

The background image shows a stone mountain hut with a chimney, situated on a grassy hillside. In the foreground, a wooden bridge with a railing crosses a rocky stream. The scene is set in a mountainous, natural environment with some bare trees and a mix of green and brown vegetation.

Reopening Club Huts During COVID-19

Considerations for Operators and Users

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1. Executive Summary

The BMC supports clubs and other hut operators who are preparing to reopen, and aims to share guidance on good practice between hut operators and hut users in order to minimise the risks of reopening (and of not doing so). This includes commercial considerations. We anticipate that an interim period of temporary measures will be required between initial reopening and a return to something closer to what used to be normal (duration uncertain, but possibly 18+ months). Unless or until a COVID-19 (C-19) vaccine or other treatment is developed or immunity acquired, some elements may not return to normal. Key points considered include:

- Huts enable many thousands of people per year to access the physical and mental health benefits of mountaineering and should reopen as soon as permissible.
- The legal position is varying geographically and over time – operators and users should check what applies to them. Local sensitivities should also be considered.
- Operators will need to review their arrangements when there are revisions to relevant government guidance. Easing of restrictions (especially if for primarily economic reasons) does not oblige operators to relax risk control and mitigation measures.
- C-19-specific risk assessments and method statements should be carried out by operators, then communicated internally and to users.
- Actions are suggested to mitigate the risk – including modifications prior to reopening.
- All parties must comply with actions that are deemed appropriate by the operator at any given location (accepting that all huts differ).
- Occupation density is likely to reduce in many cases, and fewer facilities may be available.
- Operators may choose to only open their huts with 72+ hour gaps between users (e.g. weekends only), or to implement an additional cleaning regime.
- It is particularly important to also address non-C-19 risks such as legionella.
- Operators may be forced to charge higher fees on a temporary basis in order to break even.
- Users are the primary beneficiaries of mountain huts, and have multiple incentives to support operators to reopen huts using the safest and least onerous methods.

Covid-19 risks will be a part of life for the immediate future. Hut operators and hut users each carry responsibilities to reduce these risks as far as is practicable. However, the C-19 risks cannot be completely eliminated, so if individuals are unable or unwilling to accept the residual risks, or their additional responsibilities to minimise risk to themselves and others that will now be a requirement of using huts, then they should not use them at this time.

📷 Front Cover

Bryn Hafod, South Snowdonia.
The Mountain Club Stafford.
Photo: P Salenieks

📷 Bryn Hafod, South
Snowdonia. The Mountain
Club Stafford.

2.0 Context

This is BMC guidance on considerations and good practice for reopening and operating the network of BMC-affiliated club huts – including the three national huts – once their temporary closure during the C-19 lockdown period comes to an end. This guidance applies to both the operators and users of huts – each of whom have responsibilities and incentives for finding workable ways of using huts in these unusual times. As every hut is different, elements may need to be adapted to suit local conditions. BMC guidance is of course subject to and secondary to national and devolved government legal and advisory restrictions, and the requirements of other interested parties such as insurers. Government restrictions and advice are evolving on at least a weekly basis as the epidemic progresses and understanding of the disease and virus develops.

Huts are a key component in facilitating climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers to access upland areas on an ongoing basis, with all the physical and mental health benefits and associated socio-economic contributions this brings. They provide very low cost basic accommodation on a not-for-profit basis, and are used extensively by the c. 50 clubs that operate them and the c. 200 other clubs that use them, plus educational and other groups. They are thus a direct benefit to tens of thousands of people every year, and the BMC's aim throughout has been to ensure that there are as many clubs and huts when we return to the outdoors as there were at the start of C-19. Everyone accepts that overnight meets are currently on hold during lockdown, but club

committees are very keen to ensure that clubs remain viable going forward. Many clubs base their mountaineering activities around hut meets, and those clubs without their own huts depend on having a forward programme of bookings at other clubs' huts to attract and retain members. Hut operators are encouraged to accept bookings for future meets, but on a conditional basis subject to legal and practical considerations. This gives the operator greater security of future bookings plus deposits in their accounts, and gives the user clubs something to market to their members. If those future bookings cannot be honoured, then with understanding from all involved, they can be rolled over to the next mutually acceptable date.



📍 Helyg, Ogwen Valley,
Snowdonia. Climbers' Club.

3.0 Legal and Societal Considerations

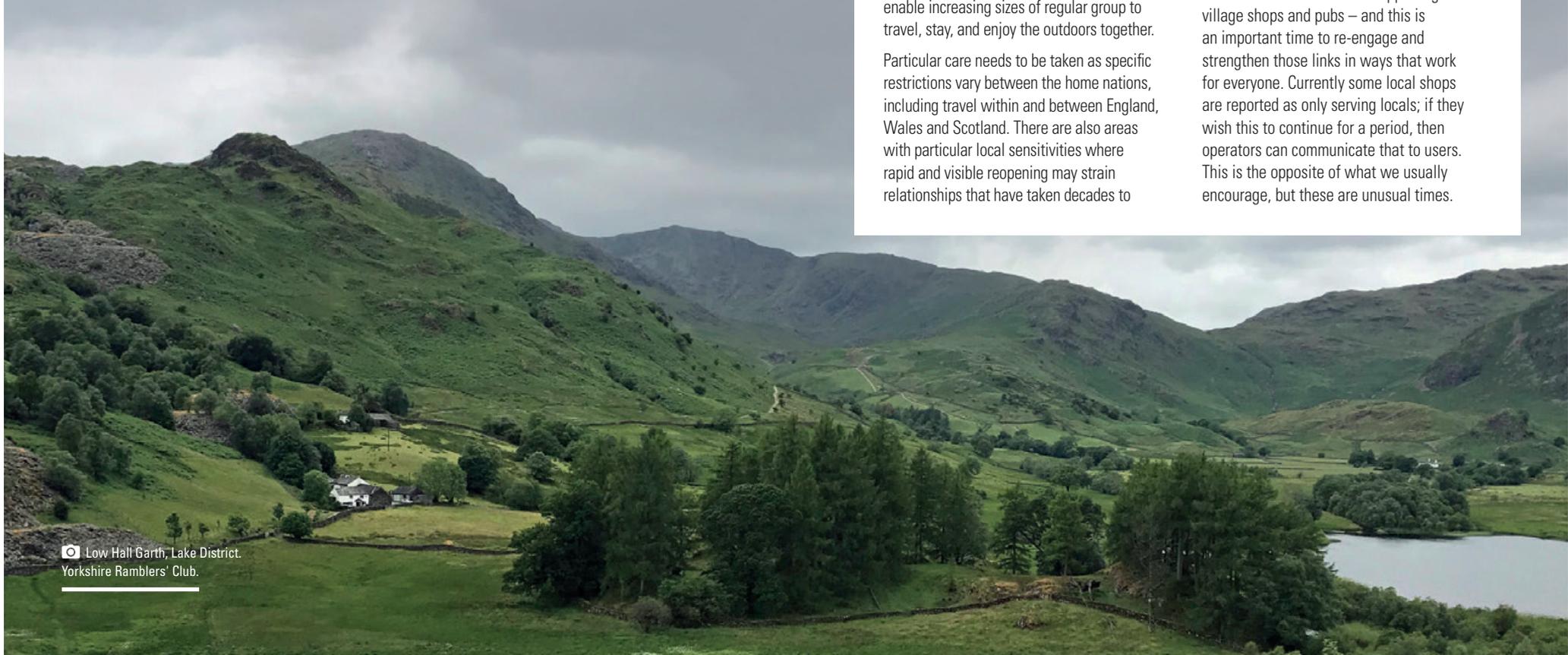
At the time of writing, all forms of overnight accommodation for leisure, away from home, are required to be closed, but the first partial relaxation of restrictions has just been announced for England for summer 2020. There is unlikely to be a specific announcement about huts in each home nation; they will probably be grouped with self-catering accommodation, bunkhouses and campsites, with which they have similarities but also differences. We understand that guidelines are being prepared by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Outdoor Industries Association that will cover these, and will share them when available.

The size and nature of 'gathering' permitted is also a factor: currently the traditional concept of a club meet is not viable (other than very small day meets). Until indoor gatherings of larger size are permitted, huts will be unable to return to any form of normality. If the 'social bubble' concept develops (where social distancing need not be maintained between members of a defined group, in a similar way to a household), then gatherings of extended families and/or regular social groups will enable increasing sizes of regular group to travel, stay, and enjoy the outdoors together.

Particular care needs to be taken as specific restrictions vary between the home nations, including travel within and between England, Wales and Scotland. There are also areas with particular local sensitivities where rapid and visible reopening may strain relationships that have taken decades to

develop. Information on this is shared on the BMC website as it becomes known. In many cases, communicating with interested parties such as landlords, neighbours & local landowners, Parish Councils and others is important, in order to explain the measures and emphasise the care with which they are being implemented to reduce the risk to locals as well as operators and users.

Huts can play a useful role in many local communities – not least in supporting village shops and pubs – and this is an important time to re-engage and strengthen those links in ways that work for everyone. Currently some local shops are reported as only serving locals; if they wish this to continue for a period, then operators can communicate that to users. This is the opposite of what we usually encourage, but these are unusual times.



Low Hall Garth, Lake District.
Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.



Lowstern, Yorkshire.
Yorkshire Ramblers' Club.

4.0 Risk & Responsibility

As mountaineers, we're used to operating in scenarios where risk exists, dynamically assessing the extent to which we can reduce it, and what residual risk we're willing to accept in order to realise the associated benefits. C-19 is currently part of the risk of mountaineering, just as it is with the rest of life, so we adapt to an interim 'new normal'. Many of the risk-mitigation measures that will apply to huts are likely to have become socially normal by the time huts reopen. However, there are also specifics to consider.

Hut operators and huts users have responsibilities to reduce the risks presented by C-19 where practicable, and acceptance of the residual risk to health remains with individual users. If individuals are unable or unwilling to accept the residual risks or their additional responsibilities to minimise risk to themselves and others that will now be a requirement of using huts, then they should not use them.

We understand that prior to reopening, self-catering accommodation will be required to carry out a C-19-specific risk assessment for each premises, and determine measures to minimise those risks. We therefore strongly urge all hut operators to produce a written risk assessment and method statement showing risk control and mitigation measures, including changes to facilities and their use, and to send those to prospective users. Users should confirm receipt and acceptance of both their duties and the residual risk. Clarity on what measures are to be taken and by whom will minimise inaccurate assumptions and misunderstanding, increase awareness of residual risks, and ultimately minimise risks and liability for all involved. The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly as the risk control and mitigation measures are implemented in the hut, in the light of experience, and when other factors – such as C-19 infection

levels and changed government guidance – alter the original basis of the risk assessment. Feedback from users should be encouraged and where appropriate, incorporated.

There are few differences in the risk presented by internal or external bookings or those from groups or individuals, provided that behaviours are the same. What matters is how likely people are to catch the virus, whether they might be at greater risk of complications if they do so, and what measures they take to reduce transmission to others if they become infected. Although people are likely to be more confident in mitigating risk with those they know, ultimately it is irrelevant whom they caught it from, or how well they knew them!

Regardless of the amount of prior cleaning and disinfecting, nothing can eliminate the risk. Provided all reasonable measures are taken to minimise the risk presented by the hut (or to be specific, the previous users of it), the current users – even if all of them tested negative prior to departure – may still have contact with the virus (e.g. at motorway services) en route to the meet and bring it to the hut with them. They are highly likely to be pre-symptomatic during the meet, and though some meet attendees might become symptomatic after the meet, there would be no way of knowing how and from whom they caught it.

5.0 Types of Accommodation and Facilities

There are differences between huts, but also some common considerations. The following specifics may be pertinent:

- **Declutter.** If it isn't present, then it can't hold the virus. Until the risks lessen, operators should have a serious look at their huts and remove/put away anything that doesn't directly benefit the user. It may become stark and minimalist, but if there is less to touch and breathe on, then there is less to disinfect. Turning open shelving into glazed cabinets will reduce what's likely to be touched and what then might need to be cleaned and disinfected. Make it as easy for everyone as you can.
- **Distancing.** In most cases the risk can be partially mitigated by planning for lower levels of occupancy than previously permitted/required, but elements will remain. Few huts have scope for one-way systems; as with shops and other 'public' areas, users should endeavour to face away from others that they need to pass. Having good ventilation is also encouraged, and wedging open of doors (subject to revised fire risk assessments) will improve ventilation and help reduce contact with door handles.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).** Use of face coverings and other PPE is a further measure to consider, in accordance with Government advice, and is something that users can bring with them rather than being provided by the hut operator. Be mindful of the consequences if you advise excessive use of PPE, as this may mean that those for whom it is essential may find it harder to source. Also, if PPE is specified as mandatory, then running out of it will mean that the hut cannot be used until more is sourced.
- **Sleeping Accommodation.** Huts with small discrete bedrooms will be able to offer those to families or 'social bubbles' relatively easily, enabling reasonable levels of occupancy. Those with dormitory-style accommodation will require different

approaches – either allocating sole occupancy to a family or 'bubble', or if the dorm is large, allocating separate parts of it to allow for social distancing, with additional marking if required. The erection of screening between 'family' sleeping bays would further reduce the risk of transmitting airborne disease whilst sleeping. However, to be effective these would need to be floor to ceiling, separating the dorm into mini-rooms. However, this may inhibit a most important aspect of risk reduction in shared spaces – good ventilation – so assessments of what is most appropriate for each dorm will be needed. Those huts that have space outside to permit small tents or camper vans to be used may wish to encourage this in order to reduce occupation density inside. Where feasible, holding what are effectively 'camping meets' at huts may offer earlier prospects of resuming activities.

- **Toilets.** These are the least optional of hut facilities, and also where users might be most at risk. Resumption of most forms of travel and overnight accommodation will require people to use public conveniences, including those at motorway services en route to the hut. Minimising the number of surfaces touched and disinfecting those that cannot be avoided will reduce the risk, but we are unaware of any organisation that plans to sanitise every toilet in between every use – it just isn't practicable, even for those that employ full time cleaners. Operators should ideally ensure that all toilets have lids, and users should ensure that they close them before flushing to reduce the range of airborne particles that could subsequently land on any adjacent surface. Operators may wish to encourage users to wipe the toilet handle and cubicle door handle with a disinfection spray and paper towel after each use. Using all fresco facilities may reduce the C-19 risks, but introduces other environmental and public health issues and so is not an acceptable substitute (unless following ethical codes as part of true wild camping). The land immediately around huts must not become substitute toilets. Operators with sufficient facilities may wish to number cubicles and sinks, with each 'bubble' allocated a specific sink and toilet to use.
- **Shower Rooms.** These are shared facilities, and invariably operate on some form of queueing or informal rota system to enable use (we aren't

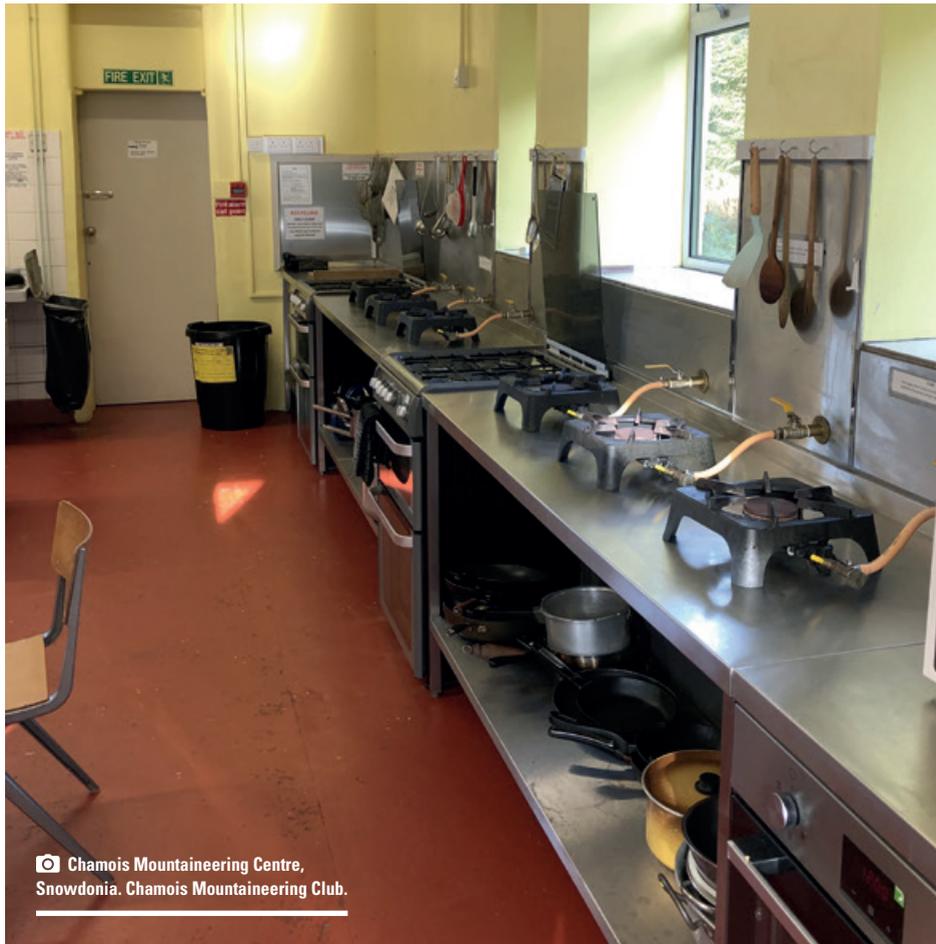


PHOTO: THE CHAMOIS MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

- aware of any huts that state restrictions on who can, for example, shower together – users have successfully worked this out for themselves!). Given the warm, humid atmosphere, confined spaces and general lack of ventilation in most shower cubicles, it will be virtually impossible to eliminate the virus (if present) from the air and surfaces between consecutive shower users. Operators may choose to close showers for the present, but if available, the responsibility for deciding if to accept the risk of using a shower sits firmly with the user. It is impossible not to touch surfaces (or yourself!) whilst showering, but on the plus side, coronavirus are enveloped viruses and are killed by washing with soap and water. Choosing to avoid the use of showers whilst on a meet will remove that element of exposure to the user, and as a bonus, if that follows a sweaty day on the hills, that is likely to also help enforce social distancing of at least two metres!
- **Kitchens.** Ensuring adequate distancing within kitchens may require informal rotas to be agreed, along with enhanced etiquettes of tidying and cleaning everything immediately after use. Some hut kitchens are large enough for a number of people to use them concurrently, perhaps helped with the addition of marked areas. Users are encouraged to reduce risk further by either adopting and disinfecting a set of crockery, cutlery, etc. for the duration of their stay (if sufficient is available), or bringing their own

from home for their personal use, as they would when camping. Operators might consider providing a dishwasher to give consistency in high temperature cleaning & disinfecting, but many will feel that this is excessive gentrification in what are intended as basic facilities. Where viable, some users may wish to cook outside using their own camping cookers in order to reduce exposure, occupation density and delays inside. Communal meals are probably out for the time being, and communal washing up cloths, hand towels and tea towels should be avoided (not a consideration limited to C-19!).

- **Living Rooms.** Usage levels will again depend on the space available, ventilation, and some zoning/grouping of chairs may assist in social distancing.
- **Drying Rooms.** Cramped, poorly ventilated enclosed spaces are probably the most appealing location for a virus to linger. Seriously consider not using these during this interim phase – where possible have a second set of clothing and kit available and take used items home for washing and drying.
- **Signage.** Additional signage may be appropriate, such as hand washing, maintaining distances, or to keep communal areas clean and disinfected.
- **Parking.** Increased social distancing whilst travelling will result in lower levels of car-sharing. If coupled with corresponding lower density of hut occupancy, then the number of vehicles that need to park during a meet may not significantly change. Hut operators with limited parking and sensitive neighbours may choose to stipulate in advance the maximum parking capacity for users to comply with.
- **External Areas.** These are likely to see higher levels of use than previously. Operators might consider how users can make greater use of them and communicate this to users before their visit. Provision of a washing line might mitigate some of the function of a closed drying room, though it is clearly weather-dependent. Some operators are considering introducing external showers (aka 'surfer showers') to maximise ventilation and UV exposure. To reduce other aspects of exposure whilst in 'public view', some etiquette might be adopted, such as wearing of swimming costumes or equivalent. That would make the experience for both the user and any audience similar to a swimming pool shower (only colder!).



Chamois Mountaineering Centre,
Snowdonia. Chamois Mountaineering Club.

6.0 Cleaning & Disinfecting

Cleaning has now become a much higher priority than before C-19, to which is now added the further requirement for disinfection. There is also a greater expectation that hut users will keep the hut clean and disinfected during their stay, particularly shared surfaces. Hut users have in most cases always been required to clean at the end of the stay, and this will now need to be more rigorous than may previously have been the case.

Our suggestions for aspects to consider can be found in the appendices to this document.

General Government guidance is given here:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

Further Government advice on the use of accommodation with shared facilities is expected imminently, and it will be available here
www.thebmc.co.uk/covid19-reopening-huts

7.0 Bookings

There are likely to be procedural differences between internal and external bookings, whether they are block-bookings of whole huts, or bookings from individuals. Subject to any specific government requirements, hut operators will need to determine what modifications they need to make to their procedures, and specify which requirements sit with the operator and with the user. A booking condition should be that users need to comply with whatever the operator requires. Some points to consider:

- **Scheduling.** The virus has a limited life outside hosts such as the human body. Reports indicate that this can vary from as little as 20 minutes outdoors in direct sunlight, through to c. 72 hours indoors on hard surfaces like plastic or stainless steel. Huts are typically heavily used at weekends, with much lower usage on weekdays. Residual risk from previous occupants is therefore likely to be minimal if huts are restricted to only be used at weekends, and left empty between Monday and Friday (or vice versa). Huts wishing to offer accommodation without a 72+ hour gap between bookings should consider a deeper clean and disinfection schedule between bookings. However, employing visiting cleaners is only likely to be viable in a few cases.
- **Use of Consumables.** A more structured or rigorous approach for reporting the use of consumables provided by the operator may be needed to ensure that the next users have access to sufficient stocks. Operators should be clear on what they will provide, and what users should provide.
- **Track and Trace.** Although most huts have a log book for recording the names of visitors, these are not always completed rigorously, and by design rarely contain contact details (for compliance with data protection regulations, etc.). For Track and Trace to work in the event of an outbreak, a mandatory record of all attendees must be kept, to at least include full names, contact numbers and exact dates of those staying (not just arrival). This should be retained by a nominated person for a reasonable period (e.g. up to a month) until no cases that could have coincided with the meet have been reported. If cases are reported, then the nominated person or infected person should immediately contact the relevant Track and Trace system(s) so that individuals can be notified. The hut operator should also be notified.
- **Internal Bookings – Meets.** The meet organiser deals with advance bookings and can be made responsible for ensuring that C-19 related user responsibilities are discharged.
- **Internal Bookings – On Spec.** Many operators traditionally permit members to turn up on-spec without prior booking. Any previously flexible attitude to ‘squeezing a few more in’ if many turn up concurrently will make social distancing more difficult and is likely to generate more resistance from those present. There may also be fewer alternative places for surplus members to go if they are turned away. Operators should seriously consider how viable this approach is in the immediate future compared to compulsory advance booking, and if retained, communicate in advance precise parameters on what is now acceptable.
- **External Bookings.** These are easier to manage as the user responsibilities can be passed in their entirety to be discharged by the external meet organiser responsible for the booking.
- **Exclusive Bookings.** These are also easier to deal with and operators with members’ rooms might consider making those available as part of the exclusive external booking.
- **Family/Bubble-Only Bookings:** These are the easiest to deal with – treating the whole hut effectively as a self-catering unit. Unless there are a reasonable number of people in the bubble, these may not be financially viable for some operators.
- **Day Visitors.** These are rarely a major part of hut operation, but would place demands on at least some facilities, so need to be considered as part of the reopening plans.

8.0 Commercial Considerations

Huts are generally operated on not-for-profit basis, to provide basic facilities in amazing places at very low cost for the benefit of the members of operators' clubs and the wider mountaineering community. They are often cottages and former barns that have been re-purposed for group use. Few generate a recognisable 'profit', with any surplus usually being re-invested in hut maintenance. Some huts generate sufficient income to also cover renewals/replacements and occasional improvements, whilst others require separate fundraising.



PHOTO: AMMH

Operating costs vary – most significantly depending on whether the freehold is owned, or a lease or mortgage has to be paid. Huts are not commercial bunkhouses, and care is needed when drawing parallels. One significant difference that enables huts to charge significantly less than bunkhouses is that traditionally the responsibility for visit-to-visit cleaning rests with the users, who clean thoroughly on exit. Very few huts have resident wardens or paid cleaners, and most wardens deal primarily with re-stocking consumables, and repairing or replacing things that break or wear out during normal wear and tear.



PHOTO: ALEX MESSENGER

Compared to the pre-C-19 operating model, any of the following will reduce income:

- Reducing maximum occupancy to improve social distancing or not exceed parking capacity.
- Prohibiting over-occupancy to facilitate social distancing.
- Taking weekend-only or other reduced bookings to reduce exposure risk.
- Excluding external bookings – reducing both the total number of bookings and bookings that pay a premium 'guest' rate.
- Excluding on-spec hut usage by members – only those that plan ahead will stay.

Similarly, any of the following will increase cost:

- Supply of additional cleaning and disinfecting materials.
- Engagement of professional cleaning services.
- Replacement of soft furnishings with wipe-clean equivalents.
- Physical modifications to huts.

Most huts that responded to the BMC survey in April 2020 indicated that they had reserves of between 3 and 12 months. Many (but not all) have had these boosted by the recent government grants such as the Small Business Rates Relief – adding typically a further 3 to 12 months of reserves. However, with total lockdown already exceeding 3 months, reopening possibly a few more weeks away, and subsequent interim restrictions likely to last longer than a year, operators need to establish the new interim basis for their huts to remain commercially viable. It would be most disappointing if – having survived lockdown – any club huts were unable to remain viable in the new normal of the next year or two. Some hut operators may be forced to temporarily increase hut fees in order to break-even, reverting to more conventional fee levels after the interim restrictions have lifted.



PHOTO: ROB SEYMOUR

9.0 Conclusion

In essence, the aims are to:

- Strike a balance between reducing the risk of infection to an acceptable level and deterring huts from reopening through being too onerous.
- Take all reasonable measures (e.g. cleaning & disinfection, social distancing, personal hygiene and catering arrangements) to reduce transmission of infection during a booking and between successive bookings.

In conjunction with physical measures to reduce risk, by cleaning and then disinfecting the hut on departure, with a long enough gap between bookings to minimise the risk of transmission between hut guests on successive bookings, plus an optional clean and disinfect on arrival, it should be physically possible to reopen huts when it is permissible to do so. This applies whether cleaning is done by hut operators, huts users, or a combination of both.

With regular income inevitably reducing and costs increasing, it is highly likely that operators will need to charge more per person per night for hut use during this interim period in order to break even. It is very much in the interests of users to carry out their own cleaning and disinfecting of the hut at each visit, both for their own safety and peace of mind, and in order that charges do not need to be increased further.

Through careful social distancing and considered use of communal facilities, users will still be able to stay at huts – albeit in reduced numbers in some cases. However, there will be some residual risk of exposure to C-19 from staying at huts and travelling to them, so only those that are able and willing to accept that risk should use huts at this time. Users who accept their additional responsibilities and the residual risks will again be able to use huts and enjoy the exceptional access to the hills that huts facilitate.

Appendix A

– Key Considerations Prior to Reopening

These are some ideas on how hut operators can be in the best position when reopening is permitted.

A.1 Insurance during and following lockdown

The huts property insurance policy from Hiscox (the insurer for those huts taking property insurance via Howden) has maximum periods of non-occupancy and the frequency of internal and external checks. This has again been extended for the period of lockdown from the original 30 days (as per insurance schedule) to 90 days and now to 180 days which runs up to 16/09/2020. The requirement to 'board up' huts that are unoccupied has been extended correspondingly.

Guidance from the Howden Group is available

at this link [www.thebmc.co.uk/covid19-reopening-huts]. Please note that this is general guidance covering clubs in the many sports that Howden insure, and though not all aspects will apply to mountaineering clubs or huts, it highlights a lot of good practice and provides links to further information.

For those with alternative insurance policies, the hut operator will need to contact their insurer.

A.2 When the hut is allowed to reopen

The situation is currently different across England, Wales and Scotland with each government setting their own time scales and plans for the easing of the lockdown restrictions. It is likely that the reopening of huts in these three nations will happen at

different times, and the extent to which they can open may also vary. It is unlikely that mountain huts will be mentioned specifically; we may need to align with self-catering accommodation with communal facilities.

A.3 Checking the safety of the hut

Hut operators will need to ensure that any testing requirements that are now out-of-date (due to not being able to access the hut during lockdown) are now dealt with and tests booked in as soon as reasonably possible with the relevant organisation(s). This includes:

- Fire equipment checks
- Smoke, CO2, etc alarms
- Gas checks
- Electric (incl. PAT) checks
- Water systems
- Heating systems

A.4 Maintaining drinking water quality

Most huts will have been dormant since lockdown restrictions came in to force and consideration is required when reinstating water supplies. Hut operators should be aware of the importance of maintaining a clean and safe drinking water supply

with consideration given to potential water-borne diseases such as Legionella. This is especially important with private supplies.

- Further advice is available from the Drinking Water Inspectorate www.dwi.gov.uk and within this letter from the DWI www.thebmc.co.uk/covid19-reopening-huts

A.5 Preopening Clean & Modifications

Huts that have been closed for a number of months should present no C-19 risk from pre-lockdown, but may have become dusty. They may also have been left in a hurry, and at a time when cleaning was less thorough. Give the hut a thorough 'spring clean'; de-clutter and remove any non-essential items to reduce what needs to be cleaned and disinfected subsequently. Remember that once someone enters the property risk of infection returns to the hut.

Carry out a C-19 Risk Assessment, produce a corresponding method statement to mitigate the risks, and carry out any modifications that this process identifies as required. Install any signage or other markings that will reinforce distancing requirements.



© Glen Brittle
Memorial Hut, Skye.

Appendix B – Cleaning and Disinfecting Considerations

B.1 Why cleaning of huts is more important than ever:

Cleanliness has now got to be a priority for hut users - it's critical as we all aim to reduce the spread of infection. It is possible for someone to contract C-19 by touching a contaminated surface—like a doorknob or light switch—and the virus may live on some surfaces for several hours or even days. That's why it's essential to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces often.

B.2 The difference between disinfecting and cleaning:

When it comes to preventing the spread of viruses and bacteria it helps to understand the difference between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning is the act of removing germs, dirt, and impurities (like when you use a soapy sponge to wipe off a visibly dirty counter or stovetop). Disinfecting is when you use chemicals to kill germs and bacteria (like spraying with a disinfectant bleach solution). By cleaning then disinfecting, you can lower the risk of infection.

B.3 What cleaning programme needs to be undertaken by hut operators:

The type of cleaning programme needed will depend on the frequency of bookings:

- If the hut operator chooses to allow a minimum of 72 hours between each booking then cleansing by the hut operator is not required between bookings.
- If the decision is that bookings will be allowed more frequently than 72 hours then the hut operator will need to arrange for a cleaning regime between each booking. See Appendix C.
- It is recommended that a thorough clean and disinfection is undertaken by the hut operator prior to the hut being reopened.

B.4 Suitable products:

Check that the products provided in the hut are suitable for killing the virus. If existing products are not suitable, then alternatives will need to be provided. Consider whether additional cleaning implements, such as

cloths, need to be provided. Additional disinfecting may be required in communal areas and therefore appropriate products, such as hand sanitiser gel, may need to be provided.

For those huts with septic tanks, check that the disinfectant that will kill the 'bad bugs' in the hut are not also going to inadvertently kill the 'good bugs' in your septic tank. Whatever approach is needed (e.g. minimising the quantity of disinfectant that enters drains), be especially clear on this to users.

Many huts provide baskets for hut users to leave used tea towels and cloths in for the hut operator to wash. Consider providing bags that can be closed by the hut user prior to departure, or ask hut users to provide their own tea towels and cleaning cloths, or only provide disposable wipes (bio-degradable where possible).

B.5 Telling hut users about your cleaning routine

When taking hut bookings provide information on the additional steps you are taking to reduce the spread of infection. It's a good idea to mention your cleaning routine in your listing description. If you do, please be careful about the words you choose—while it's okay to say that you're taking extra care to disinfect your space due to C-19, you can't make unsubstantiated claims, like calling your space "COVID-free-".

Remind hut users to clean and disinfect the hut at the end of their stay, and to keep it clean during their stay with specific consideration to hard surfaces. A list of items to be cleaned and disinfected is detailed in C13.

B.6 Helping hut users protect themselves:

Like you, many hut users will want to take extra steps to reduce their risk of infection. You can help encourage social distancing by implementing specific signage and informing users when making a hut booking.

To help hut users maintain a higher standard of cleanliness and hygiene, make sure your hut is well-stocked with items such as hand soap, paper towels and toilet paper. Hut operators may also wish to install hand sanitiser dispensers (e.g. near to entrances and high use areas such as kitchens).

B.7 Disposing of refuse and recycling:

Items for refuse or recycling should be disposed of in the bins provided at the hut, or removed by the users. Any refuse, including disposable wipes, should be bagged in a bin bag and securely tied before placing in the bin for collection.

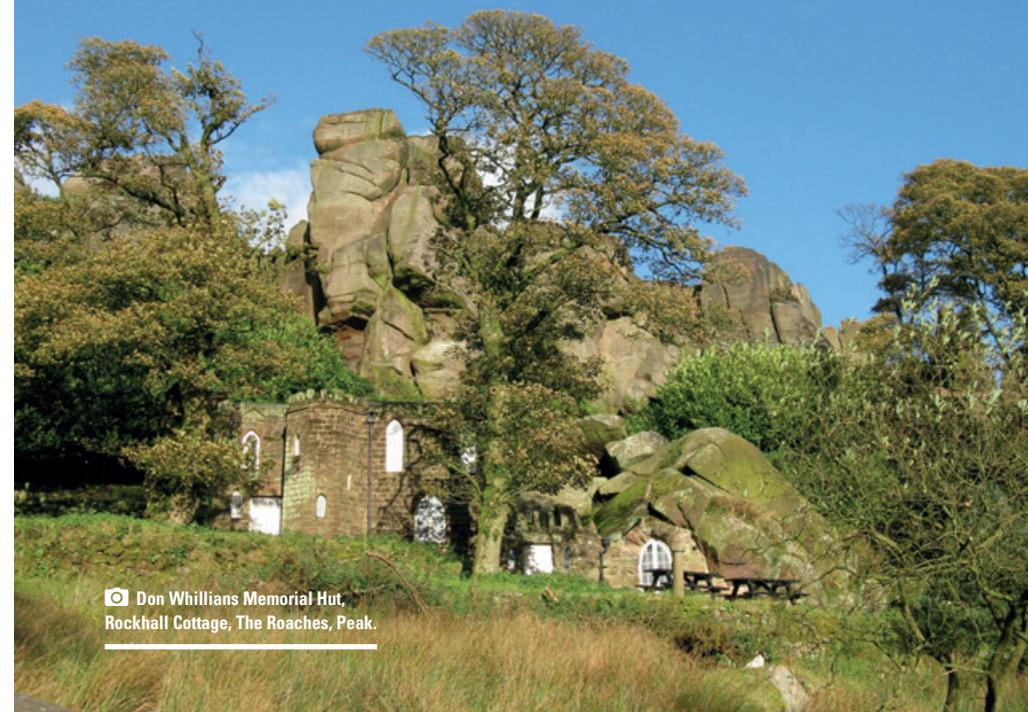
Advice on protecting refuse collectors appears to be to bag all waste associated with disinfecting, and ensure that at least 72 hours has passed before it is collected. Depending on the days of hut usage and days for refuse collection, a segregation and/or 'dispose after X date' labelling may be needed, so that some waste is not collected until the next visit.

The alternative approach of treating waste associated with disinfection as clinical waste is likely to be prohibitively expensive and impractical, as the infrastructure to collect and deal with clinical waste may not exist in remote mountain areas.

B.8 A positive C-19 test:

If a hut user tests positive while staying at the hut, or within 72 hours of departing the hut, then a deeper clean may be required. Follow Government advice on the steps to take:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings



Don Whillians Memorial Hut, Rockhall Cottage, The Roaches, Peak.

Appendix C – Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidelines

Research suggests that the virus can live up to 72 hours on certain surfaces. Where hut users are permitted to stay in the hut with less than 72 hours between bookings, hut operators are advised to follow these guidelines, adjusted to suit each hut. It may be necessary for some huts to have a cleaning operative or hut warden.

C.1 Wear protective gear while you clean. Personal protective items like disposable gloves, aprons or gowns, and facial coverings (such as homemade or purchased masks) can provide additional protection. Make sure to wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.

C.2 Ventilate rooms before you clean. Opening outside doors and windows and using ventilation fans (if available) to increase air circulation in the hut before beginning to clean and disinfect.

C.3 Wash your hands thoroughly before and after each cleaning. Use soap and water, and wash for at least 20 seconds. If that's not possible, use a hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.

C.4 Be aware of the ignition risk of high-alcohol cleaners. Do not smoke whilst cleaning, or clean next to naked flames. Take particular care whilst cleaning near parts of kitchens that are in use, and keep containers of high-alcohol cleaning fluid stored out of direct sunlight and used away from naked flames – at least one explosion has occurred already.

C.5 Clean, then disinfect. Use detergent or soap and water to remove dirt, grease, dust, and germs. Once the surface is clean, spray with a disinfectant. Let it stand for a few minutes, then wipe—and if you're not using paper towels or disposable wipes, it's best to use a new cleaning cloth for each booking.

C.6 Avoid touching your face while cleaning. To prevent the spread of germs, it is recommended to not touch your face, nose, and eyes with unwashed hands—so pay extra attention when cleaning.

C.7 Use the right disinfectant. Most common household disinfectants as well as cleaning solutions with diluted household bleach or at least 70% alcohol are believed to be effective against coronavirus. Check that the products used in the hut will kill viruses. Pay

special attention to frequently touched surfaces, like light switches, doorknobs, remote controls.

C.8 Don't forget about sofas, mattresses, rugs, drapes and other soft, porous surfaces. Carefully remove any visible dirt or grime, and then clean with the appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. Hut operators may wish to temporarily remove some items that hold an increased risk, such as pillow and cushions.

C.9 Wash all linens at the highest heat setting recommended by the manufacturer. That includes bed sheets, mattress covers. Remember to wear gloves when handling dirty laundry, and take care to avoid shaking laundry, which could increase the spread of germs. This is particularly relevant to huts that provide tea towels or pillowcases.

C.10 Empty the vacuum cleaner after every cleaning. You should wipe down the vacuum cleaner with disinfectant.

C.11 Dispose of or wash your cleaning supplies. If you're using paper towels, disinfectant wipes, and other disposable cleaning supplies, take the rubbish out after you're done (see also B7). If you're using cleaning cloths and other reusable products, make sure to place them in a sealed bag until they can be machine-washed at the highest heat setting appropriate for the material.

C.12 Safely remove any cleaning gear. When you've finished cleaning, immediately remove any protective outerwear like gowns, gloves, or masks with due care, and dispose of them or wash accordingly. Remember to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds afterwards.

If a hut user tests positive while staying at the hut, or within 72 hours of departing the hut, then a deeper clean may be required. Follow Government advice on the steps to take -

www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

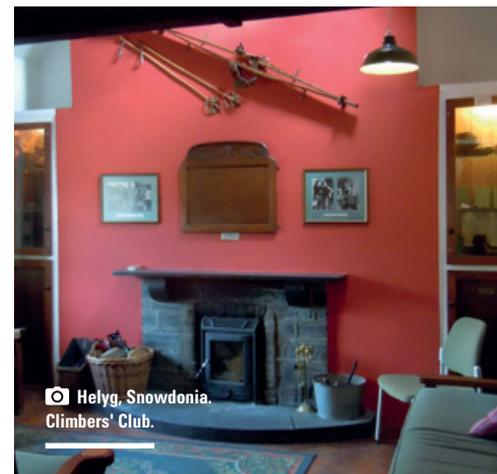


PHOTO: THE CLIMBERS' CLUB

C.13 Checklist of items to clean and disinfect in the hut

This will need to be adjusted according to the agreed process for each hut. Operators may wish to further limit the risk by temporarily removing some of these items from the hut.

Users should clean and disinfect the following items on departure from the hut, and users may wish to provide themselves with further reassurance by also carrying out an optional disinfection on arrival. Also, during a stay when more than one household/bubble is using the same communal facilities it is important that communal surfaces, particularly high-touch hard surfaces such as door handles, light switches, taps and worktops are cleaned and disinfected regularly.



PHOTO: ROB SEYMOUR

General:

- Doorknobs / door handles
- Surfaces
- Light switches
- Tables
- Hard-backed chairs
- Window sills and window handles
- Thermostats
- Keys
- Rubbish and recycling bins

Kitchen:

- Sinks
- Worktop and table surfaces
- Appliances: oven, kettle, toaster, cooker, microwave, coffee maker, etc. especially knobs and switches
- Condiments: oil, salt and pepper shakers, commonly used spices and containers, etc.
- Kitchenware: cutlery, ceramic mugs, plates, bowls, kids' plastic-ware, etc.
- Food boxes

Bathroom:

- Sinks
- Toilets
- Toilet handles
- Showers
- Shower curtains and doors
- Soap dispensers
- Toilet brushes

Bedroom/Dormitories:

- Sleeping Mattresses
- Shelves

Other amenities:

- Games
- Books
- Ornaments



Tranearth, Lake District.
Lancashire Climbing and Caving Club.

Appendix D

– Information and Advice for Hut Users

Hut operators may wish to consider including some or all of the following points for their club members and those wishing to book the hut:

- Those staying in the hut must accept that there are risks inherent with their stay and no guarantees can be provided that the hut will be a coronavirus-free environment. Requests to stay at the hut denote acceptance of that risk.
- Those at higher risk of C-19 may wish to consider whether staying in a hut is appropriate for them, or they may wish to take further steps, such as providing their own bed linen (sheets, pillows) and personal crockery, cutlery and cooking utensils.
- To manage occupancy, operators may restrict use of the hut and grounds to individuals or groups who have booked in advance.
- Only one group/booking allowed in the hut at any one time.
- A reduced maximum may be allowed to be in or stay in the hut at any time.
- Only one household group or social bubble may stay in a bedroom / dormitory.
- Anyone presenting any of the recognised symptoms of C-19 must not use the hut.
- Anyone developing symptoms while at the hut or immediately after must contact the meet organiser and hut booking secretary.
- Groups booking the hut will be expected to hold the contact details of all those staying at the hut for track and trace purposes.
- There is greater expectation that hut users will keep the hut clean during their stay, particularly shared surfaces.
- Hut users should clean and disinfect kitchen utensils, cutlery and crockery before the first use at the start of their stay.
- Hut users will clean and disinfect the hut at the end of their stay.
- Hut users may wish to provide their own antiseptic wipes to clean door handles, key safes or other hard surfaces on arrival and during their stay as an extra precaution.
- A minimum of 72 hours will be observed between bookings. The hut will therefore only be available for bookings between Thursdays at 4p.m. and Monday at 12 noon, or between Monday evening and Friday morning if unoccupied on for 72 hours before and after.
- Hut users should provide their own pillows, pillow cases, t-towels, dish cloths and hand towels. These must be removed by the user at the end of their stay.



📷 Fronwydyr, Nant Peris, Snowdonia.
London Mountaineering Club.
Photo: London Mountaineering Club

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