

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

4th May 2021

AGENDA ITEM 10.3 REOPENING OF VILLAGE HALL TO HIRERS

1 REPORT

- 1.1 The Village Hall has been closed to hirers since the original lockdown about a year ago. The situation now appears to be approaching when it might be reopened. Council has considered earlier in this meeting whether future Council meetings should revert to the Village Hall.
- 1.2 Government guidance states that perhaps on 17 May, at Step 3, despite relaxation in terms of persons meeting outdoors, the rule of 6 or 2 households will apply indoors. Some indoor locations will be permitted to reopen. Before Step 4 begins, the Government will have completed a review of social distancing and other long-term measures so as to inform decisions on timings of the rules on 1 metre plus distancing, the wearing of face masks, etc. From 21 June at the earliest it may be possible to remove all legal limits on social contact. However, the detail of potential arrangements is not yet clear, and commonly accepted conventions of 'hands, face, space', complying with Covid-secure measures that will remain in place, meeting outside where possible and letting fresh air in, etc. etc. will remain relevant (though it is pointed out that the Village Hall has little potential for opening windows),
- 1.3 In terms of social distancing, the Hall's capacity is believed to be a maximum of 10 persons. (25% of the floor area of the main area of the Hall).
- 1.4 The Hall has currently been prepared in line with the current guidance up to and including Step 3 and if required, changes can be made to suit future guidance or the meeting of the next Step at the relevant time.
- 1.5 Appended to this report is ACRE's Appendix D in their pack of advice to community hall owners. It provides extensive information and advice.
- 1.6 Among other things, it notes that (particularly relevant to Pickmere's Village Hall):
 - A group like the Art Group could attend in Step 3, though they would have to abide by the Rule of 6 or 2 household rule up to the Hall's capacity, with any such groups separated by a minimum distance of 2 m. Those persons from different households in a Rule of 6 group are encouraged to be socially distanced.
 - A WI meeting is specifically mentioned in relation to Step 3 and it states – "The age profile may mean that members are particularly cautious so it would be best to assume they would prefer to sit 2m socially distanced from everyone else, or in pairs, and set the room out accordingly, allowing them to move their own chairs into groups of no more than 6 individuals or two households."

- It is also possible for indoor sports activities such as table tennis to take place in Step 3, but again overall Hall capacity will apply and social distancing etc conventions will have to be observed.

1.7 The reopening to hirers in mid-May will therefore be legalised if the Step 3 provisions are introduced. However, if the Hall is opened to users (particularly those just mentioned), the activities will have to be closely regulated and as previously reported to Council, additional rules and restrictions will have to be added to Council's normal Hire Agreement.

1.8 It may, taking everything into account, be preferable to await Step 4, when it is hoped that most distancing etc restrictions will have been dispensed with.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Council gives consideration to the proposed date of reopening of the Hall.

Jack Steel
Clerk to the Parish Council