

**Minutes of Electronic Correspondence of the Trustees of the  
Educational Foundation of Abigail Bailey and Ann Levett  
On 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Participating:**

Melvyn Wooding (Chair), Raymond Dyer, Andrew Seaman, Arthur Wright,  
Peggy Deards, Sharen Hegarty (Trustees)  
Adrian Dale (Clerk)

**2021.8 Village Hall Ventilation**

**Clerk's Proposal**

The Clerk proposed cancelling all booked social functions for the remainder of 2021 and avoiding taking firm bookings for social functions for the foreseeable future. The reasons are as follows:

1. To avoid the problems caused by shifting lockdown/restriction goal posts. Even now the Government is preparing us for a potential extension of restrictions on 21<sup>st</sup> June if the Indian variant cannot be contained. We've already had requests for parties and weddings for the last week of June, which we have declined.
2. To minimise the risks to the caretakers of having to clear up after a social function. They would be spending 1-2 hours in the venue after what could have been a "super spreader" event if someone infected had attended. The safety of our contractors has to be one of our key priorities.
3. Because the Village Hall has inadequate ventilation and cannot achieve the recommended minimum air change of 10 litres/minute per person that is now recommended by the Government for public buildings. We have a duty of care to provide a safe venue.

The latest [Government advice](#) for Community Buildings was published on 17<sup>th</sup> May. It contains the following paragraphs:

Many community facilities are also workplaces and those responsible for the premises should therefore be aware of their [responsibilities as employers](#). The government is clear that no one is obliged to work in an unsafe workplace. Organisations also have a duty of care to volunteers to ensure as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and are afforded the same level of protection as employees and the self-employed.

...

Anyone with control of non-domestic premises (such as a community centre, village or community 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.

Although "the buck" legally stops with the Trustees, it is the Clerk's responsibility to advise them to the best of his ability on what courses of action Trustees should consider. Under Health and Safety law, the Clerk is defined as being the "Duty Holder" and has to do everything in his power and ability to keep users of the Village Hall safe.

We have taken advice from ventilation engineers on what can be done. Unfortunately, it isn't simple. The recommendation is that we introduce 6 inlet vents at ground level, around the Hall, each fed with ducting coming down the walls from a central manifold. These would bring pre-warmed fresh air into the Hall at low speed (quietly and at minimum discomfort to users). Three larger ducts would then be placed at the

ceiling level to extract warm stale air (potentially virus infected). This exhaust air would go to a heat exchanger on the roof of the extension. The warm exhaust air would be used to heat up the incoming fresh air, without mixing. There would be various control equipment to monitor air quality and filter cleanliness.

The basic cost for the installation and equipment would be £37,000 but this would not cover some of the enabling electrical works, nor the boxing in of the ducting and a new false ceiling to hide the ducting. I haven't yet done the detailed planning and costing of these items. Realistically, I can't see the project coming in at less than £50,000. We will be able to get some grant assistance from the various Village sources but we will need to find a good 30-50% of the cost, especially given the £25,000 of COVID-19 support grants we have already received.

So what can we do? The options are:

1. Keep a watching brief on the pandemic situation and stay closed to social functions until the problem has gone away, with herd immunity having, hopefully, been reached (even in Bedford).
2. Start the ventilation project process in earnest with a view to an Easter/Summer 2022 closure of 2 weeks to facilitate the installation.
3. Purchase a professional [indoor air quality meter](#) for £450.00 and begin monitoring the carbon dioxide levels at all classes and meetings, so that we can truly understand the risk levels and demonstrate that we are alert to the risks and are taking the appropriate steps to monitor and manage them.

Outside carbon dioxide concentrations are normally around 400-500ppm (parts per million). Indoors it rises quickly as the air becomes stale and stuffy with people breathing in a poorly ventilated space. When the level reaches 2,000ppm, people start to feel drowsy. Many meetings or functions can quickly reach 1,200ppm at which point 1 in every 50 breaths each person takes contains air that has already been in someone else's lungs. Below 1,000 ppm the risks start to drop off significantly. At 700ppm, they are negligible unless you are in very close proximity to an infected person for a long period. After the 48 hour gamer weekends or an evening function and you can "smell" that the room has been heavily occupied. This can't be safe in the context of Covid-19, and we should not ask the caretakers to take the risk.

After discussion by email it was **RESOLVED** by majority that the Clerk should investigate the ventilation options in more detail. In particular, we need to examine what it would look like in the Hall and what the noise/running costs would be. In the mean time, the Hall will remain closed for social functions for the remainder of 2021.



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