

Somerby Memorial Hall (SMH) Covid risk assessment for Parish Council meetings

From 6th May 2021 it is unlawful for Parish Council meetings to be held remotely. It is also unlawful for a Parish Council to exclude members of the public from its meetings, though of course Covid regulations may in some circumstances have the effect of excluding people.

This risk assessment has been prepared taking into account:

1. National Covid restrictions as at 17th May 2021
2. NALC advice issued 6th May 2021 for 17th May 2021 (reproduced below)
3. SMH's own risk assessment April 2021 (reproduced below)
4. SMH's Guide Assessment for Hirers April 2021 (also reproduced below).

Rule of Six (meeting indoors)

Parish Council members number 7. We have considered whether this is a 'group meeting indoors' and are uncertain, bearing in mind that the summons to attend Council operates on individual Councillors not a 'group'. We think it is a question of fact not law whether they attend 'as a group' ie. How do they actually arrange themselves in the room and interact? Therefore, we undertake:

- Councillors will not travel together to the meeting
- Councillors will enter one at a time maintaining distance
- Councillors will sit a minimum of 2m apart at all times and not physically exchange documents or other items.

They will not be like a group of people around one table in a restaurant, which would be permitted only up to 6. In behaving as above they will not be a 'group', they will be distanced individuals in a room.

Capacity of SMH

The main room is about 120 m². Seating will be arranged to ensure minimum distance of 2m between individuals (including members of the Council) or between groups if members of the same household.

Whilst mindful there is no general power to exclude members of the public, the Council takes the view that Article 2 ECHR, Covid regulations and Health and Safety law combine to allow exclusion of any number beyond that which can achieve social distancing in the space. The Council will do this.

SMH's own Risk Assessment and Guide Assessment for Hirers April 2021

We have reviewed these documents. We understand them and believe they contain sound assessments and effective mitigating actions. We will comply with them.

Parish Council actions

Many of the actions are for the SMH Committee to take, but the Parish Council will do the following:

1. Clerk to liaise with SMH Committee prior to the meeting about:
 - Cleaning regime before and after our meeting.

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- Any equipment or other items provided, such as sanitizer and wipes, and/or any which we should provide.
 - Check that the described signage, tapes etc. are in place at the building.
2. Agenda to include questions and instructions as per 5. Below (including please do not attend if positive test, symptoms).
 3. Clerk and Chair will attend in good time before the meeting to ensure signage, entrances and furniture are suitably arranged.
 4. Name and contact numbers of attendees will be obtained and retained for 21 days.
 5. Before opening the meeting, the Chair will:
 - Ask whether anyone present has tested positive for Covid in the last 7 days or has Covid symptoms.
 - Remind everyone to use hand sanitizer on entering and leaving, maintain social distancing, use the one-way system, use toilets one at a time, avoid touching their faces, wear masks/visors unless actually speaking.
 6. Not physically exchange papers, pens or other items.
 7. After the meeting and before leaving ensure frequently-touched surface (handles, doors etc.) are wiped down.
 8. Not use the kitchen.
 9. Monitor National and any Local guidance/regulations in case of change.

Cllr Carl Powell

Chairman

Somerby Parish Council

17th May 2021

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

NALC advice issued 6th May 2021

CORONAVIRUS — INFORMATION FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

ABOUT

This page has been created to provide local (parish and town) councils with information about the coronavirus. It should not be used as a substitute for government advice. However, some practicalities are specific to local councils, where we hope this information will help you plan and manage your risks. If you would like further advice and support on any of these topics for your local council, please [contact your local county association](#).

ANNOUNCEMENT

Following the [High Court Judgment on remote meetings](#), without further legislation there are no definitive answers and NALC is taking the approach of advising the safest course for local councils taking into account both Covid laws and local government law.

The current position is unsatisfactory and will cause huge problems for many of the 10,000 local councils in England, which the sector will address in its usual professional way and in the best interests of residents.

It is clear that the legal position is that local councils need to meet face-to-face, rather than remotely, and be open to attendance in person from the public.

As we have advised previously in our guidance on preparing for the possible return to face-to-face meetings, local councils should take steps to address this issue through measures such as delegation to clerks, deferring controversial decisions or holding meetings later in the year, after the 21 June roadmap date.

Any face-to-face meeting should be held in line with restrictions and public health advice in place at the time. So, in practical terms, local councils will have no choice but to control the numbers of people physically in the meeting room at any one time in order to comply with the Government's Covid restrictions.

We are currently advising local councils not to meet before 17 May because of Covid regulations and the roadmap.

If a meeting is necessary, local councils must conduct a risk assessment of any available venue and you can find details of how to in the Managing Facilities and Public Spaces section.

In light of the risk assessment, it is advised to set out in the agenda the arrangements for safely meeting (for example social distancing, wearing of masks and hand sanitising and other measures) and the number of the public that can be accommodated.

If there is a large influx of the public for a meeting which exceeds the room's safe capacity as stated on the agenda, then the permitted number of attendees should not be exceeded. Local councils should manage as they would usually any disruptive behaviour or health and safety risks.

If the assessment is that the room cannot hold a safety meeting and no other venue is available or there is no outside space then, the local council will need to take appropriate mitigating actions including delaying meetings until after 21 June.

The meeting notice should also set out any arrangements for live streaming and making the meeting available for the public to observe proceedings and encourage the public to watch remotely.

Councils may also want to encourage members of the public to make written representations on issues rather than attending in person.

This summary and further information are set out below in the *Preparing for the return to face-to-face meetings* section.

NALC summary position and guidance on return to face-to-face local council meetings

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We are currently advising local councils not to meet before 17 May because of Covid regulations and the roadmap.

When calling a meeting, local councils must conduct a risk assessment of any available venue and you can find details of how to in the Managing Facilities and Public Spaces section.

In light of the risk assessment it is advised to set out in the notice of the meeting and the agenda, the arrangements for safely meeting (for example social distancing, wearing of masks and hand sanitising and other measures) and the number of the public that can be accommodated.

If there is a large influx of the public for a meeting which exceeds the room's safe capacity as stated on the agenda, then the permitted number of attendees should not be exceeded. Local councils should manage as they would usually any disruptive behaviour or health and safety risks.

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SOMERBY MEMORIAL HALL RISK ASSESSMENT APRIL 2021

Area or People at Risk	Risk identified	Actions to take to mitigate risk	Insert Date completed and any notes.
<p>Staff, contractors and volunteers – Identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus and likelihood staff could be exposed</p>	<p>Cleaning surfaces infected by people carrying the virus. Disposing of rubbish containing tissues and cleaning cloths. Deep cleaning premises if someone falls ill with CV-19 on the premises. Occasional Maintenance workers.</p>	<p>Stay at home guidance if unwell at entrance and in Main Hall. Staff/volunteers provided with protective overalls and gloves. Contractors provide own Staff/volunteers advised to wash outer clothes after cleaning duties. Follow PHE guidance and PPE if deep cleaning is required.</p>	
<p>Staff, contractors and volunteers– think about who could be at risk and likelihood staff/volunteers could be exposed.</p>	<p>Staff/volunteers who are either extremely vulnerable or over 70. Staff or volunteers carrying out cleaning, caretaking or some internal maintenance tasks could be exposed if a person carrying the virus has entered the premises or falls ill. Mental stress from handling the new situation.</p>	<p>Discuss situation with volunteers over 70 to identify whether provision of protective clothing and cleaning surfaces before they work is sufficient to mitigate their risks, or whether they should cease such work for the time being.</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers will need to be warned immediately if someone is tested positive for COVID-19 who has been on the premises. Details of a person's medical condition must be kept confidential, unless he/she agrees it can be shared. It is important people know they can raise concerns.</p>

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<p>Social distancing requirements and limit on group sizes of 6 or 2 households. Risk to hirers/event organisers and to those attending the hall</p>	<p>Confusion among hirers. Risk is people attending in groups mingle with others not in their group, which is unlawful and may worry other users. Risk of virus spread to all attending an activity or event, rather than one group of ≤6.</p>	<p>Ensure hirers understand the limit on group sizes (if people attend in groups) and convey to those attending the need to avoid mingling between groups. Adjust hire conditions to cover this. Discuss hirer concerns with them, as this should not prevent any activities, though adjustments may be needed eg to seating arrangements.</p>	<p>Discussed with hirer on a hire by hire basis Event organisers are not expected to ask about people's domestic arrangements. But no group members should mingle, ie mix, with another group. Polite, socially distanced, speaking only between groups, as for an activity at which all individuals are socially distanced. Avoid raised voices or interactions.</p>
<p>Car Park/paths/ patio/exterior areas</p>	<p>Social distancing is not observed as people congregate before entering premises. Parking area is too congested to allow social distancing. People drop tissues.</p>	<p>Mark out 2metre waiting area outside all potential entrances with tape to encourage care when queueing to enter. Cleaner asked to check area outside doors for rubbish which might be contaminated, e.g. tissues. Wear plastic gloves and remove.</p>	<p>Transitory lapses in social distancing in outside areas are less risky, the main risk is likely to be where people congregate or for vulnerable people. Ordinary litter collection arrangements can remain in place. Provide plastic gloves.</p>
<p>Entrance hall/lobby/corridors</p>	<p>Possible "pinch points" and busy areas where risk is social distancing is not observed in a confined area. Door handles, light switches in frequent use.</p>	<p>Identify "pinch points" and busy areas. Consider marking out 2 metre spacing in entrance area. Create one-way system and provide signage. Door handles and light switches to be cleaned regularly. Hand sanitiser to be provided by hall</p>	<p>Hand sanitiser needs to be checked before hire period. More bins in hall, Empty regularly. One way system in place to reduce pinch points all clearly signposted</p>
<p>Main Hall</p>	<p>Door handles, light switches, window catches, tables, chair backs and arms. Soft furnishings which cannot be readily cleaned between use. Projection equipment. Screen. Window curtains or blinds Commemorative photos, displays. Social distancing to be observed</p>	<p>Door handles, light switches, window catches, tables, chairs and other equipment used to be cleaned by hirers before use or by hall cleaning staff. Social distancing guidance to be observed by hirers in arranging their activities. Hirers to be encouraged to wash hands regularly.</p>	<p>Provide hand sanitiser.</p>
<p>Upholstered seating</p>	<p>Virus may remain on fabric. Cannot readily be cleaned between use. Frequent cleaning would damage fabric. Metal parts can be cleaned and are more likely to be touched when moving them, ie more frequently.</p>	<p>Cushioned chairs with arms are reserved only for those who need them by reason of infirmity and who have been socially isolating themselves. Avoid anyone else touching them unless wearing plastic gloves. Clean metal/plastic parts regularly touched. Rotate use of upholstered chairs. Ask those moving them to wear plastic gloves.</p>	<p>Vinyl chairs in hall as an option</p>
<p>Kitchen</p>	<p>Social distancing more difficult Door and window handles Light switches Working surfaces, sinks Cupboard/drawer handles. Fridge/freezer Crockery/cutlery Kettle/hot water boiler Cooker/ Microwave</p>	<p>Hirers are asked to control numbers using kitchen so as to ensure social distancing, especially for those over 70. Hirers to clean all areas likely to be used before use, wash, dry and stow crockery and cutlery after use. Hirer to bring own tea towels. Sanitiser/ Paper towels to be provided. Hirers encouraged to bring own food & drink</p>	<p>Kitchen to remain closed or restricted access to be discussed with hirer on a hire by hire basis. Sink & kettle available in the bar area. Hirers asked to bring own cups, drink & food for now if at all possible</p>
<p>Store cupboards (cleaner etc)</p>	<p>Social distancing not possible Door handles, light switch</p>	<p>Public access unlikely to be required. Cleaner to decide frequency of cleaning.</p>	

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Annexe area – access to chairs, tables etc	Social distancing more difficult Equipment needing to be moved not normally in use.	Decide whether hall cleaner cleans or hirer to clean equipment required before use. Hirer to control accessing and stowing equipment to encourage social distancing.	Where possible required equipment left out in main hall for hirers.
Indoor Toilets	Social distancing difficult. Surfaces in frequent use = door handles, light switches, basins, toilet handles, seats etc. Baby changing and vanity surfaces, mirrors.	Hirer to control numbers accessing toilets at one time, with attention to more vulnerable users. Hirer to clean all surfaces etc before public arrive unless staff have precleaned out of hours. Consider engaged/vacant signage and posters to encourage 20 second hand washing.	Ensure soap, paper towels, tissues and toilet paper are regularly replenished. One at a time access encouraged.
Events	Handling cash and tickets Too many people arrive	Organisers arrange online systems and cashless payments as far as possible. For performances seats to be limited, booked in advance, 2 seats between household groups. Cash payments/donations to be handled by one individual wearing gloves.	NO EVENTS PLANNED UNTIL AFTER LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS LIFTED

SOMERBY MEMORIAL HALL – GUIDE ASSESSMENT FOR HIRERS APRIL 2021

This sample document can be used as a guide to help your hirers produce their own COVID-19 risk assessment for use of your hall. Please be prepared to help them complete it in the light of your own premises. It is intended as a supplement to a group's ordinary Risk Assessment.

Area of Risk	Risk identified	Actions to take to mitigate risk	Notes
Cleanliness of hall and equipment, especially after other hires	Other hirers or hall cleaner have not cleaned hall or equipment used to standard required. Our group leaves hall or equipment without cleaning.	Group to check with hall committee when hall is cleaned and to make sure regularly used surfaces are cleaned before, during and after hire e.g. tables, sinks, door and toilet handles.	Can we bring our own equipment?
Managing Social distancing and limit of groups size to 6 or 2 households especially for people attending who may be vulnerable. Preventing groups from mingling.	People do not maintain 2 m social distancing. People who attend in groups try to mingle or mix with other groups, which may worry them and is unlawful. Risk of virus spread to those attending whole activity, instead of a small group.	Advise all attending they must comply with social distancing as far as possible and use one-way system. Adopt layout advised. Limit numbers using toilets at once. Advise those in groups of the need to avoid mingling with others.	Avoid use of kitchen – ask people to BYO food and drink? Allow older people time to use toilets without others present. Ask each group to use toilets at one time, so they are not mingling with others. Allow polite, socially distanced, speaking only between groups. Avoid raised voices or interactions.
Respiratory hygiene	Transmission to or from other members of group.	Catch It, Bin It, Kill It. Ask group to avoid touching mouth, eyes, and nose, wear face coverings. Provide tissues ask all to dispose into a bin or disposable rubbish bag, then wash or sanitise hands.	Remember to bring tissues and hand sanitiser. Remember to empty any bins used at end of hire. Face coverings to be worn unless an exception applies.
Hand cleanliness	Transmission to other members of group and premises	Advise group to use sanitiser on entering and exiting the hall, to wash hands regularly using soap and paper towels.	
Someone falls ill with COVID-19 symptoms	Transmission to other members of group and p premises	Follow hall instructions. Move person to safe area, obtain contact contacts, inform cleaner.	