

Latest Corona Virus information from ACRE 5th November 2020

Village and community halls are required to close from Thursday 5th November to Wednesday 2nd December, except for the purposes outlined below.

Outdoor exercise on recreation fields and use of children's playgrounds is permitted. People are permitted to meet one other person from another household for this purpose.

The situation for village halls is explained in Section 1 and the supporting legislation is provided in Section 2.

Section 1 - Information for Village Hall Committees

Permitted activities at village and community halls

1. Pre-schools, education (e.g. primary school use, home schooling, forest schools) and childcare (e.g. before and after school clubs)
2. Work purposes, where people cannot work from home (this would include the hall being hired to provide a socially distanced workplace).
3. Food and essential retail e.g. Community shop, indoor market selling food, post office.
4. Essential voluntary and public services such as food banks, blood donations, medical services.
5. Takeaway food and drink services
6. Organised support groups providing mutual aid or therapy or other forms of support may continue with up to 15 participants e.g. victims of crime, new parents and guardians, people with long term illnesses, bereavement support and people in drug and alcohol recovery (see paragraph below for further information)

The following premises are required to close, which means the relevant activities held at village and community halls will not be permitted:

- a) Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, including gyms, dance studios, soft play facilities
- b) Theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums and galleries, bingo.
- c) Social clubs, bars, cafes, except for takeaway food and non-alcoholic drink.
- d) Youth centres, except for 1:1 youth work.

Action by village and community halls

If your hall is likely to remain open (e.g. for pre-school and/or essential services) other bookings will need to be cancelled until 3rd December.

If your hall is likely to close, you should inform your insurer and follow any guidance they issue with respect to maintaining heating, shutting down water supply and security systems/checks.

Some village halls and community centres employ staff and will need to be aware of the following information:

Job Support Schemes

Workers can retain their job, even if their employer cannot afford to pay them, and be paid at least 80% of their salary up to £2500 a month.

The flexibility of the current CJRS will be retained to allow employees to continue to work where they can.

Employers small or large, charitable or non-profit are eligible and because more businesses will need to close, they will now be asked to pay just National Insurance and Pensions contributions for their staff during the month of November – making this more generous than support currently on offer.

The Job Support Scheme will not be introduced until after Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends Wherever you live, you may be able to get financial help through the:

- [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)
- [Job Support Scheme](#) (from 1st November)
- [New Style Employment and Support Allowance](#)

Places of worship are closed except for funerals, broadcast acts of worship and private prayer or childcare. Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people. Linked ceremonial events such as ash scatterings can continue with up to 15 in attendance. Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are not permitted except in exceptional circumstances. Wakes and wedding reception s are therefore not permitted.

Section 2

Extracts from relevant legislation

Part 3 Restrictions on Gatherings

Regulation 18

(9) A person who is responsible for a community centre or hall must ensure that the community centre or hall is closed except where it is used—

- (a) to provide essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services (including the provision of food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions or support in an emergency),
- (b) for the purposes of education or training,
- (c) for the purposes of support groups, or
- (d) for the purposes of—
 - (i) childcare provided by a person registered under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006, or
 - (ii) supervised activities for children.

Part 2 Restrictions on leaving home

Regulation 5

(1) No person may leave or be outside of the place where they are living without reasonable excuse.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)—

(a) the circumstances in which a person has a reasonable excuse include where one of the exceptions set out in regulation 6 applies (*see below*);

(b) the place where a person is living includes the premises where they live together with any garden, yard, passage, stair, garage, outhouse or other appurtenance of such premises.

(3) This regulation does not apply to any person who is homeless.

The **Regulation 6** exceptions to this restriction on individuals, relevant to activities that might happen in Village Halls, are:

- To access services provided by voluntary or charitable services, including food banks
- To access critical public services
- To donate blood
- Attend a meeting of a support group that consists of no more than 15 persons and is reasonably necessary for members of the group to be physically present at the gathering. A support group means a group, or one to one, support which is organised by a business, a charitable, benevolent or philanthropic institution or a public body to provide mutual aid, therapy or any other form of support to its members or those who attend its meetings, for example those providing support—
 - (a) to victims of crime (including domestic abuse).
 - (b) to those with, or recovering from, addictions (including alcohol, narcotics, or other substance addictions) or addictive patterns of behaviour.
 - (c) to new parents.
 - (d) to those with, or caring for persons with, any long-term illness or terminal condition or who are vulnerable.

- (e) to those facing issues related to their sexuality or identity including those living as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
- (f) to those who have suffered bereavement.
- (g) to vulnerable young people

- To attend a commemorative event celebrating the life of a person who has died
- Access childcare

For further information: www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november

If your village halls committee needs support then please contact your local [ACRE Network member](#)