

Use of Ash Village Hall and garden for social gatherings and parties during Covid-19 restrictions

Updated 17th June 2021

For community facilities such as village halls, to help decide which actions to take prior to re-opening the building for permitted activity, a COVID-19 risk assessment should be completed, taking account of the core guidance on social distancing. The size and circumstance of the premises will determine the maximum number of people that can be accommodated while also facilitating social distancing – for Ash Village Hall that has led to the **limit of a maximum of 23 people indoors** being used for the risk assessment. On entering a community facility, users will be required to wear a face covering, and will be required to keep it on, unless covered under a 'reasonable excuse' for example, if they have a health or disability reason to not wear one. Trustees and managers are not able to enforce wearing face coverings. However, hirers can be required to encourage those attending activities to do so.

COVID-secure community facilities can hold social events, provided they follow limits on social gatherings. The guidance on social distancing defining permitted activities, where exceptions are not otherwise set out, state:

You can meet indoors in a **group of 6** (children of all ages count towards the limit of 6) or a **larger group of any size from up to 2 households** (including their support bubbles) in places such as:

- private homes
- retail
- indoor hospitality venues, such as restaurants, bars and cafes
- indoor sports and leisure facilities, such as gyms, sports courts, and swimming pools
- personal care, such as spas
- indoor entertainment and visitor attractions, such as museums, theatres, and indoor play areas

Mixing between different groups will not be permitted. Where there is significant likelihood of different groups interacting, activities should not take place indoors in a community facility.

Outdoor gatherings must not exceed 30 people unless covered by a legal exemption, such as:

- for the purposes of work or volunteering
- to provide care or assistance for disabled or vulnerable people

The police can take action against people in larger groups. This includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines (fixed penalty notices). **A fixed penalty notice of £200 applies** for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400. **There is a fine of £800 for people who go to a private indoor gathering** such as a house party of over 15 people from outside their household, which will double for each repeat offence to a maximum level of £6,400. **Anyone who holds, or is involved in holding, an illegal gathering of over 30 people indoors or 50 people outdoors, can be fined £10,000 by the police.**

The fact that some people may have broken the rules in pubs or could do so in a private garden is irrelevant. The village hall is not a pub, it does not have staff on hand to ensure people follow the rules. When hiring out the hall, its trustees are obliged to ask hirers to provide their written agreement to follow the national guidance and the risk assessment and any Special Hiring Conditions. If any hirers subsequently fail to abide by those conditions, the trustees cannot be held liable and the responsibility will be for the hirer alone.

Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and funerals

From Monday 21st June 2021 the rules for wedding and civil partnership ceremonies; wedding receptions and civil partnership celebrations; and funerals and commemorative events* will change.

From 21st June, there will no longer be a maximum number cap for attendees set out in law. Instead, the number of attendees at weddings, civil partnerships and receptions will be determined by how many people the venue or space can safely accommodate with social distancing measures in place. In Ash Village Hall the maximum number of people who will be able to attend an indoor event is **23**.

*In this guidance, the phrase 'commemorative event' is used to refer to a religious, belief-based or commemorative event linked to a person's death, other than a funeral. Stone setting ceremonies, the scattering of ashes and wakes are examples of such events. These may take place before or following the funeral.

Covid-19 Special Conditions for social gatherings and parties Agreement

If a hirer is able to give written assurance that all these rules will be obeyed, ensuring that no more than one exclusive group of 6 is indoors (23 for weddings and funerals) at any time with a maximum of 30 outdoors whilst still maintaining social distancing and with any walls on any awnings or gazebos (provided by the hirer) restricted to half the sides, the trustees may, at their discretion, agree to let the hiring go ahead.

The hirer must identify a person responsible for compliance with this agreement, confirm that both the hirer and the responsible person fully understand this document, and provide contact details for the responsible person.

Date of hiring: _____

Reason for hiring: ☐ Wedding or funeral ☐ Other social gathering or party

Maximum number of people attending event: ☐ Indoors ☐ Outdoors

Hirer

I agree to ensure that all rules set out in the document "Use of Ash Village Hall and garden for social gatherings and parties during Covid-19 restrictions" will be adhered to and enforced throughout the period of hire.

Print name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Responsible Person

I agree to ensure that all rules set out in the document "Use of Ash Village Hall and garden for social gatherings and parties during Covid-19 restrictions" will be adhered to and enforced throughout the period of hire.

Print name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ **Contact number:** _____