

## Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

### Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
6 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	5	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

*This update includes risk factors around the requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship from 8<sup>th</sup> August.*

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13<sup>th</sup> June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15<sup>th</sup> June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4<sup>th</sup> July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

The [government guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](#) requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building and site open to the public. This document provides a template risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. It relates to opening up church and cathedral buildings to clergy and members of the public entering for any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

## Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
  - Private prayer (clergy only)
  - Live streaming services (clergy only)
  - Private prayer (general public)
  - Public worship
  - Rites of passage services
  - Opening for visitors and tourists

2. Consider the hazards:
  - Transmission of COVID-19
  - Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
  - Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive at the church, including if they will need to wait or queue outside; how people will enter and leave the church; circulation inside: from the entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

3. Consider who might be harmed and how? Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are not different for larger churches so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.
4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:
  - add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
  - record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
  - consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
  - check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

**Risk assessment template**

<b>Church:</b> Little S. Mary's Cambridge	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Elaine Shield – Administrative Assistant	<b>Date completed:</b> Updated 9/9/2020	<b>Review date:</b>
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or live streaming</b>  <a href="#">General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.</a>	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	Only 1 entrance – earlier/separate arrival	RM	7/7/20 ES
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here.</a>	Yes	7/7/20 ES
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Constantly in use and airing	-	7/7/20 ES
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Done	ES/Cleaner	18/6/20 ES
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a>	ES	18/6/20 ES
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.		ES	18/6/20 ES
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Font wrapped in restoration – will be emptied asap	RM	
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for live streaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Set up professionally and monitored by vicar	RM/ES	8/7/20 ES
<b>Deciding whether to open to the public</b>	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Downing Place closed. Peterhouse/Pembroke aware	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any	Done, plus Facebook updates	ES/RM	7/7/20 ES

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	relevant social media.			
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Open for Mass – limit 25 at present Allocated by Eventbrite	ES	1/7/20 ES
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	<a href="#">Apply here</a> . Not open	-	-
	<b>Include details on requirements such as bringing a face covering in communications.</b>	Clearly stated	ES	2/8/20 ES
<b>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism</b>	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Done	RM/ES	7/7/20 ES
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .	ES/JW	7/7/20 ES
	<b>Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law requiring these for all except those exempt.</b>	Done	ES	2/8/20 ES
	Choose one point of entry into the church to manage flow of people and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit.	Only one door – clear arrival/exit times – sidespeople to monitor	sidespeople	7/7/20 ES
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Notice on A frame re guidelines.	sidespeople	7/7/20 ES
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Main doors to remain open during services.	sidespeople	7/7/20 ES

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Removed	RM	18/6/20 RM/ES
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Removed	RM	18/6/20 RM/ES
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed from body of church – used weekly in labelled batches for each mass – aired/stored between	sidespeople	7/7/20 ES
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Stored in Parish Centre – no access	RM	7/7/20 RM/ES
	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including safe flow of visitors. Remember 2m in all directions from each person (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	Done – also considered building works. Extra roped-off pews used to add space, wide side corridor, directional movement.	ES/RM	7/7/20 ES/RM
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Signs added	RM	7/7/20 RM
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Keep left signs	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Signage on PC and Office door	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult <a href="#">advice on gaining temporary permissions</a> .	ES	7/7/20 ES

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Hand wash notices in WCs General notices in porch and church	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> . Sidespeople provided with gloves/spray/cloths/cleaner and double bagging bin for services. Cleaner aware	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Check that hand washing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Liners provided and in place	ES	7/7/20 ES
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	All contact details taken from Eventbrite booking and retained securely – any others required to give full details	ES & sidespeople	7/7/20 ES
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	Updates on signage/Facebook/LSM website and letters	ES	7/7/20 ES
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone)</b>	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from	All required cleaning arranged	ES/JW	7/7/20 ES

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>  Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>	surfaces.			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Confirmed OK	ES/JW	7/7/20 ES/JW
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Sidespeople clean between services. Extra cleaner before and after Sunday.	ES/JW	7/7/20 ES/JW
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. Gloves available	ES/AS	7/7/20 ES/JW
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. Certified cleaner for surfaces and wood acquired – clear instructions provided.	ES/AS	7/7/20 ES/AS
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Cleaner to remove when cleaning. Waste from services double bagged, retained for 72 hours then binned by ES	ES	7/7/20 ES
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Included in cleaning timetable	ES/JW	7/7/20
<b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.		ES/RW	n/a as yet
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a>	ES/RW	n/a as yet

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .	ES/JW	n/a as yet

LSM specific notes:

Our seated capacity in the main church is normally 230. Given social distancing and restoration works (scaffolding currently in place) the limit agreed is 25 plus vicar (26 total) in the entire building at any one time.

All services ticketed via Eventbrite at the moment – ensures all details taken and stored for track and trace.

2 Sides-people at every service to ensure those attending maintain social distancing and hygiene requirements. Also cleaning between services – clear instructions given.

Not currently open for Private prayer or hire.

Currently undergoing restoration – separate risk assessment done for contractors.

Parish Centre not currently available for events – hoping to open in October – separate risk assessment will be available for then.

Initials:

ES – Elaine Shield – Administrative Assistant

RM – Fr Robert Mackley – Vicar

AS – Adrian Savin – Church Warden

JW – Jo Wibberley – Assistant Church Warden

Any questions please contact: 01223 366202 or [office@lsm.org.uk](mailto:office@lsm.org.uk)