COVEN MEMORIAL HALL



Coven Memorial Hall

64-68 Brewood Road

Coven

WV9 5DL

CIO 120998

10th March 2026

Dear Dr Ahmed and colleagues,

Re: Use of Rooms at Coven Memorial Hall and Future Options for Healthcare Provision

[Redacted: confidential correspondence]

Trustees of the Coven Memorial Hall are community volunteers, many of whom are representatives of community groups which use the Hall. None of the Trustees have any expertise in matters of charity law nor healthcare provision. In order to try to return the provision of healthcare to Coven, the Trustees have sought out advice and guidance to ensure decisions were fully informed and appropriate.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Unsuccessfully approaching the ICB for a full list of their requirements to ensure the rooms met Clinical Standards.
- Speaking to the MP Sir Gavin Williamson to see if there were any support he could offer in obtaining a response from the ICB or how we could seek to return the provision of healthcare to Coven
- Discussions with Support Staffordshire as part of the Staffordshire Village Halls Network, to advise us around the objects of our Charity
- Discussion with our solicitor to ensure that we were acting within our charitable duties and requirements.

The advice we received centres around the constitutional document for the Hall. Upon this we have been advised that our Charity funds can only be expended in furtherance of the objects of the Charity, which does not extend to clinical provision.

4. Objects

The Object of the CIO is, for the public benefit the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of the inhabitants of Coven and the surrounding area without distinction of political, religious or other opinions including use for:-

(a) Meetings, lectures and classes; and

(b) other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

It is our understanding that the purpose of a village hall is not to fulfil charitable objects for the provision of healthcare. The objects of the village hall charity are the provision of community space for recreational purposes. The refurbishments mentioned in a prior

discussion with yourselves around our provision of clinically required upgrades such as clinical sinks or examination beds would not fall into appropriate expenditure to fulfil our objects.

We have taken the advice and guidance we have been given to support our decision making and decline your assertion that we have misrepresented law. We intend to follow the legal advice we have received and if possible within this guidance, restore healthcare provision to Coven. We understand that your preferred resolution may not align with what we believe we must do to remain compliant with our responsibilities for the charity. We seek to explore the options available to us under the advice we have been given. We hold the Hall under trust of the community and it is our responsibility to ensure the longevity of the Hall for future generations of Coven.

As we understand the advice we have received, the Trustees must act only within the charitable objects of the Trust and the Trustees cannot lawfully spend charity money to upgrade or subsidise facilities for a business, even if the business provides public benefit. This means that the Trustees cannot apply funds towards refurbishing space for a business or subsidising rent. Nor can the Trustees make improvements to common areas solely to enable a commercial service unless it were directly within the charitable objects and any private benefit were incidental and unavoidable.

[Redacted: confidential correspondence]

With reference to the common area of the John Williams room which has historically been utilised as a waiting room, we again have not received details from the ICB about their requirements for this room. There has been a previous mention of removing the carpets from this room which the Trustees were unable to support due to this area being utilised by other community groups. We would be happy to discuss refreshing the room, provided the financial investment from the Hall did not step into the provision of clinical upgrades, nor impact the use of the room for other hirers.

You invite the Trustees to serve notice which we do not intend to do. Our priority is to continue discussions and work towards a solution that supports the community while respecting the legal framework within which both parties must operate. Serving notice at this stage would not assist in achieving that aim.

We note your proposal to site a temporary modular clinical facility on the areas shown in your letter. Unfortunately, the locations you have identified would significantly interfere with the operation of the Hall, including access for community groups, regular hirers, events such as weddings and would potentially cause access and health and safety obstructions. For this reason, we cannot agree to the siting of a portacabin in those positions nor a consultation on the use of those areas.

However, we remain open to exploring alternatives. You previously enquired about the possibility of a brick-built structure behind the Hall, and we are willing to revisit that area as a potential location for a temporary modular unit. We are happy to discuss required investigations into the suitability of the land, including any planning, access, and ground-condition

considerations. We are unaware of subsidence nor any flooding to this area, although the car park flooded in 2020 with overspill from water in Greenacres.

Next steps

We remain committed to constructive engagement and again would welcome a meeting to work towards a collaborative discussion and work towards conclusion. This meeting would allow us to discuss the potential upgrades to the rooms, the common area. We could also discuss as a second option about understanding of the viability of use of the land behind the Hall and to consider what information is still required from the ICB to progress matters.

Thank you for your continued engagement. We hope that, by working collaboratively, we can find a solution that serves the best interests of the community.

Yours sincerely,
The Trustees of Coven Memorial Hall