

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 nd May 2020	1	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
8 th June 2020	2	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
12 th June 2020	3	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
1st July 2020	4	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th 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](#).

1. Activities planned for:

- Private prayer (clergy only)
- Private prayer (general public)
- Public worship

2. Hazards considered:

- Transmission of COVID-19
- Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
- Hazards arising from opening the church building for private prayer
- Hazards arising from opening the church building for Sunday services

3. Risk:

- Contact with someone with COVID-19
- Possible transmission of COVID-19 either by direct contact with someone who is infected, through aerosol droplets from an infected person or via contaminated surfaces

4. Who may be harmed:

- Individuals at private prayer
- General congregation at Sunday services
- Church cleaners
- Church leadership team

5. Factors which increase risk:

- Age
- Health conditions/factors
- Life style
- Prolonged exposure
- Layout of church building

Guidance considered when completing this Risk Assessment:

- **COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of places of worship from 4 July – *Gov.UK***
- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for churches – *Church of England***
- **COVID-19 Advice on the Conduct of Public Worship – *Church of England***
- **Keeping church buildings clean – *Church of England***
- **Review of two metre social distancing guidance – *Gov.UK***
- **COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings – *Gov.UK***
- **Staying alert and safe (social distancing) - *Gov.UK***
- **Data Protection Act 2018 –*Gov.UK***

Risk Assessment

Church: St. Peter Ad vincula, Ditton	Assessor's name: Alan Warner	Date completed: 1 July 2020	Review date: 15 July 2020
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	Only one point of access to the church, used by both clergy and parishioners.	Alan Warner	Not applicable
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Lone working policy consulted and considered.	Alan Warner	17 June 2020 Alan Warner
	Buildings have been aired before use.	All windows and doors opened.	Alan Warner	17 June 2020 Alan Warner & John Paul
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Building deep cleaned throughout. Daily check and clean as necessary.	Alan Warner and John Paul	17 June 2020 Alan Warner & John Paul
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	No stored water systems within the building mains supply to vestry tap purged.	Alan Warner	11 June 2020 Alan Warner
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Electrics checked on the 11 June, organ checked 17 June 2020.	Alan Warner	11 June 2020 Alan Warner
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets,			

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	cables/tripod causing trip hazard			
Deciding whether to open to the public	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Information on opening provided on Website, Facebook page and by post	Jane Beldham	Jane Beldham 25 June 2020
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Congregation asked to advise in advance if attending a service to allow planning for numbers. Maximum seated individuals 24.	Alan Warner, John Paul and Jane Beldham	Jane Beldham 25 June 2020
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain ‘Good to Go’ standard mark	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Confirmed.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June Reviewed 1 July 2020
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	Examination of documents: <i>Keeping church buildings clean</i> and Government guidance: <i>COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings</i>	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June reviewed 1 July 2020
	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	Only one point of access into the church.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June

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	use a different exit.			reviewed 1 July 2020
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Markers will be placed two meters apart on the church path u to the entrance door where the wardens will control access and direct people to a seats, filling from front to rear.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	The windows to the Chancel, vestry and aisle to be opened prior to the service and the tower entrance door and glass doors to the aisle to remain open during the service.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Removed prior to opening for private prayer.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner 5 June 2020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Alan Warner 1 July 2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed prior to opening for private prayer.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner 5 June 2020
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Isolated prior to private prayer.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner 5 June 2020
	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	Completed prior to opening for private prayer. Unable to mitigate so 1m not possible. Floor marked with	Alan Warner	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June reviewed

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	absolutely necessary).	tape at two meter intervals. Rail marked at 2m spacing's.		1 July 2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Every other pew taken out of use and taped off. Pews marked at two meters.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June reviewed 1 July 2020
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Limited possibilities for movement in church, as the building only has a single entrance and a single narrow aisle. Notices requesting social distancing when entering and leaving the church. Floor marked with tape at 2m intervals. Wardens to manage entry and exit of worshipers. Seats to be filled front to back and emptied pew at a time from rear to front.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June reviewed 1 July 2020
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Access to balcony closed other than to the sound operator. Access to Vestry restricted.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June reviewed 1 July 2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Sanitiser located in entrance porch, start of the aisle and adjacent to the lectern.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June reviewed

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				1 July 2020
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	The Pulpit will not be used for preaching to prevent any possible aerosol transmission.	Ross Terranova	Alan Warner, John Paul and Ross Terranova 5 July 2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		Alan Warner	Alan Warner 19 June 2020
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	All high-risk surfaces and touch points, sprayed and wiped prior to service and again at the end of the service. Church building to remain closed between Sunday services to prevent any possible contamination.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Not Applicable - No facilities accessible. Hand sanitiser provided in multiple locations.	<i>Not Applicable</i> Alan Warner	<i>Not Applicable</i> Alan Warner & John Paul 17 June 2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Toilet facilities are located across road in separate building. To be opened and checked prior to Sunday services.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020

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	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	This is our normal practice.	Alan Warner	Alan Warner & John Paul 17 June 2020 Reviewed 1 July 2020
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	Congregation asked to advise in advance if attending a service to allow planning for numbers. Any person attending who is not in 'The Church Directory' will be asked to provide contact details. Details of attendance will be securely retained in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and then destroyed after 21 days.	Alan Warner, John Paul and Jane Beldham	Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020
	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.	Information on resumption of services provided on church website, Facebook page and by post. Neighbour to Church Centre advised in person.	Jane Beldham, Ross Terranova and Alan Warner	Jane Beldham, Ross Terranova 25 June 2020 and Alan Warner 3 July 2020
Playing of music during the services - Organ	The playing of an organ during the service is permitted under Government restrictions. The organ will be played by only one person and the Chancel window open to increase ventilation.	The keyboard to be carefully wiped down and locked until following Sunday to prevent contamination during the	Joy Kemp, Alan Warner and John Paul	Joy Kemp, Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020

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		periods that the church is open for private prayer.		
Playing of music during the services - Keyboard	The playing of a keyboard during the service is permitted under Government restrictions. To prevent contamination of the keyboard when the church is open for private prayer, the keyboard will need to be removed and stored in the vestry after the morning service.	The movement of the keyboard from the Chancel to the Vestry, leads to damage of the electronic components, it is also a manual handling risk as it is a considerable weight. Keyboard will not be used at the present time.	Alan Warner and John Paul	Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June 2020
Playing of music during the services – Recorded music	The provision of recorded music through the sound system is permitted under Government restrictions.	Person operating the sound system must wear a mask or face covering and to be at the rear of the balcony. Controls to system to be carefully wiped at the end of the service and sound cupboard to be locked until following Sunday.	Sound system operator, Alan Warner and John Paul	Sound system operator, Alan Warner and John Paul Ongoing
Singing or chanting during services	Singing or chanting by either a choir, congregation or individual, is not allowed under either the Government restrictions or under the Covid-19 Guidance for Churches issued by the Church of England.	No singing or chanting of any description will take place during services, until there is a change in Government Guidance.	Ross Terranova, Alan Warner and John Paul	Ross Terranova, Alan Warner and John Paul Ongoing
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone	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 surfaces.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

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with Coronavirus symptoms) Guidance on cleaning church building followed.	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Contacted and checked. High-risk surfaces and touch points cleaned by wardens.	Jane Beldham, Alan Warner and John Paul	Jane Beldham 24 June 2020 Alan Warner and John Paul 5 July 2020
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Completed	Jane Beldham, Alan Warner and John Paul	Jane Beldham 24 June 2020 Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June 2020
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Disposable gloves available in cleaning cupboard. Church administrator has ordered disposable aprons.	John Paul and Jane Beldham	Jane Beldham 24 June 2020 Alan Warner and John Paul 17 June 2020
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Currently available, Church administrator to arrange reordering.	Jane Beldham	Jane Beldham Re-order when necessary
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Person locking the church on a daily basis will empty bins and dispose of any waste before closing the church building either after private prayer or Sunday services.	Ross Terranova, John Paul and Alan Warner	On going Ross Terranova, Alan Warner and John Paul
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Waste to be removed and disposed of daily when locking the building.	Ross Terranova, John Paul and Alan Warner	On going Ross Terranova, Alan Warner and John Paul

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Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	In the event of notification either by a member of the congregation of the Governments Track and Test programme, the Church building will be closed for 72 hours.	Alan Warner & John Paul	When and if necessary
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Not applicable, church building will be closed.	Not applicable	Not applicable
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Follow the Government guidance in document: COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings	Ross Terranova, Alan Warner and John Paul	When and if necessary