

Trinity Methodist Church

Covid-19: Additional guidance for hirers of the premises

(Updated 28th August 2020)

Introduction

In this 'new world' where Covid-19 and its ramifications are at the forefront of everyone's thoughts, it is essential that certain procedures are carried out for the safety of all who use our premises. We aim to make the re-opening of our church and ancillary premises as smooth and straightforward as possible, adhering to our strap-line, *A Church for All at the Heart of the Community*.

The guidance and procedures described in this document must be observed by all hirers of the church premises until such a time when the church deems that specific precautions in response to Covid-19 are no longer necessary.

This document should be considered supplemental to the standard terms and conditions (described in *Information for people wishing to use the church premises*). In the event of any conflict between the two documents, this text (*Covid-19: Additional guidance for hirers of the premises*) should be considered authoritative.

General principles

The church offers its premises for hire by external users in good faith. Despite the additional safety measures the church has effected (described in our risk assessment), it cannot be guaranteed that use of our premises carries zero risk of Covid-19 transmission.

We expect that each group hiring our premises makes plans/adjustments so that their sessions can be conducted in as Covid-secure a manner as possible. **Each external group hiring the premises must perform its own risk assessment in relation to its activities/hire of our premises, a copy of which must be supplied to the Bookings Secretary before their use of our premises (re-)commences.**

Activities that are permissible may be restricted by Government guidance, either national or as part of a localised "lockdown". Each hirer is responsible for ensuring that their activities are permissible as per current guidance in force at the time of each booked session. If Government or Methodist Church restrictions are implemented which then require bookings to be cancelled at short notice, the church will not charge hirers for such cancellations (but hirers must keep the Bookings Secretary informed as to the status of each group).

The church cannot be ultimately responsible for Covid-safety of individuals attending events held on our premises, and group leaders should urge individuals to follow appropriate personal safety and hygiene measures at all times.

Availability of hire

At present, we are only able to offer the premises for hire by external users with regular recurring bookings.

Only the Main Hall and Primary Rooms are available for external hire at time of writing; we will attempt to re-room hirers of other spaces if appropriate/possible to do so. The kitchenette in the Meeting Room is not available for use.

In order to ensure social distancing, the capacity of each room has been reduced as described below (note the maximum numbers include those organising/leading the group):

- Main Hall: 30 people
- Primary Room: 10 people

We ask that each hirer considers (as part of their own risk assessment) if a lower capacity is appropriate due to their planned layout for the room or any physical movement involved as part of the group's activities.

Please note that we may request slight adjustments to hirers' regular booking times in order to reduce risk associated with changeover between groups.

It is vital that the church has a full record of when the premises are in use, so if hirers require any adjustment/extension to their booked times (in relation to Covid-19 or otherwise) then this must be discussed with the Bookings Secretary in advance.

Access to hired rooms

Each group hiring the premises will be given specific instructions for access/exit to their hired room(s). It is important that these routes are adhered to and communicated to group members so as to minimise potential contact with other users of the premises.

Hand sanitising stations are deployed in communal areas and individuals are asked to make use of these upon entry/exit.

Use of toilets

We ask that toilet usage is minimised as much as possible and that any use of toilets is on a “one in, one out” basis.

- Groups in the Primary Room should use the rear toilet.
- Groups in the Main Hall should use the rear toilet, unless the Primary Room is occupied in which case the foyer toilets should be used.

NHS Test and Trace

Each external hirer must keep a record of attendance at each session for NHS Test and Trace purposes. Records (which do not need to be shared with the church) must include contact details and be kept for three weeks following each session.

Risk Assessments

The church has performed a risk assessment in relation to the communal areas/facilities and other general points arising from external hire of our premises (see separate document).

Each external group hiring the premises must perform its own risk assessment in relation to its activities, a copy of which must be supplied to the Bookings Secretary. There is no stipulated format for these Risk Assessments, but the requirement is that each hirer has given due consideration to any measures that may be required to ensure the Covid-safety of their group. We understand that some external hirers will have formal risk assessments already produced by their wider organisations, which are of course acceptable (with local refinement if appropriate).

Conclusion

We look forward to welcoming external hirers back to our premises as an expression of our outreach and service to the community. Of course, the emphasis is very much on safety – safety for those using our premises whether they be church members or hirers. This is very much an ever-changing scenario and there may be sudden/frequent updates to this guidance in response to changes in Government and/or Methodist Church policies.