

Scottish Women's Institutes



July 2020

Introduction

As we know the coronavirus has had a significant impact on us all. The organisation has put together the following guidance in order that Institutes can consider what steps they need to take when they consider reopening.

This is not an exhaustive list but is a guide to things you may wish to consider.

The guidance has been drawn from a variety of government and health organisations and some will not impact on you directly. Clearly the government advice has been changing and for up to date accurate advice please also consider checking the Scottish Government web site that specifically deals with covid-19 related matters at the following link;

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

However, should your Institute not be able to open, there are a number of other ways in which you can keep up to date with what is going on.

As an example, the national committees and indeed some institutes are using zoom as a way of keeping in touch. Zoom is a very simple video conferencing facility which allows people to meet up virtually and the organisation has been having almost daily get togethers on our Facebook page. If you search for the Scottish Women's Institutes on Facebook you will find the "Womankind by SWI" page

and you can then join in the discussion. Craft classes have also been held on Zoom.

If you haven't used zoom before here is a handy link which you can watch and it explains how you do it and join a meeting.

<https://youtu.be/kh50kValdAY>. You can use a computer, laptop or smart phone or dial in by telephone.

The organisation has not stopped completely and whilst this year all events have been cancelled rest assured that we are still actively working and planning to have a full events calendar for next year. The national office bearers have been meeting regularly via zoom to plan ahead for next year and once restrictions are lifted the staff will be booking venues.

We are also holding our AGM via zoom on 26th August and if you would like to join in, please contact hello@theswi.or.uk for further information, by 17th August.

Unfortunately, the office is not open yet but information can be sent out via e-mail. The staff continue to support the organisation by working remotely from home.

We appreciate that not all members will have access to a computer but there are other ways to keep in touch with older or vulnerable members. Have you thought of exchanging phone numbers and your committee taking it in turn to phone around to ensure that members feel they are still part of the organisation and not feeling isolated? There are a number of institutes doing this at present so that their members do not feel alone and have some contact. Institute newsletters are also popular.

It is possible to maintain social distancing and have meetings outdoors (weather permitting) as long as all necessary precautions are taken. Could someone host a meeting in their garden?

When considering opening up again for meetings it is important to look at the points listed below.

You can hold meetings indoors but only if you can socially distance. The Government advice is that face coverings should be worn indoors if it isn't possible to socially distance.

What you should consider

Are the premises where you hold the meetings safe? It is possible that aspects of the meetings in future will change. You should follow government advice carefully, particularly on being able to social distance and have strict hygiene controls in place.

Some Institutes will want to get back to where they were before, others may be considering very different approaches. For most of us, some things will change and all of us will need to adapt what we do for the foreseeable future.

As you prepare for what happens next, we advise you to consider the following questions:

Are your members happy to meet?

- What new resources might you need to restart and make your premises and activities as safe as possible?
- How can you properly assess the risks and where might you get help with that.? There are risk assessment templates available providing a checklist of things to consider and a handy link is set out below. Halls and other venues will have their own Public Liability Insurance and when they do re-open, you may have to follow their specific advice
- Are there other governance or insurance issues to consider?

Our Insurers have indicated that there is no barrier to starting up providing everyone follows government advice on social distancing and takes the necessary hygiene precautions once the restrictions are lifted.

- What other information do you need and where do you think you could get it?

The CEO can assist but the main source of advice will come through the Scottish Government who update the guidance on a frequent basis.

If you are delivering items to a members' home, remember to practice social/physical distancing and thorough and effective hand hygiene at all times.

The current advice is that additional PPE should not be required, over and above what you would normally use e.g. if you are in food handling or preparation where you might use gloves/aprons/hair nets etc.

Further information and guidance are available on request.

Remember: robust cleaning and disinfection is critical to stopping the spread of coronavirus alongside social/physical distancing and effective hand hygiene.

Raymond Pratt

Chief Executive

Some Helpful websites;

Websites: Health and Safety Executive Risk Assessment

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/assets/docs/risk-assessment.pdf>