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Reopening Community Centres in Carmarthenshire

18 November 2020 10:30am on Zoom

A third Zoom meeting for voluntary organisations across Carmarthenshire who manage community centres, village halls and other community buildings, with restrictions changing.

1. Attendees

Calon y Fferi	Julia Amesbury
CDCFA	Clive Poulton
Llanddeusant Hall	Alud Jones
Llanddowror Meeting Room	Vicky Mitchell
LINKS (Llanelli)	Michele Rees
NCE Holy Trinity Church Community Hall	Maureen Spowart Davies
St David's Faith Tourism	Caroline Evans
Whitland Memorial Hall	Gabriela Poore

CAVS Staff

CAVS Development Support Officer	Sarah Herbert Jones	sarah.herbert-jones@cavs.org.uk
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CAVS Engagement Officer	Clare Pilborough	clare.pilborough@cavs.org.uk
CAVS Volunteering Officer	Alud Jones	alud.jones@cavs.org.uk

2. Updated Guidance for Re-opening post-firebreak – key points

From WCVA "[Guidance for community centres reopening in Wales](#)" updated 8 Nov'20:

- Up to 15 people can now meet indoors (age 11+), following social distancing etc.
- Activities must be organised, and the organisers should do risk assessments.
- Reasonable measures ("Hands, Face, Space") e.g.
 - 2m distance (excluding those in same household or carer/cared-for) and including waiting areas.
 - Limit close face to face interaction and maintain hygiene (layout, shared facilities, screens/barriers, PPE)
- Consider whether activity can be undertaken digitally or by phone, or outdoors.
- If meeting indoors, stagger sessions, keep sessions brief, as few people as possible.
- Stay local, no music, no alcohol.

Elusen Gofrestredig / Registered Charity No: 1062144

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Guidance is always changing so **check for updates regularly** (weekly/fortnightly) via:

- CAVS website: <http://www.cavs.org.uk/road-to-recovery/>
- Welsh Government : <https://gov.wales/safe-use-multi-purpose-community-centres-covid-19>
- Public Health Wales: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Health & Safety Executive

3. Funding opportunities

Approx. 100 new funds announced since COVID-19 outbreak!

Key funding website is www.fundingcymru

Specific COVID-19 funding <https://funding.cymru/coronavirus-latest>

Some example funds relevant for halls:

- [Carmarthenshire COVID-19 Support Fund](#). Grants up to £1k. Closing date 30 Nov.
- Voluntary Services Recovery Fund (VSRF) wcva.cymru/funding/volunteering-wales-grants-scheme/
- Wales Respond and Recover Fund <https://communityfoundationwales.org.uk/grants/wales-respond-and-recover-fund/>
- Welsh Government Community Facilities Programme gov.wales/community-facilities-programme
- LEADER programme Community Asset Pilot Project aims to help community buildings reduce administrative costs and relying on volunteers (e.g. smart lock keypads and developing online booking systems, energy audits, crowdfunding. Email: Mepemberton@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Join PAVS (Pembrokeshire) Virtual Funding Fair this week (“Meet the Funder” sessions)

- Thu 18 Nov
 - 10am [Localgiving Wales \(digital fundraising, crowdsourcing etc\)](#)
 - 1.30pm [Welsh Government Community Facilities Programme](#)
- Fri 19 Nov
 - 10am [Wales Co-op: help for Social Enterprises](#)
 - 1.30pm [Community Foundation in Wales](#)

Funding for specific groups:

- Carers Innovation Support: Grants up to £5k for unpaid carers. Closing 18 Nov. Apply development@pavs.org.uk
- Friend in Need: Grants up to £2k for befriending. Closing date 27 Nov. Apply admin@cavs.org.uk
- Dementia Support Fund: Grants up to £1k. Apply admin@cavs.org.uk

Key Issues

One key issue for community halls is **loss of income** (reduced or no room hire or fundraising events, etc). It is difficult to find funders willing to fund this as most only want to fund specific services or activities. CAVS & Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) are lobbying Welsh Government about this gap.

Another key issue is **digital exclusion** preventing community centre trustees/ management committee holding meetings. Contact Digital Communities Wales or Age Cymru Dyfed for telephone training/mentoring and, sometimes, tablets.

4. Top tips from Community Centre attendees

- “We developed a **Risk assessment template for hall-hire groups** and are willing to share” (Whitland Memorial Hall). Copy to follow.
- “We developed a subsidiary **COVID guidelines for hall-hire groups** and are willing to share” (Calon y Fferi) Copy to follow.
- “We introduced a **telephone Booking system** so people can’t just turn up without booking” (LINKS Llanelli).
- “Make sure your **hall is ready and available** and let people know. We’re a very small hall (fit 25 people max) that haven’t opened yet but have done cleaning and preparations” (Llanddowror Meeting Room).
- “We’re not re-opened but are planning a **virtual Christmas Fundraising Event** with maybe a film of lighting the tree, a virtual choir of kids singing carols, and a virtual Santa” (Llanddeusant Hall).
- “We’re about to re-open and want to organise a gathering for isolated women – now it’s permitted that up to 15 people can meet indoors with social distancing etc” (Newcastle Emlyn Holy Trinity Church Hall).
- “Remember to **include the needs of people with disabilities** and underlying health conditions (shielding patients) in your risk assessments” (Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition for Action - CDCFA)

5. Other Points raised

- It is helpful to have these meetings for Community Halls to be able to share information and best practice and it would be useful to continue them after the pandemic is over.
- Date of next meeting to be confirmed.