



COVID RISK ASSESSMENT  
**APPLETON PARISH HALL**

**JUNE 2021**

ADAM KEPPEL-GREEN BSc FdA FSLCC MCMI

LOCAL  
COUNCIL  
CONSULTANCY  
  
AN SLCC ENTERPRISE

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## INTRODUCTION

Appleton Parish Hall commissioned Local Council Consultancy to prepare a COVID risk assessment for the reopening of the village hall. This risk assessment was prepared by LCC Associate Adam Keppel-Green in May 2021.

The risk assessment has been prepared in line with the government guidance as published in May 2021 and the additional guidance issued by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) as published in April 2021. This risk assessment is limited in scope to consider the risks arising from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the overall operation of the hall, it does not constitute a general risk assessment for the operation of the village hall nor for any specific activities taking place in the hall by hirers.

The risk assessment will require reviewing should the prevailing government guidance change.

## SUMMARY OF CURRENT GUIDANCE

Village halls support a range of activity and through their communal nature they are vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus, managers of halls have discretion over how they make their premises 'covid secure' provided they follow the advice in relevant guidance – this primarily being the '*guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities*'.

It is important to note that the hall operator is responsible for providing a safe facility but individual users/hirers are responsible for the activities which they run. The users and hirers of a village hall have a responsibility for managing the risks which arise from their own activity when they have control of the premises; they should take into account any guidance relevant to their specific activity or sector.

As an indoor venue, hall operators should set an advisory limit on the number of users a hall can safely accommodate, enable adequate ventilation of spaces and ensure users follow guidance on face coverings.

It is important to note that the hall operator is responsible for providing a safe facility but individual users have responsibility for their activity and the risk they introduce.

## **TEST AND TRACE**

The venue must display an NHS QR code. Every individual must be asked to scan the NHS QR code using their NHS COVID-19 app or provide their name and contact details – it is not sufficient for just a lead member to provide theirs.

Hall operators must collect contact information for all activities and events taking place within the venue, this should be collected by the person who hires the space.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

There must be measures in place for users to maintain social distancing. This means they should keep 2 metres apart from anyone who is not in their household or support bubble. Where this is not possible, the 1m+ rule may be applied but only where additional precautions are in place, e.g. face coverings, reduced contact time or dividing screens.

Where there are multiple users, hall operators should consider enabling multiple exit/entry points, one-way systems, staggered arrival/departure times and queue management to minimise close contact and unsupervised gatherings.

Consideration must also be given to how different user groups may come into conflict in the premises.

## **HAND WASHING AND TOILETS**

The government guidance requires everybody to be asked to wash their hands with soap and water on entry to the hall, or where this is not possible, to use hand sanitiser.

Within toilet facilities, signage should promote good handwashing technique and consideration should be given as to users congregating and social distancing whilst using facilities. Hand sanitiser should be available on entry to toilets and liquid soap provided inside. It is expected facilities will be cleaned more frequently than normal.

## **FACE COVERINGS**

All users are required to wear a face covering on entering the building and this should be kept on unless they:

- a. have a health or disability reason to not wear a covering including where it will cause severe distress
- b. are a child under the age of 11
- c. are undertaking exercise or a similar activity where it would impair their ability
- d. are taking medication, eating or drinking

A full list of exemptions to mask wearing requirements is available online.

## **SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**

During Step Three (from 17<sup>th</sup> May) up to 6 people (or more if only comprising two households) may meet indoors and government guidance states it is personal choice whether they follow social distancing guidelines.

Larger gatherings may be organised by a business, charity, public body or similar organisation but the organiser must take reasonable steps to minimise the transmission of the virus by following COVID-secure guidance and ensuring those attending do not mix beyond the rule of 6. Such gatherings are limited to 30 – there is detailed specific guidance for a variety of such activities which users must follow.

Support groups, including parent and children groups, can take place with up to 30 persons. The limit does not include children under 5 nor those running the group.

A group of up to 6 singers may perform/rehearse provided social distancing is followed but communal singing should not take place within a hall. Where singing is part of a parent and children group for under 5s, only six adults can sing with the children.

Indoor sport and exercise classes are exempt from gathering limits where they are formally organised, follow COVID-secure guidance and adhere to a capacity restriction of 100sqft (9.2m<sup>2</sup>) per person in the venue (including non-participants). Group activities should be organised to allow social distancing wherever possible.

**CLEANING REQUIREMENTS**

Cleaning surfaces with standard cleaning products is fundamental to reducing the risk of transmission but it is recognised that many village halls will not have adequate resourcing to clean the hall between each user group.

ACRE recommends that where the operator does not clean the hall between hirers the hiring group should be required to clean the surfaces their group may use before their own users arrive and regularly clean used surfaces. The operator should review its cleaning frequency and maximise the frequency with which cleaning is undertaken. For the toilets in the hall, the operator should look to clean them at least once per day with user groups performing additional cleans of high touch surfaces prior to their sessions.

In any periods of absence from the cleaner, a contract cleaner will need to be provided.

**OVERVIEW OF APPLETON PARISH HALL**

Appleton Parish Hall is a large community hall in Warrington. The hall is owned by the Parish Council which employs a booking secretary / cleaner on 16hrs per week.

The main entrance opens to a foyer which doubles as a community library and secondary hire space. From the foyer visitors access the main hall, kitchen and

a corridor off of which is the parish office and toilets (male, female and accessible). The hall is approximately 109.2m<sup>2</sup>, it has a raised stage, external door leading to the car park, access to the kitchen and a servery.

The library room is normally used concurrently with the main hall and on a Tuesday morning a librarian is present but otherwise users can access books at anytime the hall is open.

The operator has already implemented a number of measures to minimise the spread of the virus. These are included in the risk assessment and unless otherwise stated should remain in place.

Users have their own keys to access the premises. There is normally a one-hour gap between bookings.

The main entrance door has a proliferation of notices; this is confusing for visitors and dilutes messages; the operator should prioritise the information most important to convey to those arriving at the premises.

**RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM CAPACITIES**

The following maximum capacities are recommended for the different rooms in the hall. Specific activities should still be subject to a risk assessment where the specific layout of the room may determine a different capacity.

|               |    |                             |
|---------------|----|-----------------------------|
| Office        | 1  |                             |
| Male Toilet   | 2  |                             |
| Female Toilet | 2  |                             |
| Kitchen       | 2  |                             |
| Library       | 2  | using as a library          |
| Main Hall     | 11 | exercise classes / sporting |
|               | 25 | theatre style seating       |

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

The following actions arise from the Risk Matrix and seek to provide specific actions for the operator to take to minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission. The actions take into consideration the existing measures present at the hall on the date of inspection and unless otherwise stated these should be retained.

Where multiple notices are to be displayed at one location, consideration should be given to combining posters (e.g. the sanitise hands before entry and capacity notice) to reduce an over proliferation of notices.

1. Display Poster A at each entrance used to access the building.
2. Display the NHS Test and Trace QR code poster (Poster C) on the front door rather than when visitors have already entered.
3. Reduce the proliferation of posters at the entrance to make instruction clearer.
4. Put in place a process for hirers to provide contact information for users not using the NHS Test and Trace App.
5. Prepare a Hirer's Information Sheet and Checklist to ensure hirers understand their obligations. Include a list of the 'high touch' points to ensure these are cleaned.
6. Install additional hand sanitiser unit outside by the main door.
7. Install 'sanitise before entry' posters at the entry to toilets, the kitchen, the building and the main hall. (e.g. Poster E)
8. Install hand wash notices by sinks (Poster D)
9. Provide a cleaning station in the main hall to enable hirers to clean surfaces. To include blue roll, a multi-surface cleaner and pedal bin.
10. Mark out 2m waiting areas outside to ensure social distancing whilst users queue.
11. Install notices within library room advising users not to congregate and advertising the maximum number of library users at one time.
12. Implement a 72 hour quarantine on all incoming (donation and returns) books in the library
13. Review the cleaning regime and ensure that as a minimum:
  - a. All bins are emptied once per day or when advised they are full.
  - b. A thorough clean of all high touch points and toilets is undertaken on a daily basis.

## LIBRARY ROOM

The main foyer to the building is a community library which is also used by groups independently from use of the main hall.

A recommended maximum capacity of 2 library users is designed to allow the room to be used as a foyer through which other users and staff can safely pass. This should be reviewed by the operator to ensure use of the library does not impact the safe use of the hall and if so consider designated opening times for the library.

It is recommended that the library room not be used as a meeting space to ensure it is sufficiently clear for users to maintain social distancing whilst passing through.

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The main hall is used for meetings of Appleton Parish Council which comprises 13 councillors and two officers; meetings can last between 2 and 3 hours and must include provision for public attendance.

Council meetings have been held theatre style with members facing the front; the hall dimensions do not enable a layout which provides for adequate social distancing in a horseshoe set up which would generally be preferable. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk have confirmed this by attempting the layout.

The council should be aware of the information it provides to other hirers. The council should ensure windows and doors are open to maximise ventilation. Masks should be worn whilst members are not speaking (i.e. they can take them off whilst speaking, but should put them back on once they have made their statement). Members should be discouraged from mingling pre/post meeting and when joining the meeting should promptly enter and take their seat, the Chairman should guide the public and members on leaving to file out in a socially distanced manner.

## HIGH TOUCH SURFACES

The most frequently touch surfaces are likely to be the areas on which transmission is most likely; these surfaces must be regularly cleaned to reduce the potential for cross-contamination. Hirers should be advised of this list to ensure they know the surfaces they must clean, and the operator should consider if there are any additional surfaces missed on the inspection.

|                   |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Door handles      | <i>including the main entrance, the push plates on toilet doors and internal doors.</i>             |
| Touch to Open pad |                                                                                                     |
| Light switches    |                                                                                                     |
| Kitchen Surfaces  | <i>including cupboard handles, fridge door, oven door, microwave door, kettles, cannisters etc.</i> |
| Toilet Surfaces   | <i>including handrails, toilet doors and locks, flush mechanisms</i>                                |
| Chairs            |                                                                                                     |
| Table tops        |                                                                                                     |
| Blind drawstrings |                                                                                                     |
| Window handles    |                                                                                                     |

## RISK MATRIX

| Risk Identified                                 | Risk Rating | Mitigation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Revised Rating | Further Actions                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transmission through users                      | MED         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NHS Test and Trace poster displayed at entrance.</li> <li>Operator to ensure staff record time on premises.</li> <li>Hirers required to ensure all users provide contact information for their sessions – either by scanning the QR code or providing to the hirer to pass to the operator.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                | MED            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage to be inspected/renewed weekly</li> </ul>                                                                                                             |
| Hirers fail to enforce measures                 | HIGH        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information provided to hirers to clarify their obligations.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | MED            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hirers to complete checklist</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       |
| Individuals with coronavirus enter the hall     | MED         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice at entrance instructing those displaying symptoms / isolating not to enter.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | LOW            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage to be inspected/renewed weekly</li> </ul>                                                                                                             |
| Individuals fail to maintain good hygiene       | MED         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanitiser for hirers to be provided at every entrance / exit point and within the hall.</li> <li>Notices to be displayed reinforcing good hygiene.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | LOW            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage to be inspected/renewed weekly</li> </ul>                                                                                                             |
| Transmission of virus through surfaces          | HIGH        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanitiser provided outside the hall for sanitising before opening the main door.</li> <li>Sanitiser within hall for users to frequently clean hands</li> <li>Hirers to clean all surfaces they use before use; operator to provide materials.</li> <li>High touch points to be cleaned by hirers before and after use and regularly by cleaner.</li> <li>Discourage touching of difficult to clean surfaces (e.g. stage curtains and blinds) by leaving them open at the start of the day.</li> </ul> | MED            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hirers to be instructed to take charge of opening blinds to ensure they sanitise hands before touching strings.</li> </ul>                                    |
| Individuals fail to social distance on arrival. | HIGH        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice at entrance and in foyer discouraging gatherings.</li> <li>Mark out 2m waiting area outside to encourage suitable queuing to enter (to include allowance for mid-hire change over)</li> <li>Hirers to use the secondary exit for change over between groups within hirer sessions.</li> <li>Sufficient change over time to be provided between hirers to minimise conflict on entrance/egress.</li> </ul>                                                                                      | LOW            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors to be instructed to queue outside if they cannot access the main hall immediately</li> <li>Queue markings to be inspected/renewed weekly.</li> </ul> |
| Transmission through close contact              | HIGH        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacities set for public access rooms to enable suitable distancing.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | MED            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hirers to open windows during hire.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                |

|                                         |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |     |                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         |      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information provided to hirers on capacities and clarity on rules for groups.</li> <li>Hirers encouraged to open windows to maximise ventilation.</li> <li>Users to wear masks whilst moving through the building unless exempt.</li> <li>Library room not to be used for independent hire whilst hirers are using the main hall.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                       |     |                                                                                                |
| Transmission through use of kitchen     | MED  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure soap within kitchen maintained through regular inspection.</li> <li>Capacity set for use of kitchen.</li> <li>Ventilation fan to be used to increase ventilation .</li> <li>Hirer to clean surfaces and touch points before and after use.</li> <li>Hirer to wash, dry and stow crockery/cutlery after use.</li> <li>Hirers to bring own tea towels.</li> <li>Poster displayed to reinforce correct handwashing.</li> <li>Sanitiser close to entrance to kitchen</li> </ul> | LOW |                                                                                                |
| Transmission through use of toilets     | MED  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hirers to clean all surfaces before public arrive where staff have not precleaned.</li> <li>Poster displayed to reinforce correct handwashing.</li> <li>Ensure soap within toilets maintained through regular inspection.</li> <li>Hand drying facilities regularly inspected and restocked.</li> <li>Where possible, keep windows open to maximise ventilation.</li> <li>Sanitiser close to entrance of toilets</li> </ul>                                                        | LOW |                                                                                                |
| Transmission through library service    | MED  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum of two users to be allowed at one time</li> <li>Incoming (donations and returns) books to be quarantined for 72 hours before placed out on loan.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | LOW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review usage and impact on social distancing</li> </ul> |
| Transmission through contaminated waste | MED  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of bin for disposal of used cleaning materials in main hall.</li> <li>Frequent emptying of all bins.</li> <li>Regular collection of (for example) masks from grounds.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | LOW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hirers to advise operator if bins are full.</li> </ul>  |
| Transmission to cleaning staff          | HIGH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide staff with protective overalls and gloves.</li> <li>Advise staff to wash outer clothes after cleaning duties.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | MED |                                                                                                |

## REFERENCES

ACRE (2021) 'Reopening Village and Community Halls Post COVID-19 closure' Issue 10 dated 22/04/2021

Cabinet Office (2021) '*Coronavirus Restrictions: what you can and cannot do*'. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do#may-whats-changed>. Version 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

DCMS (2021) '*Coronavirus: Grassroots sports guidance for the public and sports providers*'. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-grassroots-sports-guidance-for-the-public-and-sport-providers>. Version 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021,

DHSC (2021) '*Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own*'. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-you-do-not-need-to-wear-a-face-covering>. Version dated 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.

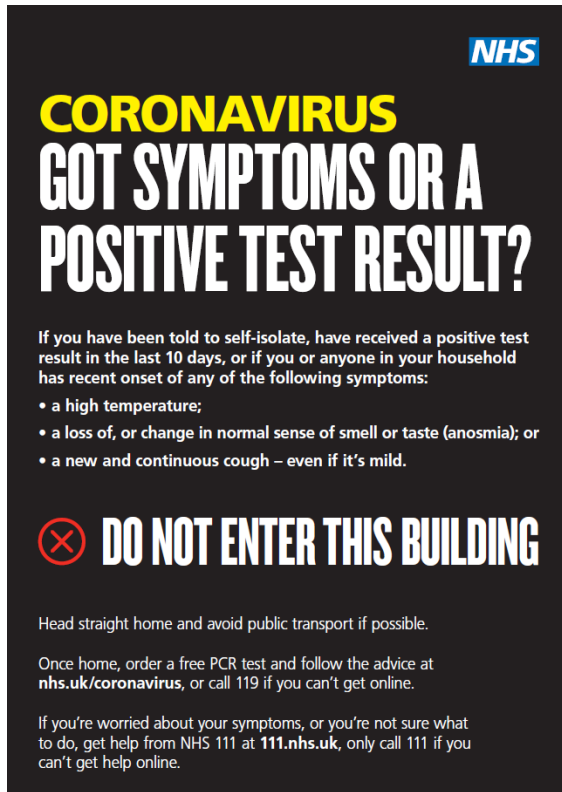
MHCLG (2021) '*COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities*.'

Available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>. Version dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

NALC (2020) '*Risk assessment for COVID-19*.'

## EXAMPLE MATERIALS



**NHS**

# CORONAVIRUS GOT SYMPTOMS OR A POSITIVE TEST RESULT?

If you have been told to self-isolate, have received a positive test result in the last 10 days, or if you or anyone in your household has recent onset of any of the following symptoms:

- a high temperature;
- a loss of, or change in normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia); or
- a new and continuous cough – even if it's mild.

**⊗ DO NOT ENTER THIS BUILDING**

Head straight home and avoid public transport if possible.

Once home, order a free PCR test and follow the advice at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus), or call 119 if you can't get online.

If you're worried about your symptoms, or you're not sure what to do, get help from NHS 111 at [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk), only call 111 if you can't get help online.

Poster A – Symptoms

<https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/nhs-resources-facilities/resources/site-materials/>



**CATCH IT** 

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

**BIN IT** 

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

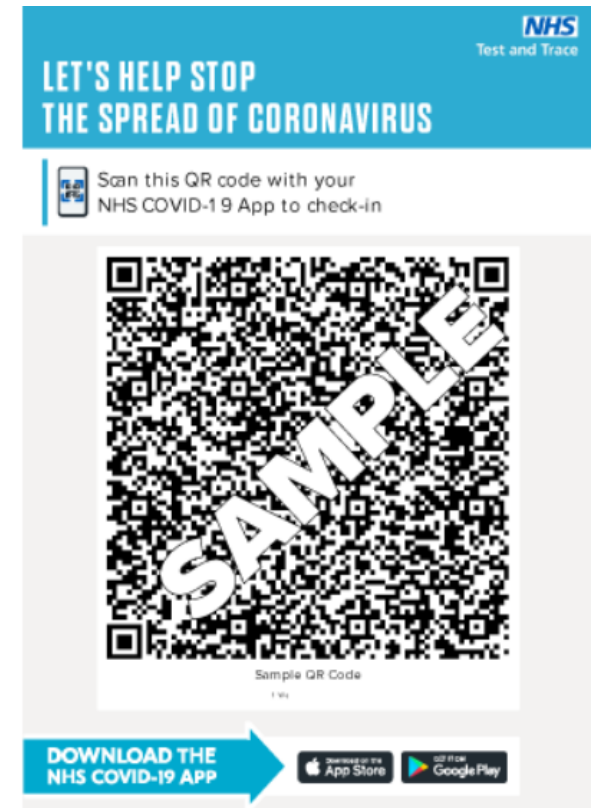
**KILL IT** 

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

**NHS**

Poster B – Catch it, Bin it, Kill It.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf>



**NHS**  
Test and Trace

## LET'S HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

 Scan this QR code with your NHS COVID-19 App to check-in



Sample QR Code

**DOWNLOAD THE  
NHS COVID-19 APP**  

Poster C – NHS Test and Trace QR Code

<https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>



Poster D – NHS Hand washing guidance

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/14061/handwashing-poster-landscape-and-portrait.pdf>



Poster E – Example 'use hand sanitiser' poster



Poster F – Example 'wear masks' poster