



Brixham Town Council

Post COVID-19 Action Plan

Created: Monday 29th June 2020
Last Updated: Wednesday 1st July 2020

Introduction

During the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's guidance and rules were highly prescriptive and clear. As the situation has developed, we are moving into a new phase where increasing emphasis is being placed on making individual or organisational decisions based on available information. From a local council perspective, the decision to re-open the Town Hall, or to return to office working will need to be made based on our specific local situation. A key part of that decision-making process will need to be how we assess and manage the risk.

Government Guidance

The Government maintains and regularly updates a range of documents giving guidance on managing the impact of COVID-19. The documents are updated regularly in accordance with government announcements and prior to lockdown the Town Council registered to receive these updates by email.

In addition to this, NALC has produced a dedicated coronavirus webpage which is regularly updated with government guidance and other information relevant to local councils.

This action plan has been put together based on current advice and is being monitored and updated regularly, based on the latest government guidance and information.

It should be noted that the advice from the Government in respect of returning to work is: "People who can work from home should continue to do so. Employers should decide, in consultation with their workers, whether it is viable for them to continue working from home." Where it is decided that workers should come into their place of work then this will need to be reflected in the risk assessment and actions taken to manage the risks of transmission in line with Government guidance.

The Step by Step Approach

The Government has laid out its recovery plans in 'Our Plans to Rebuild'. These plans are contingent on the "R" rate of COVID-19 infection not increasing. They may be adjusted or rescinded either nationally or, possibly, in certain parts of the country in the light of the situation. The re-opening of public buildings is scheduled to take place as part of Step 3, hopefully on 6th July.

The Government have carried out steps 1 and 2 and we are now on Step 3.

Step 3

We understand that public buildings can open from 4th July but it is unlikely crowded events e.g. parties, wedding receptions will be permitted until later.

Planning for Reopening

It is recommended that clear objectives and priorities for reopening the Town Hall are established, for example:

- Consider the safety and security of staff, tenants and visitors
 - Minimising contact with individuals who are unwell
 - Cleaning hands often
 - Respiratory hygiene
 - Maintain social distancing
- ensuring the continuous operation of the building, or part thereof
- conducting a risk assessment for reopening, making sure to include within it any reputational risks
- developing a plan for the reopening including supporting tenants
- preparing for a second wave of COVID-19 and developing contingency plans to handle such an eventuality
- keeping an eye on the desired outcome but adapting any actions on the current situation and risk assessment

Anyone with control of non-domestic premises (ie Town Hall) has legal responsibilities under health and safety law, and must take reasonable measures to ensure the premises, access to it, and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Therefore the Town Hall cannot reopen until we have identified all the necessary safety, compliance, management and operational issues and establish a plan to address and mitigate them.

Social Distancing

The size and layout of the premises will determine the maximum number of people that can be accommodated whilst also facilitating social distancing. In order to achieve social distancing requirements, as far as possible, we will need to work out the capacity of rooms and set limits on the number of people permitted to use each room at any one time.

Consultation with regular user groups will be important as some reorganisation may be inevitable. Some groups may not return for some time and it may be necessary to hire the hall in different ways. For example, small groups may need to use the Scala Hall rather than a meeting room to achieve social distancing.

The Government advise that “measures should be in place to ensure all users of community facilities follow the guidelines on social distancing, including **strict adherence to social distancing** of 2 metres or 1 metre with risk mitigation (where 2 metres is not viable) are acceptable.”

“From 4 July, users of community facilities should limit their social interactions to 2 households (including support bubbles) in any location; or, if outdoors, potentially up to 6 people from different households. It will be against the law for gatherings of more than 30 people to take place.”

“However, premises or locations which are COVID-19 secure will be able to hold more than 30 people, subject to their own capacity limits, although any individual groups should not interact with anyone outside of the group they are attending the venue with – so in a group no larger than 2 households or 6 people if outdoors.”

“Where gatherings have more than 30 people, those operating venues should take additional steps to ensure the safety of the public and prevent large gatherings or mass events from taking place. At this time, venues should not permit indoor performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience.”

In order to achieve this, the Town Council should consider what changes may need to be enabled to safely access the building, for example:

- Making use of multiple exit and entry points to introduce a one-way flow in and out of the premises
- Managing arrival and departure times of different groups to reduce the pressure at exit and entry points
- Queue management – the flow of groups in and out of the premises should be carefully controlled to reduce the risk congestion.

Cleaning and Good Hygiene

A decision will need to be made on how frequently cleaning should take place, based on an assessment of risk and use of the building. Hirers who use the hall evenings or weekends currently let themselves in and are responsible for putting out and stowing away the equipment they use and for cleaning the hall after use. Experience is that not all hirers clean up after themselves satisfactorily and this raises concern that not all hirers will comply with carrying out a higher level of cleaning on leaving.

The Government guidelines are:

- All surfaces, especially those most frequently touched, should be cleaned regularly.
- Sufficient time needs to be allowed for this cleaning to take place.
- Where possible, non-fire doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation
- If you can, you should wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

Equipment and Signage

The following is an expectation of what should be provided:

- Sanitiser in multiple locations including every entrance/exit.
- Notices at every entrance/exit showing what is expected of users, erect the “Catch It, Bin It, Kill It” poster and posters encouraging frequent handwashing
- It is also suggested that a laminated sheet is displayed showing the time the hall was last cleaned, but this is not compulsory.

Hiring Arrangements

- Longer time between hires will be required to allow either the Building and Facilities Officer to clean before the hirers arrival or for the hirers to arrive earlier in order to pre-clean for their own use.
- Checks will need to be made with each hirer (on the day of their event) to ensure they have sufficient supplies of sanitiser and cleaning materials.

- During Step 3 social distancing will need to be maintained and vulnerable people protected. It is therefore unlikely that the full range of normal use will be possible.
- Hirers will need to be given instructions, guidance and responsibility via special hiring conditions which should be attached to their usual hire agreement. These should be issued in writing and signed or accepted by the hirer in all cases. An electronic signature or email confirmation of the conditions is acceptable.
- Hirers should be encouraged to keep the hall well ventilated, opening doors as far as possible.
- Hirers should be encouraged to have regard as to whether people attending their activity are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 and how they will address the need to keep them safe. It is expected that those over 70, who are more vulnerable and have been required to self-isolate for 12 weeks, but not in the shielding category, will wish to attend their usual community activities, so particular attention should be paid to the need to maintain social distancing for them.
- The opening up of the economy following the COVID-19 outbreak is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. Government advise that we should assist this service by keeping a temporary record of customers and visitors for 21 days and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed. This could help contain clusters or outbreaks. All occupiers / hirers of the Town Hall will be required to keep their own records. Tenants will retain their own records. Hirers will be required to provide a copy to the Town Council.

Brixham Town Hall

There are several factors to consider when opening the Town Hall. The following is a list of actions that have been considered. For ease, they have been broken down into the specific headings.

Town Hall i.e. communal areas and toilets
<p><u>Entrance / Exit Points</u> We do not believe it is possible to create a one-way system in the Town Hall.</p>
<p><u>Communal Areas</u> Government guidelines advise that it is safe for people to pass in corridors as long as they face away from each other when passing and do not stop to talk. Whilst the corridors are narrow, it could be acceptable to open the Town Hall based on these guidelines. <u>The latest Government advice is that if you can, you should wear a face covering if in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible.</u></p>
<p><u>Lift</u> The lift is due to be changed in August. However, this will not change the size of the lift. Due to social distancing, only one person will be permitted in the lift at any one time, unless they are from the same household.</p>
<p><u>Toilets</u> With public facilities still closed, there is concern that the toilets in the Town Hall will be used by the general public, which would result in additional cleaning. There is also a need to position a staff member at the Town Hall entrance to make a note of visitor details, monitor numbers and give instructions to anyone arriving.</p>

The Government guidance steps are as follows:

- Use signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency and to avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Consider the use of social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and the adoption of a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks).
- Enable good hand hygiene consider making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand driers) are available.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces.
- Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate.
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks.
- Putting up a visible cleaning schedule can keep it up to date and visible.
- Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.

Council offices

The Town Council has a good IT system in place and has worked efficiently during lockdown without there being any interruption to Council business. This therefore means that any staff member that has a reason to work from home should continue to do so until such time that their circumstances change.

The offices are large enough to allow for social distancing and it is considered that a phased return could be introduced. However, the Town Council should be aware of the following factors:

- Staff who may have underlying health issues
- Staff who may have childcare issues

However, there are a few changes that need to be made prior to staff returning to the office:

- The office will need a reorganisation because it is advised not to have staff facing each other.
- A sneeze screen will need to be installed at the Reception desk.

It is not envisaged that the Town Council should rush to open the Town Hall which therefore means that the Council offices will not be open to the public immediately. However, after a phased return to the office, it is considered that the Town Council should accept visitors. This can be done in one of two ways:

- a pre booking system can be set up for the public who wish to meet with a Council representative; or

- A Reception Desk is repositioned to the ground floor, which will aid the monitoring of visitor etc.

It is envisaged that this will be after the lift has been installed.

Scala Hall

The Pannier Market have advised that they wish to reopen from Monday 13th July. The Town Clerk is working with the Market Manager to facilitate their opening. This includes:

- The requirement for the market manager to provide a copy of their risk assessment
- A one-way system will be put in place with entry and exit from the main Scala Hall doors.
- BTC to provide social distancing signs, floor markings and outside markings. (This will also be available for other hirers of the Scala Hall).
- The Café can open as a takeaway only.
- A barrier and no entry signs will be put up in front of the internal link door to stop market customers from accessing any other part of the Town Hall. (This barrier is light and can easily be put to one side in the event of an emergency.)
- The market will need to provide hand sanitiser etc for their customers and pay attention to other guidelines such as sneeze screens, packaging area etc. All of which will be considered within the risk assessment.
- The market manager will be responsible to ensure that all visitors to the market co-operate with the social distancing measures and monitor the level of visitors in the hall.

The Council staff are also working with other hirers who have a forthcoming booking. A special condition of hire has been drafted. See Annex One.

Other Tenanted areas

Brixham Does Care (BDC) have advised that they are considering reopening their charity shop. They have confirmed that there are no plans to date to open their office or café.

The Town Clerk is working with the them to facilitate their opening. This includes:

- The requirement for BDC to provide a copy of their risk assessment
- The internal link door will be closed to stop their visitors from accessing any other part of the Town Hall.
- BDC will be wholly responsible to ensure that all visitors co-operate with the social distancing measures and monitor the level of visitors.

Brixham Foodbank

Brixham Foodbank has been operational throughout the lockdown. The Town Council will continue to support them and ensure that social distancing requirements are adhered to. However, there may be a need to reconsider their current outdoor space because it does block a fire exit which will affect market stallholders and Council staff should they need to vacate the property at the rear in the event of an emergency.

<p>Brixham Theatre</p> <p>We understand that Brixham Theatre are actively carrying out maintenance work. However, whilst Theatres can reopen from 4th July, live performances are not yet allowed. At the time of writing this action plan, the Town Council had not had contact from the Theatre representatives. However, based on Government guidelines, it is not envisaged they will be reopening until at least the autumn.</p>
<p>Meeting Room Hire</p> <p>We have received some enquiries from Counsellors / Therapists who normally hire the Berry Room. It is not considered that the Berry Room is a large enough area to adhere to the social distancing requirements. However, there is an empty office at the rear of the building which can be accommodated to their needs. It also means that they will not require any access to the main building.</p> <p>It would have been normal for us to provide water and glasses. However, the current advice is that visitor should bring their own bottled water.</p>
<p>Risk Assessment Checklist</p> <p>Following a council office closure or change in operating model due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, the immediate reaction of some councils is to reopen their offices as soon as possible. However, it is highly likely that the working environment for the next period will be anything but “business as usual” – not just for the council but also staff, councillors and the community. It is likely that many of the COVID-19 controls put in place during the crisis will remain in place for some time, or only be partially lifted i.e. social distancing requirements etc.</p> <p>This pandemic has had an impact on organisations in many different ways, meaning that working assumptions made prior to COVID-19 are no longer true. Lessons need to be learned and the Town Council may need to adapt and change their operating procedures, policies, and practices.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Hall should continue to remain closed to the general public for the foreseeable future. • Forthcoming hirers of the Scala Hall will be contacted to advise of the COVID-19 Risk Assessment and special conditions for the hire of the hall (see annex one) • 6 x wall fitted hand sanitisers have been purchased and positioned around the Town Hall as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One in each of the 5 toilets areas throughout the building ○ One ready to be fitted at the Town Hall front doors, when it is considered it is safe to reopen the Town Hall • Toilets will be open to stallholders, tenants and staff only • Toilets will be cleaned twice daily, a record of which will be kept • The following signage will be put up in key areas of the building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hand cleaning ○ COVID-19 symptoms ○ Keep your distance (these do not display the numerical distancing to allow for any changes made by the Government) ○ Floor markings based on the Government social distancing requirement • The Council office will be reorganised and desks moved to meet the current Government guidelines

- Where possible, Council staff will return to the office mid to late July, but the office will remain closed to the public.
- After a phased return, the Council office will look to open to the public either through a pre booking system or by repositioning the reception desk to the ground floor
- A sneeze screen will be fitted at the reception desk
- The Foodbank outdoor space will be reorganised to ensure there is a safe fire exit for users of the Scala Hall and Council Office.
- The risk assessment will be closely monitored, reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Town Hall Room Capacities, based on current restrictions

Scala Hall	Max 15 visitors (based on a market / art display set up)
Function Room	Max 8 visitors (based on current set up)
Furzeham Room	Max 5 visitors
Summercombe Room	Max 5 visitors
Berry Room	Max 1 visitor
Conference Room	Max 5 visitors
St. Marys Room	Max 4
Unit One	Max 2 (converted to counselling room)
Unit Two	Max 2 (tenanted)
Unit Three	Max 3

Information from this Action Plan has been taken from:

- RICS.Org – COVID-19 re-opening of commercial buildings
- NALC / BHIB Risk Assessment for COVID-19
- Government guidelines / advice
- ACRE

Annex One: Special Conditions of Hire during COVID-19

Note: These conditions are supplemental to, not a replacement for, the hall's ordinary conditions of hire.

- 1) You, the hirer, will be responsible for ensuring those attending your activity or event comply with the COVID-19 Secure Guidelines while entering and occupying the hall, as shown on the attached poster which is also displayed at the hall entrance, in particular using the hand sanitiser supplied when entering the hall and after using tissues.
- 2) You undertake to comply with the actions identified in the hall's risk assessment, of which you have been provided with a copy.
- 3) The hall will be cleaned before your arrive and you will be responsible for cleaning all regularly used surfaces during your period of hire (including tables, wash hand basins, door handles) using either the products supplied or your own ordinary domestic products.
- 4) Please take care cleaning electrical equipment. Use cloths - do not spray!
- 5) You will make sure that everyone likely to attend your activity or event understands that they **MUST NOT DO SO** if they or anyone in their household has had COVID-19 symptoms in the last 7 days, and that if they develop symptoms within 7 days of visiting the premises they **MUST** use the Test, Track and Trace system to alert others with whom they have been in contact.
- 6) You must keep a database of your group / customers / visitors for 21 days to assist the NHS Track and Trace service. A copy of which should be supplied to the Town Council. You should only collect the minimum amount of information. It is suggested that the following information will be suitable:

Date	Time of arrival	Full Name	Telephone Number	Email Address
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There is not a requirement to hold this data for longer than 21 days. You cannot use this for marketing purposes unless you have advised them otherwise. After 21 days, you can securely delete / dispose of the database. Please note: Throwing a paper record into a wastepaper basket is not sufficient and may amount to a data breach.

- 7) It is recommended that all personnel entering the building should wear a face covering.
- 8) You will keep the premises well ventilated throughout your hire, with doors open as far as convenient. You will be responsible for ensuring they are all securely closed on leaving.
- 9) You will ensure that no more than [*insert number*] people attend your activity/event, in order that social distancing can be maintained. You will ensure that everyone attending maintains social distancing while waiting to enter the premises, observes the one-way system within the premises, and as far as possible when using more

confined areas e.g. moving equipment, which should be kept as brief as possible. You will make sure that no more than **one person** uses each suite of toilets at one time.

- 10) You will take particular care to ensure that social distancing is maintained for any persons aged 70 or over or likely to be clinically more vulnerable to COVID-19, including for example keeping a 2m distance around them when going in and out of rooms and ensuring they can access the toilets, kitchen or other confined areas without others being present. For some people, passing another person in a confined space is less risky, but for older people that should be avoided.
- 11) You will position furniture or the arrangement of the room as far as possible to facilitate people seating side by side, with at least one empty chair between each person, rather than face to face. If tables are being used, you will place them so as to maintain a distance of at least 2 metres across the table between people who are face to face e.g. using a wide U-shape [insert or attach drawing or photo].
- 12) You will be responsible for the disposal of all rubbish created during your hire, including tissues and cleaning cloths before you leave the hall.
- 13) You will encourage users to bring their own drinks and food.
- 14) We will have the right to close the hall if there are safety concerns relating to COVID-19, for example, if someone who has attended the hall develops symptoms and thorough cleansing is required or if it is reported that the Special Hiring Conditions above are not being complied with, whether by you or by other hirers, or in the event that public buildings are asked or required to close again. If this is necessary, we will do our best to inform you promptly and you will not be charged for this hire.
- 15) In the event of someone becoming unwell with suspected COVID-19 symptoms while at the hall you should remove them to the designated safe area which is [??]. Provide tissues and a bin or plastic bag, and a bowl of warm soapy water for handwashing. You will then be required to ask others in your group to leave the premises, observing the usual hand sanitising and social distancing precautions, and advise them to launder their clothes when they arrive home. Please inform the Town Council as soon as practically possible.

**Annex Two: COVID-19 Risk Assessment
Council Office**

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed	Controls required	Additional controls	Action by who?	Action by when?
Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council staff • Contractors • Vulnerable groups - elderly, pregnant workers, those with existing underlying health conditions • Anyone else who physically comes in contact with you in relation to your council 	<p><u>Hand Washing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand washing facilities with soap and water in place • Stringent hand washing taking place • Council staff encouraged to protect the skin by applying emollient cream regularly • Gel sanitisers in any area where washing facilities not readily available 	<p>Everyone to be reminded on a regular basis to wash their hands for 20 seconds with water and soap and the importance of proper drying with disposable towels or hand dryers. Also reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – Follow ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Tissues will be made available throughout the workplace.</p> <p>To help with the reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) everyone to be reminded of the public health advice. Posters will be displayed throughout office.</p>		
		<p><u>Cleaning</u> Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly particularly in areas of high use such as door handles, light switches and reception areas using appropriate cleaning products and methods.</p>	<p>The office will be cleaned regularly. In addition, cleaning wipes will be made available to ensure that shared equipment can be cleaned after each use.</p>		
		<p><u>Social Distancing</u> Social Distancing - Reducing the</p>	<p>Posters / signage / floor markings will remind everyone of the need to social distance.</p>		

		<p>number of persons in any work area to comply with the social distancing requirements.</p> <p>Taking steps to review work schedules including start and finish times, working from home etc. to reduce number of Officers on site at any one time.</p> <p>Redesigning processes to ensure social distancing in place.</p> <p>Conference calls to be used instead of face to face meetings.</p> <p>Ensuring sufficient rest breaks for council staff.</p> <p>Social distancing also to be adhered to in kitchen area.</p>	<p>The office to be redesigned to meet social distance requirements. Some officers, where possible, will continue to work from home.</p> <p>All policies to be reviewed, where necessary.</p> <p>There are no plans to hold face to face meetings at this current time.</p> <p>Officers will only be allowed to make refreshments for themselves. Kitchen to be cleaned after every use.</p>		
		<p><u>Wearing of Gloves</u></p> <p>Where Risk Assessment identifies wearing of gloves as a requirement of the job, an adequate supply of these will be provided. Staff will be instructed on how to remove gloves carefully to reduce contamination and how to dispose of them safely.</p> <p>Gloves are required in the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning • Receipt of orders 	<p>Council staff to be reminded that wearing of gloves is not a substitute for good hand washing.</p> <p>A poster will be displayed on safe practices on removal of gloves. Gloves to be disposed of in an appropriate manner.</p>		

		<p><u>PPE</u> PPE is not required in the office environment. However, it is required for maintenance work.</p> <p>Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) may be requirement for risks associated with the work undertaken.</p>	<p>PPE has been provided to the maintenance team who have received the relevant training.</p> <p>To minimise the risk of transmission of COVID- 19 it is Council staff should wear face coverings.</p> <p>The Council to supply suitable face coverings to all staff.</p>		
		<p><u>Symptoms of Covid-19</u> If anyone becomes unwell with a new continuous cough or a high temperature in the office they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance.</p> <p>The Town Clerk will maintain regular contact with council staff during this time.</p> <p>If advised that a council staff or public has developed Covid-19 and were recently on your premises (including where a member of the council has visited other premises), the Town Clerk will contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, and supply a register of people who have been in contact with them and will take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken.</p>	<p>Internal communication channels and cascading of messages through the Town Clerk will be carried out regularly to reassure and support employees in a fast-changing situation.</p> <p>The Town Clerk will offer support to staff who are affected by Coronavirus or has a family member affected.</p> <p>A register will be kept to assist the NHS Track and Trace. The register to include visitors to the office as well as premises the Council staff have visited.</p> <p>To reduce the risk, the Council offices will remain closed and staff will not be making house visits.</p>		

		<p><u>Mental Health</u></p> <p>The Town Clerk will promote mental health and wellbeing awareness to council staff during the Coronavirus outbreak and will offer whatever support they can to help.</p> <p>Reference: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/</p>	<p>Regular communication of mental health information and open door policy for those who need additional support.</p>		
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