

Wardens (et al) Talking notes (ongoing)

An ongoing record of the notes taken at online Wardens (et al) Talking meetings during the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak in 2020.



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17 December 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 17 December 2020**. There were 18 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 14 January 2021 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 14 January 2021 2PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WTONline

Links or attachments

- England: [guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- [Royal Horticultural Society advice on cleaning slippery surfaces](#)
- [England: Face coverings](#)
- [Scotland: Face coverings](#)
- [Wales: Face coverings](#)

Topics

What qualifies as 'formal curriculum' for adult education?

Discussion around what courses or qualifications are acceptable exemptions for adult education allowing a group to meet and hire rooms. The most recent version of the [guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#) refers to learning that is 'for work' and leaves the interpretation rather vague. The specific question raised is whether an art group might fit within this exemption. There was no clear answer that we were able to come up with suggesting that trustees will need to consider carefully any requests for room-hire for education groups carefully and make local decisions as to whether they are permissible.

Slippery paths

What is the best method to clean a slippery pathway which is in a shaded spot and gets a mossy, algae or moldy surface that becomes slippery?

- This is a health and safety issue particularly if the surface is part of an entrance or exit which is extensively used.
- Power washing is effective and can remove the slippery surface. Some companies provide a cleaning service or cleaning can be done using a pressure washer.
- There are some cleaning products which can be used after cleaning to keep the surface less slippery, Algon which claims to be eco-friendly was suggested.

Face coverings

What are the rules on face coverings in each region? See the links above for each part of the UK.

- The rules on face coverings are similar in each region.
- In most situations hirers and building users will be required to wear face-coverings within the building and in their spaces
- Some groups are claiming exemption which you might ask them to show you the validity of.
- If you are not certain you may need to ask for support from premises committee or AM trustees.
- If there is still uncertainty you should approach your local council who should offer you guidance.
- Terms and conditions of hire should not be specific but say that hirers should follow the legal guidance on wearing face-coverings at the time of hire.

Looking back on 2020

What has been good that we would like to keep on with after the pandemic is over and our lives can go on unrestricted?

- Whether we like it or not video conferencing has given us a lot and we should celebrate the things that it has done for us!
 - connection
 - friendship
 - making meetings across distance easier and shorter
 - fewer miles driven
 - a Zoom Christmas meeting for Friends to join from other countries, or those from the same town who can't get to meeting in person
- A change in attitude towards IT and technology such as wifi, online banking and others.
- Sharing ideas like different times for Meeting for Worship enabling our Quaker communities to flourish rather than be stagnant.
- Having the wardens group meetings so regularly
- Trustee specific: able to have more, shorter meetings, cutting down travel, being able to be more part of what is happening in our local Quaker meetings, sending out draft minutes and other documents, helping people to offer Quaker service who otherwise would not be able to!
- One meeting has produced a little guide to technology (to be shared if possible once GDPR issues are cleared).

And a great big thank you to all of you for all that you have done in 2020. It has been the most turbulent year that I have ever remembered and one that we have had to learn constantly and change and adapt to so many things.

You wardens, committee members, trustees, volunteers and everyone else have made it possible for meetings to continue, often online and sometimes in person. You have sweated and strained and your Quaker communities have been rewarded by being able to meet and worship and do so many of the things that have been restricted. Thank you all! You deserve a break so please make sure that you get one over Christmas and New Year 2020 to 2021!

It has been a pleasure working to support you all this year!

1 December 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 1 December 2020**. There were 21 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 17 December 2020 at 1.30pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 17 December 2020 1:30 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: WToonline

Links or attachments

- England: [Posters with information about the 3 tiers](#)
- England: [Guidance on worship updated on 2 December](#). Also see the relevant guidance for [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).
- England: [Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities updated on 30 November](#)
- [Facebook Group for Quaker workers \(wardens, resident Friends, meeting house managers, caretakers, volunteer wardens\)](#)

Topics

Worship

There are changes for England moving back into tiers from 2 December. The main message is that where worship is concerned there are not any changes to what there was before England went into lockdown. The guidance has changed a little so please make sure to re-read it. It is linked above with a helpful quick guide and posters for the new tiers.

A specific question was asked about whether one's usual place of worship is in a different tier to the place that I live?

We think that it is okay to travel to worship but you must follow the rules for the highest tier whether that is where you live or at the place of worship.

Room hire

The guidance for England on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities has been updated and is linked above. Please re-read this. As with the worship guidance the rules are pretty much as they were before we went into lockdown.

We talked about whether a meditation group might be considered a worship group?

Having talked about this we wondered how this group is being held. Is there an elder or some other spiritual leader? Is the group constituted as a faith? Faith groups that don't have their own premises are allowed to meet for worship as they usually would. Carry out due diligence to be sure that they are what they say they are.

We thought about the possibility of people who are in the same tier forming networks of support. If you would like to do this contact me, oliverw@quaker.org.uk, letting me know which tier you are in and I will connect everyone in the same tier.

Once again there was a question about how a decision might be made to give the go-ahead to a potential hirer who thinks they are able to gather under the current restrictions in your region. You can ask for the hirer to show you how they feel that they are exempt. This can then be shared within your management group (premises committee, AM trustees) to help the decision making process.

Broadband

For a meeting that does not currently have broadband what are the best options?

- A mifi system may be enough and could be more efficient. A router connects to 4G (or 5G if available) rather than a phoneline. Worth checking the signal from different mobile networks in your areas to see which provider offers the best signal. If signal is low this option may not work.
- Check what the usage will be at peak times. If it is going to be for more than one hirer at a time best to get superfast fibre (often around £30 per month) to ensure that there is enough speed.
- My need to get signal boosters if the building is large. This helps to keep a consistent signal in every room.
- Pay attention to the security settings particularly if you are going to have wifi available for public use.
- If users are going to be accessing video's and content that needs a lot of speed it is worth checking if ethernet cables can be installed in each room to be more stable than wifi.
- You can get a splitter router that allows some private and some public access so that staff can have separate access.

Future of meeting house, income generation etc.

This is going to be a standing item each week for a discussion to take place and build upon ideas that we all have and share. This week we spoke about:

- Remembering that lettings are one part of a jigsaw. Income comes from other sources too such as: donations, investment (equity and from other property). Lettings income may be down but area meetings need to look at the whole picture to make decisions about their finances.
- Actively advertising for new room hirers. You may be able to get involved with a social or business enterprise network locally. This could bring in new hirers or let people know about the space who didn't before.

QL will circulate any details of possible hirers who get in touch via Friends House.

19 November 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 19 November 2020**. There were 27 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 1 December 2020 at 10.30am**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 1 December 2020 10:30 AM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- [Quaker webpage on coronavirus](#)
- UK wide unless stated: [Financial support for businesses during covid 19](#)
- England: [Safe use of multi-purpose community facilities \(updated 17 Nov\)](#)
- UK wide: [Health & Safety Executive advice on using fogging, mist and UV cleaning](#)
- England: [Places of worship opening for individual prayer \(within the worship guidance\)](#). See guidance for [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)
- Press release, UK wide unless stated: [Ventilation advice for homes \(and suitable for businesses\)](#) including a link to [an animation showing airflow around a room](#)
- UK wide: [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Extension](#)
- Quakers and Business: <https://qandb.org/>

Topics

Is it worth investing in a fogging machine?

Responses to whether it is worthwhile a Quaker meeting investing in a fogging machine for self-use. See [H&S Executive guidance on safe and appropriate use](#).

- Not sure whether it would be worth it unless there is a large volume of people using the building.
- A spray cleaner or washing down areas is as effective if building use is light. 'Spot' spraying might be adequate for upholstered chairs or carpets.
- Chairs can be rotated and quarantined.
- They can trigger 'sniffing' type fire extinguishers.

Opening for private or individual prayer and how to manage?

Guidance for England is linked above and it is important to read the section on individual prayer to be sure that meetings are working within the law.

- Could offer 2-3 set periods per week for a fixed time.
- Avoid offering at times when worship would usually take place.
- Use a booking system if it is likely to be popular.
- May be taken up by people who don't have access to a quiet space in their home.

- Could be a space for people to worship quietly in a religious setting in parallel to a funeral or similar event that they are unable to attend in person.
- This should be an offer of a space only, no other activity.
- If Meeting House is not managed in person and agreed way of managing anyone attending must be put in place.
- Could be a space for Quakers and non-Quakers to worship individually.
- Recognition that some Friends may wish to challenge the legality of the restrictions. This should be done in an appropriate way putting no-one else at risk.

Pressure to change terms and conditions of hire

There have been some situations where hirers have asked whether terms and conditions of hire could be changes to enable their group to use a space. Here are some thoughts.

- It may be good to consider all requests and ask for help from premises committee/ AM trustees if a suggestion seems helpful and appropriate.
- If the request is going to break the law, it should not be considered.
- Some requests might be to help groups operate as they do in other settings.
- Might this help the meeting or AM develop their own lettings policy?

Ventilation and thinking about face-coverings

Information in the links about with the guidelines on ventilation and an animated film showing how particles can move around a space.

Part-time furlough

A question arose about how flexible part-furlough is to avoid emergency situations when someone might be required to work and go above their hours. Organisations are asked to make their claim at the end of each month and can claim based upon the hours worked instead of fixing it at the beginning of the month. Some time may be needed before the end of the month to work out payroll.

We should be making use of this support while it is available as we don't know how long it is going to take for our income from hiring buildings to return to 2019 level.

Reality about level of loss of income and future of our meeting houses

We are going to have a standing item on the agenda to think about income level and future of meeting houses. Some ideas for new hirers are:

- The Probation Service is looking for venues. Some research is being done into the South West of England.
- Some film-makers are looking for venues of all shapes and sizes. Look at <https://ukfilmlocation.com/>.

Proving spaces for certified training

While there are restrictions on what can take place you may wish to think about:

- Asking the hirer to demonstrate their exemption if it is not clear.
- Providing information from their National Body (if there is one).
- Discussing with premises committee/AM trustees before agreeing to hire.

3 November 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Tuesday, 3 November 2020**. There were 32 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 19 November 2020 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 19 November 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- [Quaker webpage on coronavirus](#)
- [England: New national restrictions from 5 November](#). See also guidance for [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#)
- [UK: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Extension](#)
- www.quaker.org.uk/employers

Topics

Worship, buildings and lettings

Today the focus was on England following the announcement on 31 October about England going back into a full lockdown. There were no representatives from other nations of the UK.

Please take some time to read carefully the new [guidance on national restrictions in England from 5 November 2020](#).

We talked a lot about lettings and the exemptions to groups that might still be able to use premises.

- There is an exemption for support groups such as AA to continue meeting.
- There is also an exemption for therapy which includes counselling and medical care such as physiotherapy.

A full list of exemptions as not yet been published in updated guidance. We will circulate a link to it as soon as it is available.

A good way to help decide whether a group is exempt is to ask them to prove their exemption. This could be through their national body if it has worked closely with the Government. In other cases it may need to be more carefully considered. If in doubt the advice is to approach your local Council who will be able to offer guidance.

Weddings, funerals and other commemorations

Check the guidance on the [Quaker coronavirus webpage](#) to check whether there are restrictions to the holding of weddings, funerals and other linked commemorations, such as memorial meetings, in your part of the UK.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) (furlough)

The CJRS will now be open until 31 March 2021. The [CJRS extension guidance is now available online](#) and it is advised that you read it carefully before making a claim for any employee.

The scheme will run as it did before with a few changes which we have highlighted below.

What has changed?

- The CJRS has now been **extended until 31 March 2021**. It will be reviewed again in January 2021.
- Until January 2021 the scheme returns to the levels in August 2020 offering employers 80% of each employee's salary up to a cap of £2500 per month. The cap is proportional to the hours the employee does not work. Meaning that if an employee is part-furloughed the cap will be in place pro-rata based upon their full salary.
- Employers do not need to have used the CJRS previously to make a claim from November 2020 onwards.
- Employers can claim for employees who were on the payroll and had a PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) submission to HMRC by 30 October 2020.
- Employees do not need to have been previously furloughed under the CJRS.
- Employees who have been made redundant or who were on a fixed term contract that has ended can be re-employed and put onto furlough (details in the guidance).
- There is no minimum furlough period and furlough can be flexible (part/full time). (Further details are in the guidance)
- Employers will be able to top-up wages to 100% at their own expense.
- See [details of how to claim under the CJRS extension](#).

The Coronavirus Job Support Scheme has been postponed due to the CJRS being extended.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Bonus will not be paid in February 2021. The Government is going to review the need for this at an appropriate time.

The [employment guidance on the Quaker website](#) is now up-to-date with these changes.

22 October 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 22 October 2020**. There were 18 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 3 November 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- England: [Three covid alert levels introduced in England](#)
- Scotland: [Five Covid protection levels introduced in Scotland](#)
- Wales: [Firebreak lockdown across Wales frequently asked questions](#)
- England: [Briefing on changes to the guidance in England on 20 October](#)
- www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus
- Public health England: [Cleaning and decontaminating non-healthcare settings](#)
- UK: [Job support scheme update on 22 October 2020](#)

Events

Yearly Meeting

Yearly Meeting 2020 will be taking place on Sunday, 15 November at 2pm. See www.quaker.org.uk/ym for information. Registration is opens online at 12pm on Thursday, 29 October, www.quaker.org.uk/ym/register-book, and will close at midnight on 10 November. There is a limit of 1000 registrations.

Topics

Changes to the guidance

There are changes to the guidance based upon the [three covid alert levels that have been introduced in England](#). The [five Covid protection levels that have been introduced in Scotland](#) and the [Firebreak lockdown across Wales](#).

We have updated the briefing document on the coronavirus webpage, www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus. There are links to all of the guidance that we regularly discuss so please check through each carefully for updates.

There is also a helpful piece of guidance from Public Health England on cleaning. It helps to think about what cleaning might be required and how to decontaminate if there is a known case within a non-healthcare setting.

Job support scheme

The [guidance for the Job Support Scheme \(Open and Closed schemes\)](#) is now available online. Having been caught a bit off guard yesterday as the changes were announced only just before we met we suggest that you read this new guidance carefully.

We will have a good look thorough the new guidance next time me meet. **If you have any queries please post them on the wardenship or property e-group** and we will make sure to address those.

Using furniture to help with acoustics

This week we talked about ways to help the acoustics in tall open rooms which may be more echoey with less furniture. Exhibition display panes are a good way to enclose a space and improve the acoustics. Curtains may also be a good way to help with sound deadening. Theatre suppliers may be able to provide heavy curtains that are particularly effective.

Outreach

There was no time to talk outreach today but please post anything in the wardenship or property e-group. We would love to hear ideas and inspiration and things that have been done during 2020. And questions or queries about doing outreach during Covid restrictions.

Ideas on future proofing new kitchens and bathrooms (COVID and beyond)

Kitchens:

- Put the wash hand basin right at the entrance, so hands are clean on entry

Toilets/bathrooms

- Have single toilets (and accessible) rather than rooms with multiple cubicles/urinals, which are also gendered
- Having a shower enables overnight Quaker groups to stay in the meeting house (eg teenage Quakers or young friends)
- Shower also useful for cyclists
- Shower also useful for some hirers, eg drug and alcohol service users, or overnight groups, and as a service for those living without access to a bathroom
- Shower rather than bath
- Showers can be coin operated

Both:

- Consider ventilation, mechanical or large enough windows
- Taps which are automatic, or have arms not knobs – for infection control and ease of use

8 October 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 8 October 2020**. There were 16 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 22 October 2020 at 2.00am**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 22 October 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- [Job Support Scheme Factsheet](#)
- [Should I return to Church? Personal Quiz from the URC](#)
- [England: Local alert levels and what you need to know](#). See also guidance for [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#).
- [England: Guidance for the safe use of multi purpose community facilities \(13 October\)](#)
- [England: Staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#). See also [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)
- [England: Face coverings, when to wear](#). See also [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)
- [England: Guidance on safe use of places of worship \(8 October\)](#). See also [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)

Topics

Changes to Government guidance

There were no major changes to the Government guidance last week when we met. There have been some clarifications to the guidance on multi-use community facilities. They appear to have made the documents easier to read and understand so it is worth having a good read through each of the pieces of Government Guidance that I have listed above. This is all changes to the English advice. I have tried to link advice for other parts of the UK as well where there is equivalent.

There is a [new 3 tier system of local restrictions](#) that will be introduced in England on Wednesday, 14 October. We will look at this in more detail when we next meet.

NHS tracing app QR code (England)

We talked about whether it is appropriate to have different QR sign-in codes for different activities within a building. This could be possible and some groups may arrange this. It may be helpful for a Nursery or equivalent user which has its own access point and is not in contact with other parts of the building.

Borrowing library books

Can Friends borrow books from meeting house libraries? There are things that you should consider to ensure that any shared resources are safe:

- **Borrowing:** is there a process for people to access the library? How will it be kept clean? Is there handwashing or hand gel available on arrival? Is more than one person allowed access or is there an online catalogue that Friends can choose books from?
- **Returning:** is there a quarantine place for returned books to be left in for 72 hours before returning to the shelf? Who will put books back on the shelf and what will their procedure be?

Talk with warden, librarian, local building managers (if applicable) and AM trustees to assess the risk and agree procedures.

Job Support Scheme

There is still no complete detail except a [four page factsheet on the Job Support Scheme](#). The Government has said more about how businesses that are forced to close due to local lockdowns will be supported. The basics are as follows:

- **To pay a proportion of wages of employees with limited work:** organisations will be able to claim for a proportion of an employee's wage. They will have to work at least 1/3 of their hours and will receive at least 77% of their full-time wage. This is made up between the employer and the Government. **See the 4 page factsheet for examples.**
- **To pay a proportion of wages when businesses are forced to close due to local lockdown:** this will cover up to 2/3 or 67% of the wages of employees. No details have yet been released about the scheme.

We are keeping an eye on this and will update as soon possible when there is information from the Government.

Helping Friends to know how the meeting house is used

How can we share the activities that are taking place within the meeting house? With the permission of hirers could a film be made of some of what the building is used for and shared with Friends?

Welcoming new hirers

How can we best welcome new hirer groups to our meeting houses? What is the role of the warden (or other worker) in welcoming and helping groups navigate the space and any rules that are in place? Could a welcoming lanyard help to make new hirers feel comfortable that you are a welcoming presence rather than someone just hanging about?

Pattern of Wardens (et al) Talking meetings until January 2021

Our meetings will now be fortnightly instead of weekly. But if there is a change that requires immediate discussion then there will be the option to hold a meeting at short notice. See below for the dates and times of discussions until the end of 2020.

- Thursday, 22 October, 2pm
- Tuesday, 3 November, 2pm
- Thursday, 19 November, 2pm
- Tuesday, 1 December, 10.30am
- Thursday, 17 December, 2pm

30 September 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 30 September 2020**. There were 21 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 8 October 2020 at 10.30am**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 8 October 2020 10:30 AM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Online events and promotions

- When should Wardens (et al) Talking meetings take place in the week?
<https://doodle.com/poll/p7m9ifa7brn3req2>
- Patterns and Examples role holder gatherings (29 Sept, 1, 6 and 8 October 2020): www.woodbrooke.org.uk/patterns-and-examples-2020
- Quakers and Business Conference (6 November):
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/annual-quaker-business-conference-2020-making-values-visible-tickets-117675680127
- World Quaker Day (Sunday, 4 October 2020) The theme will be: 'What does it mean to be a Quaker today? Living a Faithful Life in a Changing World':
www.worldquakerday.org
- Quaker Week 2020 (2–11 October). The theme is 'Living as a Quaker today':
www.quaker.org.uk/outreach

Links or attachments

- [NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance](#)
- [Job Support Scheme Factsheet](#)

Topics

Contingency planning for infection

Some things to consider if someone starts to show symptoms while they are on Quaker premises:

What action need to be taken immediately?

- Keep the person safe and away from others until they can leave the building
- Is any cleaning needed?
- Does the building, or parts of, need to close?
- Is the record of who is in the building up to date?
- Check what guidance the hirer is working to. Some hirers may have contingency plans enabling them to keep working. The response may not be the same for all hirers.

- Check with NHS Test and Trace letting them know what has happened and whether they have a view.
- Double-check that posters and relevant signage are in place to try to ensure that people do not enter the building if they have Covid-19 symptoms.

What needs to be done on confirmation that the person has tested positive?

- Check what cleaning has already taken place?
- Has it been 72 hours since the time of the incident, if not then the building, or parts of it, may need to close for deep cleaning?
- Inform other building users including Quakers and if needed close the building.
- Follow the requirements of [NHS Test and Trace workplace guidance](#).

What to do if people won't follow the rules

All building users should be following the guidance being set by the AM (trustees) and building managers.

General

- Someone (from each user group) needs to take responsibility for ensuring that the building is being used according to Covid-Secure guidelines agreed by AM trustees and managers.
- In the case of the meeting being the user, the responsible person should not be the warden, manager or volunteer worker.
- A conversation should take place with each user to ensure that they understand how the building should be used and why it is being done this way.
- Measures are in place to protect the whole user community. Individuals can't waive their responsibility to care for others.
- Use of rooms may be withdrawn from any user group who does not follow the guidance.

There have been examples where individuals in the worshipping community have chosen not to follow the rules. It may be possible for flexibility to be given for these cases to be dealt with individually **by members of the user group**. From a building management perspective all hirer groups should be treated equally. AM trustees will need to be willing to support those managing buildings if any users are not following the agreed guidelines for the building. Any flexibility should be offered equally to all building users.

Hire rates

Is there any support that can be offered to user groups that are providing a social service to members of the community (Quaker+)? This was raised in connection with 12 Steps Groups and supporting their work.

- All must be part of a conversation with the hirer with no assumptions being made about their situation.
- Many groups may wish to be self-sustaining and may not wish to have their rates reduced.
- Can this be afforded? Are the losses from the reduction in hirers too great to not allow any deficit in income?
- Where does any decision to offer a reduced rate sit? With the manager, local meeting, AM trustees? What flexibility can be offered by each level?

Wardens (et al) Talking online sessions

Friends you may remember that I recently said that during the autumn we would be thinking about the pattern of Wardens (et al) Talking sessions. I know that there is still a need for these sessions and I am glad that we have been able to provide them to offer help and support over the past 6 months or so.

Please can you fill in the [survey of times of the week for wardens talking sessions](#). This will help to find times that will enable the most people to participate. I know that weekly patterns are changing as people return to work or other activities.

I am proposing that session move to once a fortnight after next week. This would mean that there will be sessions in the weeks commencing:

- 5 October
- 19 October
- 2 November
- 16 November
- 30 November
- 14 December

I will confirm day and time once I have enough information from the survey. And if there are changes that take place between meetings that need discussion, we will offer additional sessions as required. I will also confirm when sessions will re-start in 2021. Sessions will be in the same pattern to start with and reviewed during the first 3 months of the year.

24 September 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 24 September 2020**. There were 25 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 30 September 2020 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 30 September 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Online events and promotions

- Patterns and Examples role holder gatherings (29 Sept, 1, 6 and 8 October 2020): www.woodbrooke.org.uk/patterns-and-examples-2020
- Quakers and Business Conference (6 November): www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/annual-quaker-business-conference-2020-making-values-visible-tickets-117675680127
- Rookhow Quaker Centre appeal: <https://rookhow.org.uk> or Facebook, www.facebook.com/Rookhow1725/
- World Quaker Day (October 4, 2020) The theme will be: 'What does it mean to be a Quaker today? Living a Faithful Life in a Changing World': www.worldquakerday.org
- Quaker Week 2020 (2–11 October). The theme is 'Living as a Quaker today': www.quaker.org.uk/outreach
- Worship survey: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/worshipSept20

Links or attachments

- England and Wales: [NHS Covid-19 for Android \(Android OS 6.0 or later\)](#)
- England and Wales: [Covid-19 for Apple IOS \(IOS 13.5 or later\)](#)
- England and Wales: [NHS Covid 19 app, why should I display the poster?](#)
- England and Wales: [NHS Covid-19 app, register venue and download the venue QR poster](#)
- Scotland: [Protect Scotland Android \(Android 6 or later\)](#)
- Scotland: [Protect Scotland Apple IOS \(IOS 13 or later\)](#)
- Scotland: [Protect Scotland app information](#)
- UK: [Subscribe to receive emails giving updates when there re changes relating to coronavirus](#)

Topics

NHS test and trace app

Details in the links above for apps for each part of Britain and more information about using the apps.

Versions for Apple IOS are on 13.0 (June 2019) for Protect Scotland and 13.5 (May 2020) for NHS Covid-19. Looking at the data this version of the software is available to upgrade on devices 6S and 6S *plus* and later. These devices were released new in 2015.

Android version 6.0 was also released in 2015.

If you have an older device you may need to check for upgrades to the device firmware which should enable you to download the app.

Managing hiring multiple rooms

Things that may help to consider are:

- Staggering times for each room to avoid people crossing in shared spaces such as entrances.
- Setting break times to try to manage facilities.
- Deciding which facilities can be used.
- How to manage cleaning within each space being used.

16 September 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 16 September 2020**. There were 26 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 24 September 2020 at 10.30am**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 24 September 2020 10:30 AM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- England and Wales: [NHS Test and Trace App: venue registration and QR Code poster generator](#) and [a guide to registering your venue](#)
- England: [Rule of six legislation, 14 September update](#) also see [coronavirus legislations for all parts of the UK](#)
- England: **Worth a re-read** [guidance for safe use of place of worship updated on 17 September 2020](#). See guidance for [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

Topics

Safeguarding and looking after staff

This topic has been discussed due to some general issues and some relating specifically to Covid-19.

General issues include workers being alone in buildings often at unsociable hours when there are not other people around. As employers or those overseeing workers there is a responsibility to ensure that workers are being looked after adequately. A lone worker policy should be developed in these situations. It may be necessary to build specific support, such as checking-in, for the worker to enable them to feel safe at work.

Covid-19 specific is about providing a safe environment and safe practices for workers to carry out tasks such as extra cleaning. Many workers are being asked to replace usual cleaners or to do extra cleaning as needed to enable buildings to be Covid-Secure.

As an employer or Body overseeing a worker you will need to have conversations with workers to ensure that they are not put at risk.

- They will need to be clear that what is expected of them is reasonable, safe and can be done in the time that is expected.
- Specific criteria such as age and health need to be considered and reasonable adjustments should be put in place to enable workers to carry out their tasks.
- New equipment and practices, such as pedal bins or closing toilet lids before flushing, may need to be adopted to help make the environment safe.

- Think about the signage that you have in the building. Could someone who does not have English as their first language, or who has learning difficulties understand it?

NHS Test and Trace App (England and Wales)

The NHS Test and Trace App will be rolled out across the England and Wales on 24 September. This is a free App available on [Android](#) and [IOS](#) smartphones and tablets.

The App is a free service as part of NHS and Trace to help individuals keep a record of their activities and places that they have visited. It notifies the user when they have been in contact with someone else who has tested positive for Covid-19. The developers were keen to say that all data is anonymised and stored on the users device and can be deleted at any time.

Venues will be asked to register and display a poster which users can scan using the app on their device. Find out [more about registering your venue](#) and [how to produce a poster that can be displayed at your venue's entrances](#).

Rule of 6

The new rules about socialising with people from outside your household came in across the UK on 14 September. The new rules for reach parts of the UK are still slightly different.

The [guidance on worshipping safely](#) has been updated today and we are advising you to read it carefully. There are some changes but the key thing is that worship can still take place and activities of worship and ceremonies that we had been able to re-start can continue. We do need to observe the 6 people rule when arriving at and for fellowship after worship. You can [find the legislation relating to worshipful activities online](#) if you would like to read exactly what the law says. You can also find [legislation on coronavirus relating to all parts of the UK](#) if you would like to check the law where you live.

Quick answers

- **12 steps groups:** can take place. There is a specific exemption to the **Rule of 6** from 14 September.
- **Masks, who is responsible for ensuring they are worn:** Building managers or those who have been designated that responsibility in their absence. For worship this might be the Duty Elder or a Duty Manager. A role description may need to be drawn up specifically for those overseeing activities within the Meeting House.

Topics to carry over

- How many rooms and organising them, being unable to hire multiple rooms at once:
- Rates, whether to reduce or not
- Should Friends have access to the Meeting House Library?
- Bathroom and kitchens (futureproofing when maintaining)
- Heating
- Booking ahead, getting bookings from people thinking way ahead into 2021
- MH's with non-resident wardens and ensuring groups are doing what is required

9 September 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 9 September 2020**. There were 25 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 16 September 2020 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 16 September 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- **England:** [new guidance on social distancing from 9 September](#). See publications for [Wales](#) or [Scotland](#) and follow [local restrictions guidance](#) if it is in place in your part of the UK.

Topics

Long-term future, jobs roles employment etc

This was a good opening to a conversation that will need to evolve over time. Many meetings who employ staff have been relying on the furlough scheme whether in part or full.

We started by talking about job security and that there is uncertainty for many of us as our AM's income has dropped so significantly during 2020 and may not pick up for some time. Some conversations are already beginning to take place in small pockets about measures such as:

- reducing hours (and pay)
- doing work such as cleaning 'in house' that would previously been contracted out
- temporary measures such as unpaid leave, sabbatical or reduced hours for a short-term period

In all these instances' employers would need to hold a consultation period with staff involved to ensure that they are treated fairly.

We also talked about what the organisational need is now and what it will be in the future. Meeting may still want or need to provide service whether for Quaker activities or external hirers. AM's need to think carefully about how those activities will be maintained if there are not staff in post to carry them out. Will local Friends be able to cover responsibilities that are held by workers? It is not reasonable or acceptable for employees' hours to be reduced but the responsibility they carry to be maintained. AM Trustee Bodies must provide leadership to meeting and think about the future need and not only the immediate challenges. It may be **appropriate for reserves to be used** for a short time to enable services to start to recover.

New social distancing guidance

Many will have seen that there is [new social distancing guidance](#). There is a brief update in [Quake!](#) today about it with an update. The guidance says that worship will be one of the activities that will be exempt and so meeting that have begun meeting in person or blending online and in-person worship will continue to be able to do so. It is a completely **new piece of guidance so worthwhile to take the time to read it carefully.**

It is going to mean a change to some of the other activities that hirers will be able to do within Meeting Houses so it will be important to work with hirers to help them understand how best they can use your premises.

Future proofing meeting houses

How can we maintain our buildings to help them to continue to be usable as the pandemic progresses? We have talked about making surfaces and floors easy to clean. Thinking about ventilation and helping to move air around the space. Think about ways to avoid having the heating on so much in the colder months.

Some ideas are as follows:

- Having heating on between hirers so that they arrive in a warm space.
- Asking hirers to wear more layers and bring a blanket to keep warm.
- Suggesting that hirers incorporate some movement time into their activities.
- Using outdoor spaces when possible or for some periods to give users fresh air.

Some AM's have appointed groups to think about how they will re-structure and prepare for a different way of working and meeting.

Welcoming back other faith groups

We had one example of a meeting who have welcomed back a Muslim group who use their meeting house for prayer. They had a dialogue with the group and were clear about expectations. In this instance the washroom facilities are not being used by the group for their preparation and worshippers are asked to do this at home before they arrive. Keep in touch with hirers and talk about their needs and your expectations for the use of your buildings.

3 September 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 3 September 2020**. There were 24 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 10 September 2020 at 10.30am**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 9 September 2020 10:30 AM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- [Should I return to Church? Personal Quiz from the URC](#)
- [Choirs and singing: guidance from the Association of British Choral Directors](#)

Topics

Vulnerable Friends returning to worship

We had a really good conversation about people returning to worship and how that might take place. The tool linked above from the URC was talked about and it feels a really helpful one to share.

The sense is generally that this is about personal choice where an individual is only putting themselves at risk. However if an individual's behaviour puts other at risk we may have to handle a situation carefully.

This is part of the eldership and pastoral care function within meetings although it has been highlighted that in some cases it may be falling to wardens and other workers. There are some difficult conversations that need to take place and there are instances that Friends are finding it hard to understand why they might need to comply with some or all of the requirements to return to worship in person. Our Blended worship sessions have started to cover some spiritual and community aspects and there will be more session being advertised in the next few weeks.

Reducing hire charges

There has been a lot of conversation about hire charges on the wardenship e-group already. Key points are as follows:

- Discounts to individual groups are considered as donations so reduced rates should be across the board rather than for specific groups.
- The Charities Commission requires that we steward our resources carefully and reducing too much may mean we are not sustaining the charity. We should at least cover our costs.
- If groups ask for a reduction it is often helpful to talk through with them where our funds go to help them understand why we charge what we do.
- We should avoid undercutting other centres that offer comparable rooms for hire.

- If you are offering less, eg. not allowing use of the kitchen, think about what might balance this, eg. additional cleaning costs.
- Rates could be different at peak/off-peak times so if users wish to have a room cheaper, they may be able to change their times of use.

All this must be in conjunction with conversations with hirers. Many centres are holding long-term bookings until 2021 until hirers know more about their return to in-person meetings.

Choirs and singing

We are still in a place where most singing is not going to be allowed. There are a few exceptions but these don't seem to be the situations that we are coming across. We'll keep an eye on this as things change.

Future topics

1. Long-term future, jobs, roles, etc.
2. Maintenance and futureproofing
3. Sustaining our energy and resilience as workers
4. Welcoming back other faith (muslim) groups
5. Safeguarding and looking after staff
6. Cleaning, warden doing it?
7. 9 steps and risk assessment updates

Quick answers

Memorial meetings and weddings

There is information about weddings, funerals and memorial meetings on the BYM website:

- www.quaker.org.uk/weddings/ or www.quaker.org.uk/ro
- www.quaker.org.uk/funerals

We have also made the E&O handbook series volume 2 available as a PDF, www.quaker.org.uk/documents/funerals-and-memorial-meetings-2012-edition-3

Recruitment

Contact Oliver Waterhouse directly, oliverw@quaker.org.uk, [020 7663 1007](tel:02076631007) (call or WhatsApp).

Visit www.quaker.org.uk/employers for employers' resources and template documents.

Youth groups, drama and singing

This may be allowed activity so if you have a group asking about using your premises you should check with them what guidance they are following. They will then need to adhere to your terms of hire and you may choose to ask to see their risk assessment (see topic on 5 August within the attached document).

26 August 2020

Here are the notes of our last Wardens (et al) Talking meeting on **26 August**. There were 19 people present (all based in England, no participants this time from Wales or Scotland). More Meeting Houses are now in the process of re-opening.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 3 September, 2.00pm**. The joining details are below:

Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly

- Time: 3 September, 2.00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

In Oliver Waterhouse's absence, the meeting was facilitated by Matt Moore (Manager, Sunderland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne Meeting Houses), notes written up by Klaus Huber (Resident Warden, Bradford on Avon Meeting House).

Topics discussed included:

"Policing" hirers' adherence to guidelines

It's important for Meetings to decide what to do when hirers are not following the guidelines before inviting hirers back to the Meeting House. The specific guidelines for the building need to be clearly communicated to hirers. Maximum attendance numbers for individual meeting rooms could be displayed on the doors to those rooms. Questions from hirers on how to interpret government guidelines should be passed on to AM Trustees (it is not the Warden's job to offer an interpretation).

It makes sense for hirers' risk assessments to be seen by the Warden and AM Trustees, in order to ask for amendments where necessary - although it is important that we do NOT formally approve or sign off a hirers' risk assessment. One suggestion was to file a copy of hirers' risk assessments with the hire contract. In most cases, we will have to trust the hirer to follow our building rules, as we are not in a position to be watching over them; if we find evidence that they are not following the rules, we may choose to refuse future bookings from them.

Cleaning

It is important that we communicate clearly to anyone using our Meeting Houses what we do in terms of cleaning and what we don't do. We need to avoid ambiguous language (such as "deep clean"). Hand sanitizer and wipes should be provided for Meeting House users. It was suggested to display a note when the building was last professionally cleaned and when it was last used. As for soft furnishings (like cushioned chairs), there were different suggestions made: an easy-to-use spray to clean them after or before use; or rotating the chairs if you have enough and 'quarantine' the used chairs.

It is important that we protect ourselves (if we do the cleaning) or our staff/volunteers/contractors (if we are AM Trustees).

Children's Meetings

Nobody reported any children's Meetings in Meeting Houses post-lockdown. Some continue to hold children's activities on Zoom, others are doing outdoor activities. Any clever ideas of how to bring children's Meetings safely back to Meeting Houses would be very welcome.

Ventilation

Having the building well-ventilated is important to reduce the risk of virus transmission. There are some air exchange systems available (used e.g. at Bristol Central FMH). In most cases, it will, however, be open windows and doors where possible. This may become a problem when temperatures drop and heating will be required again. Providing blankets and warning Meeting House users of the lower temperature in the building may help to some degree.

19 August 2020

Topics arising:

- Children's Meetings: Arrangements for, Issues
- Experiences of Cleaning Regimes:
- Garden Meetings: Rules applying to these
- Face Coverings: Confusion surrounding the requirements
- Equipment for Blended Meetings: Different ways of doing this, Electrical Interference issues.
- Experience of Broadband requirements and Providers.
- Sharing of Documents: Good practice
- Conversations after Meeting for Worship: Do we have these? How do we manage them?
- Ventilation issues: Fresh air not recirculation. Issues when heating is on.
- Demands from hirers for extra provision.
- Elders not wishing to hold blended Meetings.
- Arrangements for Meetings held in rented premises / rooms. Venues that have now closed. Impact on local Meetings.

Notes from Topics Discussed

Face Coverings and general tips for building use:

Government guidance on Face Coverings was updated on 14/08/20. There are issues in that the guidance changes.

There are issues around inclusivity and potential exclusion regarding the requirements to wear face coverings.

It is helpful to explain clearly any measures put in place to people using the building. It could be helpful to walk through the building with users to do this.

We need to clearly communicate to users what we expect of them but there are aspects where they need to decide what they have to do to keep safe.

We can insist that face coverings are worn and then users will then decide if they can return under these and other conditions.

There are difficulties involved with face coverings.

- Some people are exempt from wearing them
- Wearing Face Coverings are not required / expected for some specified activities
- Where face coverings are not worn what could be the impact of this on the next group of people. Would this mean extra cleaning after on top of the extra cleaning we already do?
- Can it be safe or encouraging for others to attend if a number of people are not wearing face coverings?

We need to try to consider all the factors that affect the risk of transmission.

The wearing of Face Coverings is a requirement for Meeting for Worship (indoors)

It was noted that the revised guidance allows for the temporary removal of a face covering when speaking. However, this was felt to be for a setting where the speaker would be at a greater distance than in a Quaker Meeting setting and it would not be appropriate to do this in our meetings.

There has been quite a bit of consideration of the question of removing a face covering when ministering in Quaker worship.

Our general advice is that we should prioritise keeping people safe over people feeling free to remove a face covering.

Or to put it another way, just because the government guidance says we could, this does not mean that we should. (We'll come to lip-reading in a moment though.)

Using a face covering not only has some preventative effects, it will also enable some people to come to worship who would otherwise be put off by the added risk.

The government guidance for England now says that people who are leading services, or prayers or readings, do not have to wear a face covering. And when ministering, Quakers clearly fit into that category. However, the context of this guidance is normally a church or a mosque where the speaker will be a long way from the worshippers - right away up the front - and they are likely to be using a microphone and possibly now a plexiglass screen. This is completely different from Quakers sitting together in a circle 2m apart.

So we do not think that Quakers should be using this exemption to mean we should be taking off face coverings to minister.

It is also worth saying that many meetings are finding that people can be heard well whilst wearing a face covering. The advice is to speak slowly and clearly, not necessarily loudly, and then you will be heard. Perhaps there is scope to wear a different face covering if someone is not being heard.

Where lip-reading is the issue, then that would be an exemption. However that only works where the speaker can be seen well, and not where the listener is behind or to the side of the speaker. If people are going to remove face coverings to minister to help lip-readers, there are some measures you could take to reduce the risk of transmission. These include asking people to minister from a particular part of the meeting room away from others, possibly with a microphone on a stand, and/or behind a plexiglass screen. While this is not our normal practice, these are unusual times. Lip-readers could also benefit from using a mobile phone app which gives live transcription - which work much better than they used to.

If a meeting finds that there are several people not wearing face coverings throughout worship because of personal exemptions, you may need to re-consider the level of risk, and the measures you need to take.

I hope this offers some help in considering your way forward.

The effects of decisions on this and other safety measures must be considered for anyone resident in the building. It was also noted that support for

Wardens, Managers and similar is not as forthcoming as it needs to be in some Area Meetings.

Blended Meetings:

We had some discussion on broadband speeds and providers.

It was noted that the quality of online connection will be affected by speeds at the Meeting House and at Friends homes.

The connections are primarily dependent upon the quality of the lines carrying into buildings and then the Wi Fi distribution within the building itself. Direct connection to the router will be better than Wi Fi.

The number of people using the network at any time will also affect quality.

Conversation After In Person Meeting for Worship

In general, when following the guidelines this is not encouraged.

If Meetings would want this to happen there can be ways and means to do so but they must include layered provisions to minimise the risk of transmission.

It could be done sitting socially distanced and wearing face coverings.

The conversation could be time limited.

Conversation could be taken outside but this would then exclude those online.

Creation of In person “breakout rooms”

Make it happen if you can do it safely.

Meetings Hiring Rooms for their Meeting for Worship

Those Meetings that hire premises or rooms are unable to return until the venue decides to reopen. Some venues have now permanently closed.

Meetings may have to look for alternative or new venues should they wish to start meeting in person again.

Meetings should be in contact with landlords / room providers about the situation and their wishes. Landlords and room providers are required to have carried out a risk assessment for their property and make it available to users. Meetings should make use of this when doing their own risk assessment.

It may be worthwhile investigating the possibilities of rent reduction / refund for time not spent in the building.

13 August 2020 (face coverings in worship update)

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 13 August 2020**. There were 29 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 19 August 2020 at 11.00am**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 19 August 2020 11:00 AM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- [England: Guidance on face coverings \(changes in law from 8 August 2020\)](#). There are different regulations exist for wearing face coverings in different parts of the UK, see [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).
- [UK Government job retention scheme bonus](#)
- [Quaker guidance on redundancy situations \(updated August 2020\)](#)
- [Coronavirus job retention scheme \(furlough\) check if you are covered \(employee\)](#)
- [advice about blended physical and online worship \[PDF\] - updated 22 July](#)
- [a few meetings' stories and equipment examples for blended worship \(Word\) - 4 August](#)
- [25 solutions when you can't fit everyone in your COVID-19 secure worship space \(Word\)](#)

Topics

Face coverings

The Government has given an update which makes it possible for a minister, preacher or someone reading a prayer to have an exemption allowing them to remove their face-covering during worship.

Quaker Life has looked at this and it appears to be aimed at churches where the leader might be separate to the rest of the congregation in a place that their aerosol droplets should not carry to others gathered. They may also be using other means to mitigate against the spread of infection such as microphones or a Plexiglas screen.

Many have raised the point that being able to attend worship in person helps to enable some Friends who may be most at risk from the virus to take part in worship. A mask helps each individual to protect others, it is not for personal protection. We should consider the affect that removing our mask might have on other people before our personal discomfort with wearing one.

Redundancy

Look at the [QL guidance on redundancy situations](#) linked above. We had a helpful conversation about redundancy and the process that employers should follow. The

guidance states how redundancy can be used alongside the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) (furlough) and the CJRS Bonus Scheme.

We talked about the reality that this situation means that many Quaker buildings income streams will be affected for a long time. This may mean that employers may have to look at things like reducing hours, pay (where possible) and other methods as well as redundancy to balance the books. Some meetings may choose to use reserves as part of a solution, but this may not be a long-term answer to declining income.

Routes through the building and using fire-doors

We made the distinction between fire doors and fire escapes. Fire doors tend to be internal and help to stop a fire spreading throughout a building. A fire escape is a way out of a building.

Fire doors can be used as part of a method of creating a one-way system within a building. Many have magnetic closers and so can be shut automatically. They can be held open or can be open when a room is in use but must be closed when the space(s) they protect is empty.

A fire escape can be use for exiting a building. The are usually fitted with an automatic closer. This should be checked to make sure that anyone leaving and not specifically closing them does not create a security risk.

If they are to be used, both types of doors should be included as part of the building risk assessment.

Upgrading AV kit for users

See the link about the [kit needed for blended worship and Friends experience](#). And there is some suggestions about [capacity within your worship space](#) and making it work if there are more people that you can accommodate.

Distancing when meeting with children

Some meetings have been thinking about how to bring children's meeting back together. There are tentative steps in place and using the opportunity of outdoor worship has made it possible in some places.

It is worth looking at what other churches have been doing. as they may be ahead of where we have been.

Well done to all who have managed to hold children's meeting online.

Ventilating when the heating is turned back on

This has been raised as something to think about. It may be that for some meetings keeping the building ventilated becomes difficult once the heating gets turned on. Will it be possible and could we manage to leave the heating off? Could we provide, or ask users to bring, a blanket or other warm item to enable them to use the space? We will need to think about this before long so that our spaces can be prepared for the colder months.

Contact details

Oliver Waterhouse, oliverw@quaker.org.uk, wardenship@quaker.org.uk, 020 7663 1007

5 August 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 5 August 2020**. There were 29 people present during the meeting. The notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 13 August 2020 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 13 August 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- [UK Government job retention scheme bonus](#)
- [Quaker guidance on redundancy situations \(updated August 2020\)](#)
- [England: Guidance on face coverings \(changes in law from 8 August 2020\)](#). There are different regulations exist for wearing face coverings in different parts of the UK, see [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).
- [England: Government guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facility guidance](#)
- [Ideas on capacity for holding worship in person](#)
- [England: Working safely during the coronavirus pandemic – \[Covid secure\]](#) see guidance for [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#).

Topics

Update on the Government guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities

The guidance was last updated on 31 July and in the recent update references to groups only meeting as 2 households indoors have been removed and replaced with guidance on social distancing within the capacity that the building can hold. This should allow many Quaker meetings houses to consider how they can re-open as venues for hire by groups such as 12 steps and other community groups. We encourage you to read this guidance carefully if this guidance is relevant to your meeting house. You can then amend your risk assessment and update plans and delivery methods.

Hirers risk assessment documents

This question arose following a post on the Wardenship E-group about whether as hirers we should be asking to see risk assessments that are carried out by hirers. It has come about due to Covid-19 where venues might not be being run legally if hirers do not meet the expectations set out in our revised hirer agreements.

There seemed to be a general sense that we don't want to interfere in the activities of the hirer. But we want to ensure that if we are making additional expectations the hirer has considered how they will meet them.

There are some questions that might be helpful to consider:

- How much do you need to know about your hirers activities to be confident that they can meet your additional expectations?
- Might it be enough to ask the hirer to sign an updated agreement and trust that they will assess the risk and meet the new expectations?
- Could you provide a pro-forma risk assessment linked to any new expectations giving hirers examples of how they might meet these new expectations?
- Is it enough to have sight of a hirers risk assessment without going into the document in detail so you know they have done the required thinking?
- Do you have enough capacity to read every hirers risk assessment and be sure they have considered any additional expectations you have set?
- If you have read every hirers risk assessment are you then complicit if the hirers activities are found not to be [Covid secure](#)?

Time needed for cleaning and who does it

If we need to allocate additional time for cleaning spaces should this be charged to the hirer? The general sense of this was 'no' and most people are trying to keep to their usual charges. There is also a question about the possibility of having more than one user in each space.

We talked a bit about whether we can ask hirers to do any cleaning. The sense from the group is that we might ask groups to clean touch-points and areas they have specifically used but that this should not be the cleaning that is relied upon if there are different groups using the space.

We also recognised that our meeting houses range widely between those which are community spaces relying on volunteers to run them, and those which are providing professional room hire and conferencing. The requirement for cleaning is still there but the expectations of users will vary. This and the number of users will need to be considered carefully when carrying out an assessment of the cleaning requirement.

Face coverings and Ministry

We spent some time exploring whether it is reasonable to remove face coverings when giving Ministry. The guidance as we understand is to avoid the spray of droplets and aerosols associated with speaking and shouting. Many other activities that fall into the category of speaking to an audience are not yet allowed. There may be ways for Ministry to be audible such as:

- by using a microphone
- having a place that Friends move to when giving Ministry which faces away from other people
- using a Plexiglas screen
- supporting people with visual or hearing impairment to have accompaniment which may not be silent

We will have to be flexible to people's additional needs when worshipping together in person for the time being and accept that this may not be what we are used to.

29 July 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 29 July 2020**. There were 32 people present during the meeting. Be aware that the notes from each session since 3 June are held within the document attached to this email.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 5 August 2020 at 2.00pm**. The joining details for that meeting are below:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: 5 August 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- England: [Government update from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government \(MHCLG\)](#)
- England: [Government guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facility guidance](#)
- England: [Government guidance on safe use of places of worship from 4 July 2020](#)
- England: [Special religious services and gatherings COVID-19 checklist](#)
- **Face coverings:** [England: Guidance on where you must wear a face covering](#) the rules are slightly different in [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)
- **Gyms and indoor sports:** [England: Guidance for people who work in grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities](#), see also guidance for [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#).

Topics

Government update from the MHCLG

See the guidance documents linked which gives some [example scenarios and the response from the Faith adviser](#) and civil servant that Jonathan and Oliver spoke to on 21 July.

I have summarised below our understanding of the number of people that can be within each space when following the [safe use of multi-purpose community facility guidance](#):

Our terminology

- **Gathering:** is being used to refer a whole event whether it uses all of a building or one space within a building
- **Small group:** is being used to mean the number of people that can come together and interact with each other.
 - When meeting indoors this refers to: 2 households (including support bubbles) socially distancing from each other.
 - When meeting outdoors this refers to either: 2 households (including support bubbles) socially distancing from each other, or 6 individuals socially distancing from each other.

A gathering can consist of

- Up to 30 people or (if there is enough space) more than 30 people formed of as many **small groups** as can fit within the space observing social distancing (2m or 1m+ with mitigation).
- **Small groups** must not interact with any other **small group** other in any way even if there are people within another **small group** who are friends.
- Households are not permitted to swap between **small groups** during a gathering.

The advice is specifically trying to reduce the possibility of a gathering which consists of a group sitting together in a circle interacting with each other across the circle.

We recognise that this means that many activities that our buildings hirers might wish to begin, such as 12 steps groups, will not be possible at this time.

Remember these numbers are when following the guidance for safe use of multi-purpose community facilities. This guidance does not cover meeting for worship. For this see the [guidance on safe use of places of worship](#) instead.

Risk assessments

One or two people were asking about updating risk assessments as the requirements change. Most are adding a review period of around a month or reviewing when significant changes to guidance or legislation are announced.

Blended worship

It is good to hear that some meetings are taking the step to blending worship even with a basic technical setup. It is possible and the small steps will help to ensure that we build confidence. Blending can be achieved with as little as a laptop, external microphone and speaker. With small groups gathering in person this seems to be adequate but as larger worship groups can come together in person groups may need to think more about what is needed to be inclusive.

Some groups have not been ready to take the step into blending worship yet and are managing with running worship in parallel, in person, using Zoom and individually at a distance.

Cancellation fees

There was a general sense that we need to try to be as flexible as we can with cancellation fees. We are in a situation that no-one in their mind could have expected. On meeting described re-setting all their agreements so that any fees that might have been due are waived and groups can start from fresh when they can re-use the building again. Being as flexible as possible may also help to encourage users back rather than penalising them at a time when they could be in financial difficulty.

Work closely as workers, premises/ house committees, AM trustees to agree a way forward that is affordable and practical.

Face coverings

See the linked guidance on special religious service and gatherings. And re-sending the guidance for each part of Britain on face coverings.

22 July 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Wednesday, 22 July 2020**. There were 35 people present during the meeting. The notes of all the previous sessions are listed in this document.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 29 July at 2.00pm**. The details for joining that meeting are below.

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly
- Time: July 22, 2020 2:00 PM London
- Join Zoom Meeting, <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
- Password: 854618

Links or attachments

- **Face coverings:** [England: Guidance on where you must wear a face covering](#) the rules are slightly different in [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)
- **Cleaning products:** www.hygienedepot.co.uk/
- **Furlough:** [Recirculation of information about furlough](#) (see also [3 June 2020](#))
- **Cleaning:** [England: Cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#) there may be different guidance in Scotland and Wales.

Topics

Re-opening

A reminder that Jonathan and Oliver met with Colin Bloom the Government's Faith Adviser on Tuesday afternoon. We have asked some specific questions about the multi-use community facilities guidance and will report back once we have more information. We understand that our queries have been passed to the Cabinet Office as they needed additional clarification from Government. We hope to bring some specific understanding of what may or may not be permitted (in England) soon.

One specific question that we asked on the day was about 12-step groups and the indication is that they should not take place at the present time.

Masks for worship

There is a variety of practice being suggested. Some meetings are requiring masks to be worn in worship, some are encouraging Friends to wear them but not enforcing it and others are allowing Friends to decide for themselves. Face coverings are going to be mandatory in various settings in each of the regions of the UK before the end of July so check the guidance for your part of the country. None of the current guidance suggests that face coverings will be mandatory in place of worship.

Eco alternatives to cleaning products and non-plastic wipes

Some people have recommended using Hygiene Depot, linked above for some eco-friendly products and supplies. They can be more expensive. There was a sense from one person that using soap and water for cleaning is as effective and is a cheap alternative

that can be sue for personal hygiene and for many of the cleaning requirements of smaller buildings.

Hirers using kitchens

Some helpful views in this. Use of the kitchen may be possible particularly if your meeting house has permanent lets such as offices that have sole use of a designated space and need access for refreshments etc. It may be advisable for groups who hire to be excluded from using the kitchen.

It may not be being in the space that is most likely to spread the virus but using cutlery, cups, plates and other shared items that are usually available. For anyone allowed to use of the kitchen you might require them to use their own items rather than any shared crockery etc.

Should hire costs be reduced if the kitchen is not allowed to be used?

Look at this alongside other changes that you make. If you are doing more cleaning or other then there may be a fair trade off that can be accounted for in the charges that you make. Charges need to reflect the whole of what you are providing, or not providing for the service or space being offered.

Lockdown #2

What to do if there is a second national lockdown or there are local lockdowns?

Mostly people think that they would be able to repeat what they had to do when the first national lockdown which began on on 23 March 2020.

May need to think and plan if AM's cover regions and could cross a lock-down border. How might this affect the meeting houses and Quaker activities?

Cleaning upholstered furniture

General understanding that if the time between uses is greater than 72 hours your usual cleaning practices should be sufficient.

If you only have upholstered furniture and you are going to need to use it more regularly there are ways to clean such as sprays or a process called fogging which cleans very quickly. These methods may not be cost efficient depending upon how regularly they may need to take place.

As capacity in spaces is reduced it is worth considering managing rather than expecting to clean all surfaces. Think about:

- The volume of users
- Touchpoints on furniture (are arms etc. able to be cleaned?)
- Rotation so that furniture that may be contaminated can be kept out of use for 72 hours?
- Using different spaces within the building to try to maintain gaps to at least 72 hours between use.

Additional cost of cleaning

Should meetings pass on the cost of additional cleaning to hirers or absorb themselves?

This is going to depend on each centre and the additional needs that are identified in the risk assessment. You will need to analyse the cost of cleaning and decide whether this can be absorbed in the short term or whether it will need to be passed on.

You may also think about whether there are any savings that you are going to make from things that you are not able to provide. Ensure that the entire cost of providing the space is viable and within agreed limits.

Taking temperatures

Should we be taking people's temperatures on entering our buildings?

Taking temperature is one of a range of measures that help to identify whether people are carrying the Covid-19 virus. It is not entirely reliable and should not be used in isolation. Consider whether it is going to make a difference with the number of building users and how you are managing entry, movement within your building and exit.

Track and trace

- **England:** [NHS test and trace](#)
- **Scotland:** [Test and protect](#)
- **Wales:** [Test, trace protect](#)

In friendship,

Oliver and Jonathan

16 July 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on **Thursday, 16 July 2020**. There were 35 people present during the meeting. The notes of all of the previous sessions are listed in this document.

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 22 July at 10.30am**. The details for joining that meeting are below.

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly meeting
- Time: July 20, 2020 10:30 AM London
- Join Zoom Meeting <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>

Links or attachements

- Template emergency clause (attached): L&LAM, thank you
- Memorandum of understanding (MOU) template in the trustees handbook: www.quaker.org.uk/trustees
- Signage: <https://urc.org.uk/coronavirus-resources>

Topics

T&C emergency clause

There may be things that building managers need to add or change to the terms of hire to enable your meeting house to be opened to hirers safely. Some meetings are putting together a temporary clause which can meet the needs. An example from one meeting is attached to this message. It might include:

- Details about what extra cleaning of safety precautions you are taking
- expectations that you have of the hirer
- what the hirer can expect of you
- temporary changes to the hire cost
- what you will do if you need to cancel their booking
- what would happen if a second period of lockdown were required
- how regularly this clause will be reviewed.

The following process is offered as a suggestion of how to go about this:

- Contact AM trustees to find out if they have done work on this
- Draft and agree the new clause local and with trustees
- Send to all hirers wishing to resume hire and ask them to sign the new agreement
- Share your risk assessment and mitigation with hirers
- Share which advice you are looking at with hirers so they can see for themselves what constraints you are working within.

Signage

Suggestion to search online as there are lots of templates that can be printed locally and laminated. May not be worth spending too much money on as the guidance may change and mean the sign becomes obsolete.

Area meeting and involving the right people

An example from one meeting on thinking about how to open for worship:

- E&Os meet (online) and discuss and discern
- With this information premises committee meets and discerns
- LM meets with the information from E&Os and premises committee, they discern.
- Proposal to open shared with trustees who decide if they are content with any risk identified and the mitigation.

This is a lot of meetings and will require a lot of processes. This is an example based upon opening for worship. Opening for hirers may not involve all of the same groups but there should be a process by which decisions are reached and any risks are identified by the relevant people and a plan to mitigate the risks made and carried out.

We talked about memorandum of understanding and how having one in place between trustees and each meeting can help meeting to know what decisions they can make independently. If one is not in place the assumption would be that all compliance, financial or legal decisions would automatically require referring to trustees.

Helping people to take the risk seriously

A couple of examples were shared of meeting opening without proper consultation or assessment of the risks involved in re-opening.

This is just a plea to try to pass on this information throughout meetings to try to make sure that careful consideration is taken before opening buildings.

Cleaning between users

What should we be doing about cleaning between users? The guidance is a bit unclear here. Our sense is that deep cleaning might be required if someone develops symptoms of C-19 while on the premises. Between users we have been suggesting that cleaning takes place and focusses on frequently touched areas to ensure that there are clean between user groups. The timescale of 72 hours is what is being suggested that the virus survives on surfaces so if your building is only used on a Sunday you may not require more than the standard cleaning that is carried out between use each week.

You do need to be careful around handwashing or supplying the means to clean hands on entering the building and making sanitizer available so that it can be used regularly.

Blended worship kit

Please email Jonathan Carmichael, jonathanc@quaker.org.uk, if you have set up blended kit and with feedback about it. Jonathan is going to make a document available which with everyone's suggestion in it.

We look forward to seeing you next week.

In friendship,

Oliver and Jonathan

8 July 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking discussion on **Wednesday 8 July 2020**. There were 38 people present for most of the meeting. Thanks everyone for joining the meeting and taking part in the discussions. It is a big group and I am conscious of trying to include everyone in the conversations.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday, 16 July at 2pm**. The joining details for the meeting are below this paragraph. I look forward to seeing all who can join the meeting.

- Time: July16, 2020 2:00 PM
- Join Zoom Meeting
<https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
- Meeting ID: 626 289 766
Password: 854618

Links

- www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus
- www.quaker.org.uk/employers
- www.quaker.org.uk/trustees
- [ENGLAND: Government guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- [ACRE covid-19 information sheet opening your hall after lockdown 6 July](#)
- [ENGLAND: COVID-19: Guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)
- [WALES: Guidance on Marriages and Civil Partnerships](#)
- [ENGLAND: Working safely during coronavirus covid-19 in the visitor-economy \(includes conference centres\)](#). Applies to: England (see guidance for [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#)).
- [ENGLAND: Staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#). National guidance that applies to England only - there's different guidance in [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).

The main body of guidance here is for England. There are regional variations available in Wales and Scotland.

Opening meeting houses as multi-use community facilities

There was a lot of conversation about the guidance from the Government on multi-use facilities and the lack of clarity in the guidance about number of people that can be in each space. Some people are using the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) information sheet. I have linked this above for anyone who is interested. In my view it is not helpful. ACRE seem to be interpreting the guidance in a way that does not appear to take social distancing between groups (of households or individuals outside) into account when giving examples of activities that can take place. There is some expanding upon 'interaction' in the guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing).

Below is a reminder of the suggestion that was made last week about BYM's interpretation of the guidance.

1. In any one space within a building you can have no more than 2 households (which includes support bubbles)
2. In any outside space you can have no more than 2 households (including support bubbles) **OR** 6 people from different households.
3. There can be up to 30 people on the premises so long as points 1 and 2 are being followed.

Whichever interpretation you choose to follow be sure that those who need to be in the conversation are included. This could be wardens or other workers, members of premises committees, trustees and when re-opening for worship members of the eldership and pastoral care group.

I have also linked above guidance for the visitor economy (which includes conference centres). This may apply to larger meeting houses running hospitality businesses in which case you may not be able to open for business yet. Be sure to have a conversation involving the necessary people to decide which is appropriate in your situation.

Opening meeting houses for blended worship

Helen spoke about their Horsham Meeting's experience of [holding blended worship](#). This was set up using minimal kit as follows:

- 2 laptops (one for the monitor on the meeting room and the other for a Host to control)
- 1 external speaker (connected with a wire, not wifi or bluetooth)
- 1 additional microphone (prepared but not used as the hearing loop was able to be connected)
- 1 large monitor (borrowed as an alternative to projecting on the wall)

The experience was good and Helen answered questions. Using a monitor made a huge difference to projecting as it could be placed in the circle and so did not take people's focus. There was also no distraction from the noise of the projector. Friends welcomed the initiative and being able to worship together.

A question was asked about whether a wifi dongle or smartphone hotspot could be used instead of broadband/wifi. We felt it would be possible if the phone signal is good enough but is likely to be very costly (approx. 8MB per hour was suggested by someone).

There was also some hesitation around describing the meeting as a 'broadcast' as this may feel as though it is being made live on social media rather than just the video conferencing software being used.

And a question about people who do not wish to appear on video in the meeting room. It may be off-putting to some Friends. There may be a space available off-camera. Friends may need to get used to it as it is the best way to be inclusive.

Working across area meeting

We had a brief conversation about working across AM's but time got short. It is a reminder that people need to be involved in discussions at all levels. They may not all

need to be part of decision-making but do need to be communicated with about progress and changes. This includes various role-holders and workers.

2 July 2020

Here are the notes from the Wardens (et al) Talking session on Thursday, 2 July. There were 46 people present during the meeting. This is a significant sized group and I know it may have meant that not everyone got the chance to speak or ask a question. I hope that it has felt valuable for everyone joining and I would like to again welcome everyone who is joining and encourage you all to keep coming. I am really grateful to Jonathan Carmichael being present as he is a great support to me in running the session with the detailed knowledge that he brings.

Next week Wardens (et al) Talking will be on **Wednesday, 8 July at 10.30am**. I look forward to seeing all who can make it to that meeting. The joining details are:

- Topic: Wardens (et al) Talking weekly meeting
Time: July 8, 2020 10:30 AM
Join Zoom Meeting
- <https://quaker.zoom.us/j/626289766>
Meeting ID: 626 289 766
Password: 854618

Links

- [Government guidance on safe opening of places of worship from 4 July 2020](#)
- [Government guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)

Please read this guidance and look at the Quaker advice at www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus before getting in touch as it may answer questions that you have.

Blended worship

Many meetings are exploring the opportunity to blend online and physical worship.

The next two sessions of Online Worship Facilitators Talking series will focus for part of the time on blended worship. You can register for one of the sessions by clicking the links below:

- [Tuesday 7 July 15.00-16.30 – Main topic: blended online and physical worship](#)
- [Thursday 9 July 14.30-16.00– Main topic: blended online and physical worship](#)

Future sessions of Online Worship Facilitators Talking are publicised on the [Woodbrooke Online Worship Advice page](#).

Re-opening buildings

Most of this week's meeting was about re-opening of buildings mainly from the perspective of as multi-purpose community facilities. Meeting house premises whether inside or outside are considered as part of the premises. The Government's guidance is available but is very ambiguous about numbers. What we think is:

4. In any one space within a building you can have no more than 2 households (which includes support bubbles)

5. In any outside space you can have no more than 2 households (including support bubbles) **OR** 6 people from different households.
6. There can be up to 30 people on the premises so long as points 1 and 2 are being followed.

There has been some question about the use of the word 'interaction' in the guidance. We hope that a future version of the guidance will make this clearer.

Opening for worship

There was a conversation about Meetings that don't have their own premises. In my reading of it they are included in this guidance as per the **Definitions for the purpose of this guidance** in **Table 2** of the guidance, see below:

"Place of worship"

A place of worship refers to a building used for regular religious ceremonies, communal worship or similar gatherings by religious organisations. It includes the use of surrounding grounds, for example, adjoining car parks, courtyards or gardens for which the venue managers are also responsible.

The guidance also covers premises when being used for religious gatherings, even when their primary purpose is not for religious gatherings, such as a community centre. These premises will only be able to be used where they are permitted to be open and additional guidance may be applicable.

This guidance does not cover public parks, private homes, cultural sites or other open spaces, such as woodlands which may be used for religious purposes. If people do want to engage in worship in these spaces, then the guidance relevant to that place should be adhered to.

Risk assessment

We talked again about assessing the risk and being sure that AM trustees are content with the measures that are being taken to re-open buildings. There was a helpful reminder that with a risk assessment there needs to be a **method statement** to make clear how the identified actions will be implemented.

Cleaning

We talked again about cleaning and being sure that you have the resource to be able to clean areas between uses. It may be possible to ask hirers to do some of the cleaning where they have sole use of spaces. Costs of and the ability to clean between groups needs to be carefully considered and conversations with hirers need to take place so that everyone is clear about their expectations and what is expected of them.

Grants (re-sending)

We talked about grant funding and the opportunities that are available. Look at www.quaker.org.uk/grants or email grants@quaker.org.uk to find out more about pots of funding that BYM has available.

There is also an opportunity to access local authority grants. Information about these is available online at, www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-local-authority-discretionary-grants-fund

As ever I look forward to seeing those who can come next week.

24 June 2020

Here are the notes from our meeting on Wednesday, 24 June. I would like to remind you that there are the two documents on re-opening the were available last week. I am also sharing the page of the Governments websites that have details specific to places of worship and a guide to physical distancing that has been circulated in the Lancet. All are linked below:

- [9 steps to re-opening Quaker meeting houses and worship spaces safely \(Word\)](#)
- [Risk assessment template \(Word\)](#) a supplementary page in the same format used in the [Quaker Meeting House Handbook template document](#).
- [England: guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](#)
- [Scotland: guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](#)
- [Wales: guidance on reopening places of worship during the pandemic](#)
- [The Lancet guide to physical distancing](#)

I also have started to keep a record of Wardens (et al) Talking notes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Apologies for not recording this before June 2020, I hope that not too much is missed. This is a PDF that can be shared with others.

- See also www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus
- Subscribe to Quake! at, www.quaker.org.uk/quake

Changes to social distancing, 2m / 1m+

What does this mean? We had a helpful conversation about this to address questions about whether the relaxation of the rules should lead to re-measuring spaces to accommodate people at 1m distance rather than 2m.

The best answer to this is **no**. The guidelines state 1m+ and the consensus of all present was that we should be thinking about the + as giving space to take precautions. The guidance still states that where possible remain at 2m distance. For now when thinking about how many people to accommodate please still base this on people being at 2m apart.

In England places of worship will be able to re-open from 4 July. Scotland and Wales are also due to change their guidelines in due course. As previously said this is **no reason to rush into coming together for worship in person**. There is not detailed guidance about this yet and meetings' need to follow the guidance for the safe use of places of worship linked above for each region of Britain.

If your meeting house has benches that can't easily be moved or accommodate people at 2m you could put a pine-cone or sprig of holly in places where people shouldn't sit as an alternative to brightly coloured tape.

We have been thinking a lot about who needs to be involved in the conversations about re-opening. Up to now it has mainly been AM Trustees with members of Premises Committees and workers. As the opportunity for worship starts to become realistic make sure that Friends with [eldership and oversight responsibility](#) are also involved as they will need to ensure that the building guidelines are adhered to at times when the building is being used for worship. See also the [thoughts on blending worship](#).

Face coverings

Should we be wearing face coverings? There was an interesting comment about whether these should be compulsory.

Is it realistic for everyone worshipping to have their face covered? How would this change the feel of worship?

We discussed the effectiveness of masks and who they protect. Non-surgical masks are mainly for the protection of others rather than the wearer.

There was a question about whether they can be used and re-used if we are asking building users to wear them in common areas (such as toilets) of meeting houses. Should we be providing them if people arrive without one?

If your meeting is re-opening for hirers and the agreement is to require some use of face coverings you may need to consider including your expectations clearly in any supplementary terms and conditions of hire and to members of the worshipping community.

Building users

We talked a lot about building users and managing expectations. It was helpful to be reminded of the need to consider activities rather than just building users in general. Such as:

- Users with sole access to a space
- 1 to 1 services such as counselling
- Groups (including meeting for worship)

The guidelines that your meeting agrees with AM trustees will not necessarily be that same for all of these users and you may need to consider carefully what activities take place. Whatever is agreed should be upheld by **all user groups** regardless of whether they are paying for the space or are there for worship or other Quaker activity as it becomes possible.

Communications

And another reminder that keeping people in touch with changes is important. We have mainly talked about keeping employees informed but it is equally important that members of the worshipping community are too. As we are nearing a time that we may be able to gather again, worshippers may become restless and wish to come back to the meeting house. The more transparent and clear you can be with all users of the building the better.

17 June 2020

Here are the notes from our meeting on 17 June. You will remember that I suggested that there will be updated guidance on re-opening meeting houses. You may already have seen that there are two new documents, as below:

- [9 steps to re-opening Quaker meeting houses and worship spaces safely \(Word\)](#)
- [Risk assessment template \(Word\)](#) a supplementary page in the same format used in the [Quaker Meeting House Handbook template document](#).

Both documents are also available on the main coronavirus webpage, www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus.

Furlough

Updates to the furlough arrangement are summarised online at, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme/changes-to-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

The table summarising the amount that can be claimed each month and what will be paid by the Government (NI/Pension contributions) is a starting point to working out how and when it will be possible to bring employees back to work. There does not appear to be any restriction on re-furloughing employees if you have brought workers back for short periods of time. Part-time furlough is available from 1 July allowing you to claim a percentage of the wage that the employee is not working (pro-rata).

Trustees and decision-making

Again we talked a lot about hirers returning and how this might take place safely. One of the things that everyone present on Wednesday wanted to emphasise is the **need to for AM trustees need to make decisions and involve those Friends and workers locally** who have the knowledge and information to help decisions to be made. See more in the new documents linked above and also the guidance at www.quaker.org.uk/trustees.

This linked in with a conversation about accountability and where responsibility lies. Ultimately trustees hold the responsibility for each area meeting and the risk associated. AM trustees need to know what each LM in their area is doing so that they know what risk is being taken on their behalf. There is no *one-size-fits-all* solution and so not every LM within an area meeting will necessarily be able to open at the same time.

Communicating

Some workers are either still working or are beginning to return to work for short periods. Contacting hirers has been a helpful way to gauge how quickly buildings might start to be used again. If you are able to it is helpful to do this as it will help to inform how long a furlough period might be needed (if being used). It is also key to remember to keep in touch with workers (paid or voluntary) whether on furlough or still working. There is a lot of anxiety at the moment with uncertainty about the future, try not to make it worse by creating a wall of silence with workers. AM trustees and members of Premises Committee's or line-managers need to remember to keep in touch as much as possible and appropriate.

Future

A request was made as to whether we can think about how to support meetings that they are considering making some staff redundant. I am looking into the possibility of this and what it will require, and whether there is capacity within the team working at BYM to offer something.

10 June 2020

Here are some notes from the conversations that we had yesterday. A reminder that a lot of the guidance and support can be found online at www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus and www.quaker.org.uk/trustees.

Outdoor worship

BYM and Woodbrooke guidance is available online as a pdf, www.quaker.org.uk/documents/thoughts-on-outdoor-worship-during-pandemic. Be aware that outdoor worship must fit within the current restrictions on gathering in whichever part of the UK you live in.

Blended worship

Many of us are starting to think about how we can emerge and enable worship to take place in person and online as inclusively as possible. BYM and Woodbrooke have gathered some guidance on this as a pdf, www.quaker.org.uk/documents/thoughts-on-blended-worship.

Private prayer

We had a conversation about private prayer and what it might mean for opening meeting houses. The Government is due to announce that churches in England can open for private prayer on Monday, 15 June. Look for updates in your region of the UK. As yet there is no detailed guidance about this and until there is we can't begin to plan. Decisions about opening still sit with AM trustees working in partnership with premises committees and workers or others who know the limitations of buildings. The question of why we would open for private prayer arose which might be considered alongside a risk assessment and what is needed to enable it. Would it mean that someone (a worker or volunteer) is required to ensure that conditions set by the Government are adhered to? How could their safety be ensured?

- www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-re-open-for-individual-prayer
- <https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/do-not-rush-new-guidelines-for-safely-resuming-mosque-congregational-prayers/>

Private prayer is not the same as private worship and we should still not be gathering for any kind of worship anywhere indoors.

Cleaning

We spent further time on cleaning and ensuring that spaces are fit for use. Cleaning seems to be one of the areas that is causing anxiety in particular around whose responsibility it is to clean areas of buildings. We talked about:

- Sole users and that they may have a responsibility for areas that they are using to protect their people participating in their activities. This might include Nurseries and Pre-schools.
- 1 to 1 counsellor's who may be able to occupy a single space that is not used by anyone else.

- Shared spaces such as kitchens, toilets, waiting rooms and other fixtures and fittings that building users may come into contact with. These are likely to be the responsibility of the meeting rather than the hirer.
- We talked about whether it is appropriate to pass on additional costs for cleaning to the hirer. It needs to be economically viable to open so if the costs of making the spaces usable outweigh what can be charged then it may not be appropriate to open. One person mentioned that their meeting is thinking about a Covid Supplement rather than increasing hire charges. This would then be reviewed as the need for additional cleaning costs becomes less necessary.
- Risk assessment:
 - Meetings will need to carry out a risk assessment and communicate with hirers what they are doing and how they are mitigating risks within their premises.
 - Hirers will also need to carry out a risk assessment for their activities and compare with the meetings risk assessment. The hirer may then need to make a decision about whether it is safe for them to use the building.

When working out the risk it is key to give as much clarity to the user as possible as this is what they will base their decision to use the building upon.

Grants

We talked about grant funding and the opportunities that are available. Look at www.quaker.org.uk/grants or email grants@quaker.org.uk to find out more about pots of funding that BYM has available.

There is also an opportunity to access local authority grants. Information about these is available online at, www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-local-authority-discretionary-grants-fund.

3 June 2020

Here are some notes from the conversation that we had today at wardens talking. Today 33 people attended for some or all of the meeting.

Furlough

There are some changes to the furlough coming. The initial change is that the last opportunity to furlough a member of staff for the first time is approaching. 10 June is the last opportunity as employees being put on furlough for the first time will have to be furloughed for at least 3 weeks before 30 June. The details of this are available online at, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-could-be-covered-by-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>. Headlines below:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is changing:

From 1 July, employers can bring back to work employees that have previously been furloughed for any amount of time and any shift pattern, while still being able to claim CJRS grant for their normal hours not worked. When claiming the CJRS grant for furloughed hours employers will need to report and claim for a minimum period of a week.

The scheme will close to new entrants from 30 June. From this point onwards, employers will only be able to furlough employees that they have furloughed for a full 3 week period prior to 30 June.

This means that the final date by which an employer can furlough an employee for the first time will be 10 June, in order for the current 3 week furlough period to be completed by 30 June. Employers will have until 31 July to make any claims in respect of the period to 30 June.

Further guidance on flexible furloughing and how employers should calculate claims will be published on 12 June. [Find out more information on how the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is changing.](#)

We will be looking at the detailed guidance about flexible furlough after 12 June when it is published.

Trustee/committee/worker relationships and working together

We had a conversation about the importance of trustees being involved in decision-making and supporting premises committees and workers by involving them in decisions. A trustee from one described how they have been working closely with each of its Meetings meaning that decisions are being made in consultation with those most closely involved. There is a general acceptance across this AM that decisions are needing to be made rapidly and that a small group is appropriate to make the decisions. There is general acceptance across the AM that this is necessary at this time. The exact model is not important as area meetings vary in their size and geography. Communicating is key to helping things to run smoothly and involving people in decisions that affect them and their work or responsibility.

Re-opening buildings/cleaning

Two topics quite quickly ran into one as many of the issues around re-opening are linked to cleaning.

- How can buildings be cleaned adequately if there are multiple users?
- Where does the responsibility for cleaning lie?
- Is it economically viable to re-open if the cost of cleaning outweighs the income the building can generate?

Broadly hire agreements will need to be reviewed and may need to be amended to be sure that we are letting hirers know clearly what cleaning will be done to ensure that the building is safe. And that we will let hirers know what they can expect and what is expected of them. Hirers may need to sign a new version of the Terms and Conditions of hire and there may need to be additional charges if the cost of cleaning can't be absorbed by the room charges.

Meetings shouldn't need to bear all of the responsibility but hirers do need to know what they can expect so that they can make informed decisions about whether to hire the space or not.

Look over insurance policies and get in touch with insurers if there are queries to be sure you are covered. Insurers may offer some conditions that you will need to meet prior to opening.

Trustees must be involved in decisions about re-opening. They hold the risk of the organisation. If the risk is too great or it is not economically possible to open then buildings may need to remain closed.

Our worshipping communities

Quaker meeting houses are primarily religious buildings for worship. There are very good reasons that meeting houses might open before worship can re-start in person. The needs of the worshipping community also need to be at the front of our decision-making. As time goes on there may be difficult decisions about whether to re-open for worship and these may include whether worship takes precedence over hirers. These decisions will inevitably involve others in the Quaker community and considerations should be being made as early as possible to prepare.