attending of social distancing rules.
  - b. Keep a check that hygiene procedures in the toilet are being followed.
  - c. Regularly wipe down well used areas, e.g. door handles, light switched, hard surfaces with anti-bacterial spray/wipes.
8. At the end of an organisation’s session, an organisation must:
  - a. Ensure all tables and chairs they have used are cleaned.
  - b. Ensure all work surfaces, crockery, cutlery and equipment they have used is cleaned.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace>

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- c. Check and clean the toilet, i.e. bin emptied, toilet seat, flush lever and wash basin taps are wiped with anti-bacterial spray/wipes.
- d. All light switches used are wiped with anti-bacterial spray/wipes
- e. All door handles used are wiped with anti-bacterial spray/wipes
- f. All rubbish is bagged in a black bin bag, fastened and left in kitchen for disposal (a supply of black bin bags and bin liners are available in the kitchen).

**PLEASE SIGN THE DECLARATION AND RETURN IT TO THE ADDRESS AT THE HEAD OF THIS LETTER (you may wish to keep a copy for your own records)**

**Declaration to be signed by organisations that do not have a Licence agreement**

I confirm I have received a copy of the requirements relating to COVID-19 to use Shildon Community Hall and confirm my organisation will follow the requirements as set out to protect the safety of all users of the Building by reducing the risk of COVID-19 contamination and transmission at the Building.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of (Organisation): \_\_\_\_\_