



C19 project team Bulletin No 2 – issued 18 June 2020

COVID-19: Guidance for Local Meetings/Branches on the re-opening of Meeting Houses & Offices

Website: first, a reminder that these Bulletins, plus all supporting documentation, are available on the CEQ website. Look for the “Policies” section (black strip) at the foot of the Home Page and select the link to “Coronavirus Guidance”.

Communications: we hope that you received the first Bulletin, issued 11 June, and were able to share it widely within your Meeting. You will recall that we said “*LM Clerks will be the “default” point of contact, but if you would like to nominate a different or additional contact please let James know*”. Please let James Bradbury know if you want us to amend the mailing list. We are aware that some of the guidance may not be applicable to all Meetings (for example those that meet in rented rooms), but it is simplest for us to mail to all, and ask you to interpret the content selectively.

Help and support: as a general principle we want all Local Meetings to have an opportunity to speak to someone if they have any questions or concerns. Your Link Trustee or Property Link Friend are your primary contacts, and they will be pleased to assist. In case you are not sure who your LT and PLF are, we have put the current list on the website. James Bradbury (C19 project team secretary - contact details below) will also be able to put you in touch with other team members who can be of help on a range of issues. In due course we may be able to give you nominated contacts for specific topics.

New guidance: we are hard at work preparing detailed guidance for undertaking risk assessments, and for hygiene, cleaning and signage. We hope to get these documents to you next week. In the meantime, you will find attached a document titled “Visitor Guidelines”. As the document states “*we recommend that you circulate these guidelines to all Friends planning to visit the Meeting House. and to incorporate relevant parts of the guidance in the instructions given to hirers. (Please feel free to adapt the wording to reflect your local circumstances and risk assessments)*”.

Please note that the government guidance is constantly changing, and therefore our own guidelines may have to change. We will do our best to give you updated guidance as rapidly as we can.

Room Hire: We have been advised that Quaker Meeting Houses used by community groups will most likely fit into the Hospitality sector (rather than Places of Worship). We are eagerly awaiting the government guidance for this sector. in Bulletin 1 we said “*we suggest that you start a conversation with your groups now, as some will be more cautious than others, which will help to determine priorities*”. We see this as a two-stage process, with an initial conversation to assess the group’s intentions, followed by instructions to the group regarding the preparation of risk assessments and acceptance (by signature) of an amendment to the existing room hire agreement. For the first stage we appreciate that some Meetings may prefer to make contact by telephone, but for those that wish to write we are providing a sample letter (attached) which you can adapt to your own situation. For the follow up stage we will be providing a model “Room Hire Agreement” amendment for you to personalise, and a risk assessment template for use by hirers that ask for your help.

Insurance: our Insurers (Congregational) have issued some instructions for “preparing your church building for re-opening”. The link to this is below, and a version of the guidance in pdf format will be on the website. We are not sure that it adds a great deal to the guidance we are already preparing, but to ensure compliance with insurance requirements we recommend that you study this document.

<https://www.congregational.co.uk/news-and-media/post.php?s=preparing-your-church-building-for-re-opening>

Timescales: finally, it is important to stress that we don’t have to open when we are told we can. We can dictate our own pace, and we cannot open until we are ready, with all appropriate measures in place. Subject to government policy, and discussion with your link Trustee, it will be up to each Meeting to decide when it is appropriate to re-open, for either Meetings for Worship or room hire, and we need to balance the desire to restart M for W (and recover room hire income) with the “logistics” involved, and potential additional costs (eg cleaning).

Please don’t hesitate to ask questions or offer feedback.

In Friendship

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