



## Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

### Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2020	1	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	2	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
12 <sup>th</sup> 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 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)
  - Livestreaming 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.

<b>Church:</b>	<b>Assessor's name:</b>	<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>Review date:</b>
Christ Church Walshaw	Pat White	03/07/2020	

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 livestreaming</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	Back entrance	Wardens and PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	In the absence of a church lone working policy at this time members of the church and in particular the PiC, Wardens others who enter and work in the building on their own are encouraged to consider the Lone Working Policy of the Diocese of Liverpool for good practice / guidance <a href="#">here</a>	Wardens, PiC, Bill, Andrew	
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Building will be aired before initial cleaning and before each time of worship	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	See the advice note on keeping church buildings clean. When the church is being cleaned initially the Wardens / Cleaners will check the building for animal waste, eg from bats, and in regard to general cleanliness	Wardens & cleaners	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020 & ongoing.
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a> The toilets will be flushed before the building is open for worship and hot and cold water will be allowed to run for two minutes.	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Electrical items except for dishwasher are not plugged in / switched on. Only lighting will be used when using building. When heating is needed we will check the system fires up safely and that everything seems to be in order ... if not turn off, advise Wardens and call engineer.	Andrew	N/A at this time
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	n/a	n/a	n/a

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	If live streaming is an option for church in the coming weeks then this will be done using wifi (wirelessly). If services are recorded this too will be done without cables. Any support for the camera (a small tripod) will be marked to ensure high visibility and will be away from members of the congregation	Steve	12 <sup>th</sup> July and every Sunday when live streaming
<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.	Walshaw is only a small village with a limited number of businesses open on a Sunday morning. It is envisaged that the church car park will be able to accommodate those who wish to attend Morning Worship	n/a	n/a
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	The community and beyond will be advised of the church being open for worship as well as the guidance / rules	Steve	10 <sup>th</sup> July in relation to first service in church
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	This is not envisaged to be necessary at the moment given the size of the building and anticipated attendees	n/a	n/a
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit	<a href="#">Apply here</a> . n/a	n/a	n/a

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark			
<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.		Wardens and Bill	As required
	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>	Wardens and PiC	Weeks prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	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.	Main entrance for entry and via back entrance except where mobility is an issue	Wardens and PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Given the size of our building and anticipated number of attendees this is not considered necessary.	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors will be left ajar at front and rear of church. Windows do not open in main church body.	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	None of these items will be available / on display	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	n/a	Wardens & PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play	Childrens toys will be	Wardens	Week prior to

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	areas	removed		opening on 12/07/2020 & ongoing
	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).	This will be done Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Wardens & PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.		Wardens & PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.		Wardens & PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.		Wardens & PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.		Wardens & sidespeople	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020 & ongoing
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing		Wardens & PiC	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or		Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>	Wardens & cleaners

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	disposable wipes			12/07/2020 & ongoing.
	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. While we have limited hand washing facilities in the church, and they are not by the entrance of the church, people who attend for worship will be encouraged to use hand sanitiser on their hands. However the sinks in the toilets will have paper towels available and a bin for them.	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020 & ongoing.
	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. The toilets will only be available for use in an emergency. However adequate soap and towels and bin will be provided	Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020 & ongoing
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		Wardens	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020 & ongoing.
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	This will be done by a Sidesperson as people enter ... recording people's names	Wardens & Sidespeople	Available from 12/07/2020



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		and for those who are not regular attendees telephone numbers too (advising people that this is being done to assist looking after everyone if someone is found to be CV19+ in the coming days)		
	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.	This will be done via social media and our website	PiC via Website, FB & Twitter	Week prior to opening on 12/07/2020
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>  Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>	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.	Church will be closed for at least 72 hours between services.	n/a	n/a
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	See above	n/a	n/a
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.		Wardens	In progress & ongoing.
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.	Wardens	Available from 4 <sup>th</sup> July
	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.	Wardens	Available from 4 <sup>th</sup> July
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		Wardens	
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially	To be removed after every	Wardens	After every

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	contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	service		service. Ongoing.
<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.	Church will be closed for at least 72 hours between services.	Wardens & PiC	As required
	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> See above re 72 hour closure	n/a	n/a
	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>	Wardens & cleaners	As required & ongoing.