



C19 project team Bulletin No 3 – issued 25 June 2020

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

New guidance on risk assessments, cleaning, hygiene and signage: please find attached two new guidance documents which we hope are self-explanatory. The risk assessment document contains examples of risk assessments for Meeting for Worship, Hirers and Employees, and a suggested amendment to existing room hire agreements for your hirers to sign. Blank risk assessment and room hire agreement templates will be available on the CEQ website for you to adapt and tailor for your needs. Please feel free to use other risk assessment formats if you prefer – we have tried to make ours as simple as possible. We want to stress that these documents and templates are guidance, not rigid instruction, and you will need to vary the text to reflect the decisions that you make as a Local Meeting. Your Link Trustee will need to see your completed Risk Assessment. The cleaning, hygiene and signage document gives the details and contact person for Firefix – the company you can order your signage from, have it delivered to your contact person and the invoice will be sent to CEQ Trustees. The Firefix catalogue is attached to this Bulletin, and will also be available on the CEQ website.

Further BYM guidance, 9 steps to re-opening meeting Houses and worship spaces safely: on 17 June BYM published some more detailed guidance in the form of an 11 page document and a separate risk assessment supplement – both documents are attached, and will be on the CEQ website. The C19 project team has studied these documents, and we believe that there is a great deal of common ground between this new guidance and our own. The BYM guidance is perhaps more comprehensive, and there are some differences in emphasis (over issues such as how to manage numbers, who should attend and who should stay at home - see BYM Step 5 - keeping kitchens closed and removing books), but in all other aspects our own documents are consistent with BYM guidelines. Although we recommend that Meetings follow the guidance issued by CEQ Trustees, we also recommend that you read the BYM documents, as they may help to inform the decisions made by individuals and groups.

Changes in government guidance: In the last Bulletin we said “please note that the government guidance is constantly changing” and in just the last few days the social distancing rules have changed. Please note that you do not have to align with the reduction – some Meetings may prefer to maintain a 2m rule, but we need to be prepared for hirers that decide to take advantage of the new “1m plus” concession. ***If this happens hirers must monitor the new government guidance and adapt their plans to comply.***

Timing for re-opening: Last Tuesday’s news indicated that Places of Worship can open on 4 July but we are not yet clear which types of hirers can meet from that date. We are awaiting further information, and will aim to provide further advice soon. ***Please remember that you cannot open your Meeting House for Worship or Room Hire until you are ready to do so - in other words when the recommendations set out in our guidance have been implemented. Furthermore, you must consult your Link Trustee and discuss with them the measures that you are putting in place before re-opening.***

Managing the process: in Bulletin 1 we recommended that you establish a small group of Friends to take responsibility for planning and implementation. We know that several Meetings have formed such a group, and that some have already started work. The BYM 9 Steps guide (Step 1) suggests that you set up a team “with a clear co-ordinator”, and we strongly support this.

Help and support: In the last Bulletin we said that “*your Link Trustee or Property Link Friend are your primary contacts, and they will be pleased to assist. 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*”. Some of our project team members have agreed to help with queries on specific topics, and you are welcome to contact them directly: -

Judith Jenner: risk assessments	clerk.trustees@outlook.com
Richard Tuckett: employment Issues	r_p_tuckett@yahoo.com
Andrew Callan: sources for cleaning products, advice on hygiene regs.	andrew@theprioryrooms.co.uk
Clare Peat: general advice on Meeting House issues and hirers	sellyoakquakers@gmail.com
Mina Tilt: advice on steam cleaning and other cleaning/hygiene matters	minatilt.hgq@btinternet.com
Kris Turner: Tech support for blended Meetings	kris.turner@live.com

Financial concerns: we appreciate that Meetings are suffering from loss of room hire income and, in some cases, additional costs. Most Meetings have adequate reserves, and it may be necessary to draw on these to cover short term losses. However, Trustees want to ensure that Meetings do not get into financial difficulties, so we hope that Meetings with particular concerns will speak to their Link Trustee for advice on “prudent use of reserves” and to discuss action that the Meeting could be taking to increase fundraising and plan for the future. Cash collections have obviously ceased, and our guidelines discourage the handling of cash, but we have an opportunity to encourage Friends to make donations by bank transfer and regular standing order. Please make all Friends in your Meeting aware of the financial pressures that you are experiencing, and seek their help.

Finally, please don't hesitate to ask questions or offer feedback.

In Friendship

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