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Temporary Closure of the Billingshurst Scout and Guide Hut.

It is with regret that with immediate effect we have had to close, for a temporary period, all use of the Billingshurst hut.

The reason is that as part of the toilet area refurbishment project, we have had a survey to look for asbestos. Whilst the hut has generally had a clean result, some asbestos has been found in some paper coating to the main hall's ceiling panels. Whilst we have not been instructed to close the hall, we have been advised to seek its removal as soon as possible. Over time the paper will become more fragile, and so will a risk of fibre contamination.

Your Committee has decided that the best policy, and least risk to all, is to close the whole hut. Clearly this will impact all activities but we are sure you all will appreciate the obvious reasons for closure.

Having just discovered this, we are now awaiting costs from a specialist and approved remover and intend to initiate the removal of all the main hut's ceiling (not roof) as soon as possible. Initially this will mean that we will have a clean, but bare, roof so we will at least be able to use all facilities. We are hoping that we can achieve this in a reasonably short time and before Christmas although we do not have firm timescale, as yet.

We are well aware that everyone has been hoping, indeed wondering when, the whole toilet area would be refurbished. Up until this week we were in the position of having reasonable funds in place, having had formal and detailed plans drawn up, being about to submit an application for Building Regulation approval, and were about to seek final and detailed quotations for work commencing as soon as possible. Indeed we were just about to press the 'go' button.

As the cost of the ceiling's removal may well be considerable, we are forced to delay any further progress refurbishing the toilets until this is quantified and costs for replacing the ceiling are known. We all hope that this delay will not be too long.

Please bear with us in all this and we will try to keep all informed as to developments.

Thank you.

Richard Pope.
Chairman – Billingshurst Scouts and Guides Executive Committee.