

Kersey Parish Council COVID-19 Risk Assessment for Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council has identified that there is a risk of transmission of COVID-19 to all those attending Parish Council meetings. Parish Councillors, the Clerk, District and County Councillors and members of the public.

The Parish Council will regularly review the current Government guidance regarding COVID-19 and public gatherings. Legislation allowing remote meetings expired on 7 May 2021 meaning that the Parish Council must now meet face-to-face to conduct business.

If transmission rates of COVID-19 increase and Government guidance and legislation allows then the Parish Council will meet by remote means because this is best way to prevent transmission of COVID-19 and is the risk-free way for the Parish Council to conduct business and ensure public engagement.

Meetings of local councils are 'permitted organised gatherings' which means face-to-face meetings are able to take place without the limit on numbers attending, subject to the venue's physical limits, providing the Parish Council conducts the appropriate risk assessment and follows the relevant Government guidance for the type of venue. Kersey Village Hall management committee has carried out their own risk assessment which means the hall is available for hire and is a suitable venue for Parish Council meetings.

The impact of the transmission of COVID-19 has the potential to be severe. Some people are more badly affected and become seriously ill, are hospitalised or even die. Even with actions taken to mitigate the risks, as set out below, the risk rating for face-to-face meetings is still considered to be high to medium. (This conclusion has been reached using the 9 box grid matrix to identify risks as set out in the Council's risk management policy.)

All attendees are encouraged to take a lateral flow COVID-19 test before a meeting to help further reduce the risk of transmission. These self-test kits are freely available from pharmacies.

For extraordinary meetings where there is a very short agenda, it may be decided to hold the meeting immediately outside the village hall. This will significantly reduce the risks of transmission. No tables or chairs will be provided. Attendees wishing to be seated must bring their own chair.

Risk Identified	Risk Rating	Actions to mitigate the risk	Notes
An attendee or a member of their household has symptoms of COVID-19 or develops them within 10 days of a meeting	High	Reminder included in the notice of meeting stating if an attendee or anyone in their household has COVID-19 symptoms they MUST NOT attend the meeting. Symptoms include a new continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell. If they develop symptoms within 10 days of attending a Parish Council meeting, they MUST get a COVID-19 antigen PCR test. They MUST use the NHS test, track and trace system to alert others with whom they have been in contact.	

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The hall and equipment has not been cleaned to the required standard	High	Parish Council to ensure surfaces are cleaned before and after hire including chairs, tables, door handles, window latches and light switches. Empty bins at the end of the hire. (The person carrying out the cleaning will use the equipment supplied by the village hall management committee. Before and after cleaning they will thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.)	
Attendees must sign in to the meeting	Medium	All attendees must give their name and contact details to the Clerk who will retain them for 21 days to provide to NHS test, track and trace should the need arise.	
Masks to prevent transmission not worn	Medium	All attendees are requested to wear a mask, unless exempt. Reminder to wear masks included in the notice of meeting. Signs displayed at the hall entrance to remind all attendees to wear a mask.	PC to supply sign
Hand sanitiser not used on entry and exit of the village hall	High	Reminder to use hand sanitiser on entry and exit of the village hall included in the notice of meeting. (Sanitiser is available in all areas of the village hall) Signs displayed at the hall entrance as a reminder.	PC to supply signs
Social distancing of 2m not maintained	High	Ensure tables and chairs are well spaced, either seat people side by side or in a wide U shape. Open windows and doors to allow good ventilation. Ensure social distance is maintained particularly on entry and exit through pinch points.	PC to supply signs
Sharing of documents and pens	High	Paper documents will not be issued. Attendees to bring all necessary documents and pens with them. Where it is necessary for Councillors/the Clerk to sign documents, they will sanitise their hands immediately before and after signing the documents, using their own pen.	
More than the village hall maximum capacity attend the meeting	High	If many people attempt to attend the meeting the Parish Council will ensure an orderly queue is managed and only the maximum village hall capacity number of people enter the hall. (50 people at Sept 2021) Members of the public will be reminded they can contact the Clerk or Councillors before a meeting to submit questions, comments or concerns. It is not possible to provide a remote link to the meeting, it will only be held face-to-face at the hall.	
An attendee falls ill with COVID-19 symptoms	High	Follow village hall instructions as displayed in the village hall. Initially move the person to the isolation area in the toilets. All attendees to leave the building after being advised to observing the usual hand sanitising and social distancing precautions and to launder their clothes when they arrive home.	

Risk Assessment carried out by: Sarah Partridge

on: 18 May 2021 updated 27 Sept 2021

Review of risk assessment to be carried out as Government guidance is changed or updated.