

Covid-19 closure; Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall

As chairman of Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall Committee, I think it appropriate to explain the reasoning behind the recent committee decision to keep the hall closed till January 2021.

Within the last week a number of village hall trustees met to discuss the latest central and local government directives and recommendations for protecting users of public buildings such as village halls. Not surprisingly, the source documentation was extensive, but unfortunately so are the requirements that have to be implemented before a public building can be declared Covid-19 protected.

These requirements would not only have been nearly impossible for the village hall committee to implement, monitor and prove conformity, but also place a significant burden of responsibility on the individual hirers to fulfil extensive pre- and post-activity Covid-19 protection cleaning.

The VH committee booking secretary contacted all regular hall hirers a short while ago and the majority of hirers responded as “happy to delay” commencement of activities until such time as the Covid-19 threat has reduced to an acceptable level to enable VH use without significant restrictions.

During a virtual VH committee meeting on the 25th August it was decided to keep the VH closed to all activities until January 2021, with the proviso that should government guidance significantly reduce the Covid-19 protection measures required for community buildings, the VH committee would hold an extraordinary committee meeting to review the closure decision. Regardless, the closure decision was reviewed and confirmed at the VH committee meeting on 1st October.

The decision to keep the hall closed was not made lightly and the VH committee is well aware of both its responsibility to provide a VH facility for use of the parishioners, but also of the potential disappointment and frustration some of our hirers may experience with the continued closure. However, I hope you can understand the significant work burden the volunteer committee members would face should we be compliant with government rules, not to mention potential litigation risk all committee members would face should the worst case scenario occur and a Covid-19 infection be traced back to our VH.

I and my colleague committee members look forward to welcoming all VH hirers back to Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so, we do value your participation, and we will keep you informed on developments as and when they happen.

Andrew Eckersley
Chairman