

Below are some examples of groups that have managed to meet safely and responsibly once lockdown restrictions have eased:

Milborne Port Tanners group

Run by a support worker from The Balsam Centre in Wincanton and a health coach from Milborne Port Surgery – a friendship group offering games, activities, fun, singing and more!

During the summer of 2020 once lockdown restrictions were eased, the group met in the Village Hall and the tables were set up 2 metres apart with 4 people at each table. They all brought their own cups and flasks of tea/coffee and cake or biscuits and each table was set up with individual packs of craft materials, with no sharing of equipment.

Group members stayed in their table bubbles and only left their tables to use the facilities. Afterwards, the tables and chairs were sanitised, as were the toilet facilities.

The group members were so happy to be together again in a covid-safe environment.

Dinder Village Hall

An example of good practice in ensuring that a community facility is covid-safe is Dinder Village Hall!

Like hundreds of village halls and community facilities across Somerset, pre-Covid, the hall hosted a large range of groups, activities and private functions which all had to stop. The only groups that were able to return to the hall were yoga and Tai Chi classes and supporting parents and babies with baby massage sessions. The management committee obtained a grant from Mendip District Council which was used to redecorate, purchase replacement windows and replace carpeting with wooden flooring which is easier to steam clean after each use.

To enable these sessions to continue, the village hall manager De Hiscox put in place a range of measures to keep people safe, including:

- Deep cleaning of the hall the day before group sessions
- Hand sanitisers outside the front door and throughout the building
- Improved signage throughout the building
- QR Code inside the entrance door for Track & Trace purposes and all group leaders to have list of names and contact details for all group members in attendance
- One way system for entering and leaving the building
- Sanitiser and anti-bacterial wipes in the toilets, requesting that all users wipe down all surfaces after use
- All group leaders to clean down all surfaces that anyone could have touched after sessions
- Hall manager purchased antibacterial spray which was used to spray the curtains regularly
- Hall manager steam mopped floor and cleaned all surfaces after each use
- A maximum of 15 people in the hall at any one time with dots on the floor marking out 2 metre distance
- All users to wear face coverings and strictly adhere to 2 metre distancing rules
- For baby massage, yoga and Tai Chi, people bring and use their own mats

Frome Men's Shed

As our two workshops did not have any windows, we engaged Western Airducts to install very extensive ventilation equipment in both workshops, which provide industry standard air changes, with extremely high levels of filtration.

On completion of our Covid risk analysis, we implemented a Covid-safe reception desk, with a broad range of personal protective equipment (PPE) with all workstations and desks equipped with sanitizer and cleaning equipment. We implemented a one-way system, a process for limiting numbers attending to ensure adequate self-distancing, as well as ever present signage to remind Shedders of the guidelines.

Between lockdowns (and subject to the Government Guidelines at the time) we implemented several methods of "meeting"

1. In groups of six, we met on chairs in the park in Frome when we not allowed to meet indoors.
2. When we were able to meet indoors, we limited numbers and increased the number of sessions per week from two to four.
3. During the lockdowns we ran photography, art and project exhibitions on the website. (Some Shedders continued to work independently at home, for example making planters and Swift nesting boxes for other groups.)
4. We implemented a "Zoom Shedding" System, which enabled people to remotely Zoom in to the Shed to speak to Shedders in the Workshop; this also gave us the ability to "Talk" workshop to workshop.
5. We ran two Zoom Sessions per week during the early 2021 lockdown, to enable Shedders to link up, and have provided "talks" to form the basis of the sessions. This has included talks about the Sutton Hoo excavation, making indoor water features from metal and interesting buildings around Frome.
6. We have also obtained funds to purchase two internet ready tablets that we can loan to those Shedders who have no broadband.
7. With the UK Men's Sheds association, we produced and broadcast (On Frome FM, and Source FM (Falmouth), 25 one-hour radio shows "Shed Happens - Even when you're self-isolating" to help Shedders worldwide stay connected.

More information about Community/Men's Sheds can be found at www.menssheds.org.uk you can also find information on covid-19 precautions relevant to Men's sheds and the Street & Walton shed at www.streetmensshed.btck.co.uk