

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: 27/6/2020 29/7/2020 Revised 5/8/2020 additional 4/9/2020 revised and choir added Reviewed 14/9/2020 30/9/20 revised with cold weather advisory	Review date: 1/11/2020 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

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
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
	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. Congregation should leave the premises as quickly as possible and not remain to hold conversations in the church. Please do not touch pews etc on the way in/out	South door already identified as entrance and West door for exit. Signs in place Feel free to meet and chat outside the church building Additional cleaning needed	In place Rector, CW steward on duty	27/6/2020 23/7/2020
	Regulate number in church according to maximum number identified. (50) 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	If too many turn up will need to politely turn away Rector will advise that face coverings be worn but that people have the freedom to make their own choice	Rector	29/7/2020 Amended 5/8/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	replacement for physical distancing and regular hand washing.	Clergy not required to wear mask to lead service but will wear mask for preparation and distribution of communion (5/8/2020)		
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation. 30/9/20 Autumn/winter cold advisory The heating will be on until 10 minutes before any service when it will be switched off and the doors will be opened for the duration of the service,	Doors to be fixed open Congregation to be aware it will be cold and Diocesan advice is to dress warmly, bring blankets and hot water bottles if required.	CW and stewards Congregation to bring own requirements	
	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	
	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.		In place	27/6/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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	Rector	
	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 where 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.		
	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

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	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
	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	

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	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	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	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	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	
Choir rehearsal before services and performance during worship	Agreed health and safety procedures as below to be advised to choir members before attendance.		MC	MC to date when decisions made
	Which choir members to attend each service to be determined in advance to comply with maximum number identified (6 plus organist).		MC	
	Choir Vestry windows to be opened temporarily before choir arrival to improve ventilation, and re-closed on departure.		MC or delegated deputy	

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	Choir members to enter and exit the church via Choir Vestry, maintaining physical distancing requirements.	Use sign-in sheet as above; Choir Vestry not to be used for gathering; no processing		
	Choir members to sit in designated seats, maintaining physical distancing requirements.	Two seats in sanctuary, four in chancel outside sanctuary	MC	
	Each choir member to have their own personal copy of each piece of music, and pencil. Music copies distributed on the day to be ready in place before choir members arrive, distributed by one person wearing disposable gloves, and then kept by the individuals to whom they are distributed.		MC	
	Areas used/touched by choir members to be cleaned after the service per above.	Choir member(s) to be responsible for cleaning, liaising with service steward(s) as necessary		
	Face coverings to be worn inside the church.	Face coverings may be removed for singing		
	Choir members to face towards the west while singing.			