

# **BISHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

## **CYNGOR CYMUNED TRESEFGOB**

### **Preparations for reopening Bishton Community Council Facilities.**

#### **General**

1. The Coronavirus is still in circulation and continues to cause health issues. The Welsh Government lockdown restrictions are gradually being lifted but the risk of an increase in infections through a further wave of the virus is a cause for concern. Therefore, to avoid any inadvertent spread of the virus, Bishton Community Council (BCC) needs to be prepared for when our facilities will be allowed to reopen for community use by considering what measures we need to put in place to keep people safe. These measures will not only affect the safety of customer groups but also help ensure the safety of our staff as we prepare for reopening and to resume face to face meetings. The measures required will, in part, be guided by Government Lockdown Guidelines in place at the date of reopening as well as the measures we put in place and these will have to be reviewed periodically to evaluate their effectiveness.

BCC should therefore take all reasonable measures (e.g. cleaning & disinfection, social distancing, personal hygiene and any catering arrangements) to reduce transmission of the infection during a booking and between successive bookings.

#### **Facility usage.**

2. To avoid inadvertent spread of the virus our facilities should be thoroughly cleaned after each use.
3. *The frequency of usage at UCC & BVH* should be restricted to one group per day to give our cleaners opportunity to clean the premises after each hire and thus avoid possible transfer of the virus from one group to another.
4. This will mean timings for bookings may have to be rearranged, e.g. if there is an evening event the start time of the first group the following day needs to be delayed (perhaps until 11am) to allow cleaning to take place. On days where there is no evening booking the next group can begin earlier in the day.
5. *Sports ground* - as it will be difficult to achieve and control the social distancing recommendations, and as the Agency cleaning contract has not yet come into effect, the sports ground changing rooms and toilets should remain closed for use until further notice.
6. *Allotments* - the allotments have continued to be worked during the lockdown as it is an outdoor activity and social distancing is easy to maintain. It is deemed to be a low risk activity. Therefore, use of the allotments should continue to be allowed.
7. *Bishton Play Park* - the park should remain open because exercise in the fresh air is recommended and there is less risk of transmission of the virus compared to inside activities so

long as people observe the social distancing recommendations, but many of the surfaces in the playpark will be handled by multiple children (and adults) and may continue to be an issue. The gate can be left open and it should not be handled too much, but we should consider if the framework for the playing equipment should be cleaned periodically. In addition, we need to put up posters at key locations on the site warning against COVID 19, precautions on how to prevent virus spread and emphasising hand washing at the earliest opportunity.

### **Safety measures.**

8. BCC has a legal responsibility to our staff and customers under health and safety regulations, and we must take reasonable measures to ensure our facilities, access to them, and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, so far as it is reasonably practicable.
9. The responsibility for the safety of everyone who use our facilities will fall to everyone involved - BCC, our cleaning staff, our customers and contractors. If we are to continue to offer a service to members of the community, we must operate safely and it is critical that everyone accepts their part of the responsibility for keeping us safe. Matters that must be considered:
  - a) **Safety of our staff** - the safety of our caretakers and cleaners should be in the forefront of our preparations for reopening our facilities as both will have contact with items that will have been handled by customers and thus open to potential transfer of the virus to them. These items include:
    - i. furniture & fittings, door handles, etc. that will be touched by customers which will affect our cleaners;
    - ii. keys, paperwork & money that our caretakers will handle.
  - b) If our cleaners are to remain safe we must allow adequate time for them to do their job properly. This will involve reorganising timings for when UCC & BVH are used to allow sufficient time for cleaning to take place after each event.
  - c) **Customer safety** - we do not have the resources to introduce 'track & trace' but leaders of each user group must make a list of all participants taking part at each event so should a participant be tested positive all those present at that event can be notified.
  - d) Users of our facilities have responsibility for managing risks arising from their own activities when they are using the premises and should take into account any guidance relevant to their specific activity.
  - e) Whether we require all customers to wear mask when using UCC & BVH will be guided by Public Health Wales guidelines at the time but social distancing will still be required and BCC should give some thought to how we wish to proceed and how we will be able to control the measures we put in place.
  - f) We should consider what measures to put in place to prevent crowding at building entrances when groups of users arrive at the same time for their event.

- g) How can we ensure social distancing whilst our facilities are in use? This will be particularly challenging especially when the 'Little Ones' group are using UCC and small children are present.
  - h) **Protecting vulnerable people** - the group leaders of groups like Senior Citizens and the Quiz Night need to decide if they wish to hold meetings, thus bringing vulnerable & elderly people together who may be in one of the risk categories. The risk of serious illness to senior citizens and those with underlying health problems, should they contract the virus, is known to be higher than that of younger, fitter people.
  - i) **Controlling numbers** - restricting use to one group per day would allow for the facility to be thoroughly cleaned after each use to prevent potential spread of the virus from one group to the other. If social distancing is to be put into effect, we should also consider limiting the number of people that each group can allow at their event.
  - j) **Storage rooms** - How to control 'who touches what' in the storage rooms? The front office and the store room off the main hall are storage areas for multiple groups, with the risk of people touching items from other user groups and thus, potentially, aiding the spread of the virus.
  - k) **Cleaning equipment & items** used by each group should be carried out before returning items to the store rooms to prevent other users who may touch them, potentially, contracting the virus.
  - l) **Toys** are to be cleaned after 'Little Ones' play group have used them. It will be almost impossible to prevent children touching multiple items so users are to ensure all toys are cleaned after use before returning to the storeroom. Also the room where they are stored is one of the general storage areas which is accessed by various groups thus increasing the risk of virus spread unless strict hygiene is observed.
  - m) **Parties & other gatherings:** because the risk of spreading the virus is a current issue, and the work involved in cleaning up after every event, we should not permit bookings for large events like birthday parties and other family gatherings. At events such as these it will be impossible for BCC to be sure that sensible social distancing will be adhered to, especially where alcohol is consumed. By allowing large events to take place we may have to accept part responsibility should the virus be spread around our community through an event of this sort.
10. **Ventilation** - keeping our facilities well ventilated when in use will help keep our customers safe. This would involve keeping doors and windows open during use. Although this will mean fresh air is circulated it will also have an effect on how we keep the building warm and therefore, for the period these restrictions are in place, it would have an effect on heating costs during cold weather.
11. **Testing COVID 19 positive:** should it become known that any member of any group using our facilities is tested positive for the virus or show COVID 19 symptoms, the group organiser *MUST IMMEDIATELY* inform the council and the caretaker by phone and email. That group will then

not be permitted to use our facilities for 14 days. The group organiser must give written assurance to the council and the caretaker that, to their knowledge, none of their members have COVID 19 symptoms prior to being allowed to resume their meetings.

12. **Closing facilities:** In the event that we are informed that a user has COVID 19 symptoms or is tested positive we should close the facility for 7 days (and put up notices to that effect) in order for a deep clean to take place.

### **Declutter**

13. We should also take the opportunity to declutter our storage areas. The virus can be spread by people touching surfaces that have previously been infected by others and we can reduce this risk by removing unwanted items and making individual group items in the storage areas more accessible without them having to move other groups property. Having a sort out of unwanted items and carrying out a tidy-up will mean some of our people working in close proximity to each other and would therefore rely on volunteers not on an 'at risk group' to carry out the task prior to opening our facilities.

### **Signage / markings.**

14. Posters should be prepared as guidance to users of the safety measures we are putting place. These should not only be put up in each facility and published on BCC website, but also copies should be given to caretakers to issue to customers when the keys are being given out at the beginning of each hire. Types of poster required and where to locate them should include:
  - a) *General guidance posters* to be located inside the main entrance alongside a 'sanitising station' with hand cleansing gel.
  - b) *Outside each toilet* detailing only one occupant at one time and to clean toilet seat before & after use.
  - c) *Outside the kitchen* entrance warning people the kitchen is closed to customer use until further notice. Cleaning items of crockery & cutlery used in hot, soapy water and dried before being placed back in the cupboards after each hire will be to labour intensive for our cleaners. Therefore, we should close the kitchen facilities completely until the risks of the virus have run its course and we return to normal operations.
  - d) *Outside each store room* warning people against touching items other than those the group in question will use.
15. It will be important to advise parents about controlling children to prevent them entering all areas outside the main hall unless under parental supervision.
16. Consider floor markings as guidance to users regarding social distancing. Positioning tables and chairs at set distances may assist in keeping people apart from each other and help us decide how many people may use the facility at one time.

### **One way system.**

17. A one way system when our facilities are in use seems, at first glance, to be of little practical use (entrance through the main doors, exit through the fire door) as in each location (UCC & BVH) there is a small corridor leading to the toilets and kitchen areas where it will be almost impossible to control people passing close to each other.
18. As an alternative we could provide posters reminding customers of the current social distancing advice and giving guidance on how to stay as safe as possible. This would rely on users own common sense to put them into effect.
19. **PPE & additional hygiene materials:**
  - a) Purchase wall mounted hand sanitiser dispensers mounted in the entrance to each building and inside the doors to the main halls.
  - b) Purchase addition cleaning materials to ensure our facilities can be suitably cleaned to prevent virus spread, i.e. bacterial cleaning materials, hand sanitiser for customer use, bacterial sprays/wipes for toilet seats, etc.
  - c) Provide additional PPE for our cleaners - single use gloves, aprons, masks, visors, etc? When cleaning tables and chairs our staff may lean against them and risk transferring the virus to their clothing and therefore risk taking it home with them.

#### **COVID working group (CWG)**

20. Form a COVID Working Group of a minimum of 3 people to put our plans/measures into effect prior to reopening of our facilities. It will be necessary for CWG members carrying out this work to visit each site (but should not include those who are shielding or in isolation & may be at a higher risk of inadvertently contracting the coronavirus). Tasks should include:
  - a) Identify PPE for use by our staff and consider how these items are to be disposed of after use.
  - b) *There is a difference between cleaning and disinfecting so we should identify training or provide extra guidance to our cleaners on the specific issues they should be aware of on how to combat the virus.*
  - c) Draw up a list of additional cleaning materials required by our cleaners.
  - d) Identify which type of wall mounted hand sanitiser dispensers are available and the appropriate sanitising gel to use with them.
  - e) Produce advisory posters to be placed at key locations within our facilities.
  - f) Assess and recommend measures to be put into place to avoid crowding at the building entrance.
  - g) Assess how best to control usage of customer storage areas to avoid one user group handling other user's equipment.

## **Conclusion**

21. In essence, our aims must be to:

- a) Strike a balance between reducing the risk of infection to an acceptable level and the use of our facilities.
- b) Take all reasonable measures to reduce transmission of infection during a booking and between successive bookings in conjunction with physical measures to reduce risk, by cleaning and then disinfecting our facilities with a long enough gap between bookings to allow cleaning to take place.
- c) Regular income will inevitably be reduced and costs will increase due to the way we will operate for the foreseeable future.
- d) Only those that acknowledge and agree to the measures we are putting in place and are willing to accept that the risk of a further spread of the virus is very real, should be allowed use our facilities at this time.
- e) Identify any training/guidance we can offer to our staff that will help them to prepare our facilities for use whilst keeping themselves safe.