



The Queen's Hall  
High Street  
Cuckfield  
West Sussex  
RH17 5EL

01444 451610  
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**30<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

### **Item FC055: Staff Return to Queen's Hall**

Since March 2020, all office staff have been working from home to adhere to the COVID-19 lockdown rules imposed across the country. This has been entirely successful and has in no way been detrimental to staff productivity or performance; indeed staff are to be congratulated for the way they have adjusted to the changes in working procedures, supported by the regular 3 times weekly team calls via Zoom to stay in touch with one another, providing remote support and tracking progress of initiatives being worked upon. Further to this the seamless transfer to running Council and Committee meetings via Zoom has been pain free, allowing Council business to continue unimpeded by normal life grinding to a halt.

Following the recent Government announcements that the village halls can reopen to hirers, and that staff no longer have to work home if they are able to but can consider returning to the office, full risk assessments have been prepared and reviewed by all staff in order to prepare the Queen's Hall to reopen to both hirers and staff. These risk assessments are included as separate documents for Council to review.

As Clerk I am responsible for the health and safety of all staff and have taken into consideration their feedback regarding the return to the office. As a result of this, I plan to implement the following measures to maintain a safe and secure environment for all to work in.

- The office will reopen on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September.
- A signposted one-way system will be implemented to encourage all visitors to move safely through the building.
- The office will be manned by 2 teams of 2 on a weekly rota to enable social distancing to be maintained:
  - Team A: Sam Heynes and Jane Forester
  - Team B: Caroline Hansen and Paul Stevens
- The reasons for splitting the team in this manner are partly logistical; due to Caroline's desk sitting between Sam and Jane's desks it will not be possible to adhere to social distancing whilst Caroline is in the office; and partly to always have either the Clerk or Assistant Clerk available within the office should a face to face meeting be required.
- Alternating presence in the office on a weekly basis will mean less cleaning is required of the office on a daily basis. The Cleaners will complete a full clean of the office space each Sunday thereby preparing the office for the new team to arrive on a Monday.



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- Paul will schedule his work so office-based tasks are completed during the week Caroline is in, which will provide the additional benefit of not leaving Caroline working alone.
- Based on the success of home working throughout lockdown I am confident it will be possible to maintain the continued high levels of output and delivery whilst working in this manner.
- A sanitisation pack will be provided in the office to enable staff to wipe down high contact areas as required.
- Staff will not be required to wear face masks but can do so if they wish.
- Removal of the meeting table must be considered to create more space within the office to better enable social distancing, especially when visitors are present.
- Safe areas will be marked onto the office floor with tape to identify where visitors to the office must stand to adhere to social distancing requirements.
- An appointment only process will be introduced for members of the public who wish to attend the office. This will safeguard both staff and public by ensuring only one visitor (bubble) is in the office at a time.
- A checklist of requirements will be shared with all who make an appointment to attend the office which will include what we expect when they arrive i.e. use the hand sanitiser at the entrance, follow the one way system in place, remain within the designated area whilst in the office to maintain social distancing, wear a mask, request permission to log their details for 21 days to enable track and tracing.
- Posters will be put up around the building i.e. that the Queen's Hall is COVID-19 secure, 20 second handwashing, Catch It Kill It Bin It, reminders to maintain social distancing, one-way guidance.
- Purchase and installation of a video entry phone (approx. £100). The reason for this is 2-fold; firstly it will enable staff to speak with ad hoc visitors to the office, advising them why they cannot enter if there is already a visitor (bubble) within the office, and potentially providing them with the answer to their query without the need to enter the room. Secondly, this will provide extra security for any member of staff who is working alone within the office, by allowing them the opportunity to assist a member of the public without admitting them to the office. Security for staff especially when lone working is something that has long been discussed without a reasonable solution being identified, I believe a video entry phone will resolve this open area of risk.
- The Research Room will remain closed to all members of the public.
- The Research Room will be the designated location for anyone who is taken ill whilst at the hall. A first aid pack and guidance for initial treatment will be provided within the room to be used in the event of this occurring. Removal of the fabric covered chairs will be done as these cannot be cleaned regularly to prevent potential contamination. A hard chair will be placed in the room instead.



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- The hours of opening for public to visit will be adjusted to 11am to 3pm, Monday to Friday, to enable the regular team meetings to take place uninterrupted.
- The 3x weekly calls will continue to enable the team to meet and discuss tasks, issues and any concerns on a regular basis whilst working separately.
- Disposable masks will be available within the office to provide to visitors if required.
- All fabric covered chairs available within the public areas of the building will be removed, unless the fabric cushions can be separately removed, due to the risk of contamination and the difficulty of cleaning them.
- At this time we are not scheduling additional cleaning of the Queen's Hall or Village Hall, however as the risk assessments will be regularly updated based on government guidelines and experience gained as we re-open the halls, it may be necessary to revisit this decision.

I ask for Council to support these recommendations in full. As and when government guidance changes these measures will be reviewed and adjusted as required.

Sam Heynes  
Parish Clerk