

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public: individual prayer and funerals

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

Churches and cathedrals are legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provides for churches to open for funerals from 15th June.

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 individual private prayer. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for individual private prayer or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context.

Future versions of this document will be produced when different forms of public worship and access are allowed.

A risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers forms part of an updated document giving advice on access for these groups. This can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Risk assessment template

Church: St Nicolas Cranleigh	Assessor's name: Katherine Tuck	Date completed: 29/7/2020 Revised	Review date: 23/8/2020 or sooner if needed
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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	Rear door and through choir vestry. Sign in sheet .	In place KT	KT 27/6/2020
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.		Roy Woodhams	
	Buildings have been aired before use.		In place	KT 27/6/2020
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		in place	KT 27/6/2020
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Already in place	Mike Roberts	27/6/2020
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.		Mike Roberts	
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Already actioned	Roy Woodhams	RW 27/6/2020
Preparation of the Church for individual prayer and funerals	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Already actioned for private prayer sessions	In place	RW KT MR 27/6/2020
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Reviewed for opening for personal prayer		KT 27/6/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	<p>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.</p> <p>Regulate number in church according to maximum number identified. (50)</p> <p>Face coverings Advice as of 23/7/20 We strongly advise that face coverings should be worn by all those attending a place of worship, including ministers, worshippers, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, where there may be other people present; remembering that they are mainly intended to protect other people, not the wearer, from coronavirus COVID-19 and that they are not a replacement for physical distancing and regular hand washing.</p>	<p>South door already identified as entrance and West door for exit. Signs in place</p> <p>If too many turn up will need to politely turn away</p> <p>Rector will advise that face coverings be worn but that people have the freedom to make their own choice</p> <p>Clergy might choose not to wear face coverings to lead services but might do so to take communion to the congregation.</p>	<p>In place</p> <p>Rector, CW steward on duty</p> <p>Rector</p>	<p>27/6/2020</p> <p>23/7/2020</p> <p>29/7/2020</p>
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors to be fixed open	CW and stewards	
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Signs to not touch and do not use, Bring own if required	Rector, CW & stewards	

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	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items		Rector	
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Already removed	Rector CW	27/6/2020
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Move to side to keep emergency exit clear . Cover toys etc	CW	
	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. Arrangements for Communion	Communion will not be taken at the altar rail. It will be of one kind with distribution by clergy to each pew	In place Rector	27/6/2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Has been planned	Rector and MR	27/6/2020
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.		In place	27/6/2020
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.		In place	27/6/2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	South door and West door	In place	27/6/2020
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	N/A.		

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	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		MR	
	If the church has been used in the last 72 hours ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes.	Cleaning after each service - rota of cleaners	KT	
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.		In place	27/6/2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Choir vestry toilet available. If used during service then unavailable until cleaned	In place	6/7/2020
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		In place	27/6/2020
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	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.	N/A		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	The rota will not include these people	KT	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.		KT	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Available. Bring own masks if required	KT	27/6/2020

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	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Already available	KT	27/6/2020
	Cleaning AV equipment and microphones between services	Do not use spray MR to source suitable cleaner	MR / AV operator on duty	
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Cleaner on rota	KT Cleaner on rota	
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	At end of final service each day	Cleaner on rota or Verger	
Someone taken ill during service Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	PPE – gloves, mask and apron available in case of symptoms of Coronavirus If someone feels unwell (with or without symptoms) they must leave the building immediately If unable to leave building isolate in Baynards	PPE - masks gloves and aprons available Isolation area in Baynards Symptoms with breathing difficulty call 999	KT CW Steward	
	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	If necessary services & private prayer to be cancelled to allow closing	Rector	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.			
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.		CW	