

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:	Assessor's name:	Date completed:	Review date:
St Elisabeth's Church	Rev Alison Mitchell	July 2020	

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 General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible (PADLOCK to remain on the gate for the foreseeable future)	Designated people only to enter via the Vestry Tony Angie Alison	Tony Angie Alison	On going and in place
	To sanitise hands before entering the Nave. (door to the High Altar to remain closed)	Register with name and date to be completed. Sanitiser by the sink in the Vestry to be used.	Tony Angie Alison	In place
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Each individual to add parts to make relevant to their role	Alison	June 2020
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Doors both open	Wardens	On Going
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		Tony	On going
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Each week to maintain healthy systems	Tony Geoff	On going
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	When a date is set to open by the PCC	Tony	When PCC decide
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.		Tony Geoff	On going

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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.			
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Website updated for Individual Prayer Video shown on FB/ Instagram and Twitter	Alison Vicky JT	Web site up to date. Video shown
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services			
Preparation of the Church for individual prayer, worship, and funerals	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	By Angie, Alison or Tony	Wardens	Check before each session
	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.	Entry is by the SW door. Exit is by the Tower door Markers and tape are on the floor to indicate the direction of flow	Wardens Clergy Getting the church ready team	June 30 th 2020
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Both doors at exit and entrance to be left open to minimise touch and keep the air flow.	Wardens Two people on 'duty'	On going
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	No items left for people to look at and touch. Information board turned around to avoid touch	Getting the church ready team	All removed 30.6.2020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Votive candles to be removed from church Nave	Getting the church ready team	All removed 30.6.2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Remove pew cushions/kneelers need as per government guidance	To be stored in the Lady Chapel	Getting the church ready team	All removed 30.6.2020
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	The childrens area to be cordoned off. A clear NO ENTRY sign.	Alison	All removed 30.6.2020
	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, including safe flow of visitors. Remember 2m in all directions from each person. Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Choose the flow of ‘traffic.’ Close every other pew row. To make clear to sit at either end of the pew. Families can sit together Work out our MAXIMUM number of worshippers	Clergy Wardens Getting the church ready team	In place, markers to show the way + signs 30.6.2020 People to sit either end of the pews
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Lines clearly shown so that people can stand safely	Clergy Wardens Getting the church ready team	Arrows are in place to direct people 30.6.2020
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	NO ACCESS (TAPE) to the kitchen LIMITED access to toilets – only the DISABLED toilet open for use NO ENTRY to chancel and Lady Chapel NO TOUCHING the chairs IE: -ROPE OFF AREAS	Clergy Wardens Getting the church ready team	Kitchen – a NO ENTRY zone 2 toilets locked Roped off Roped off

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
				30.6.2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Sanitiser as you enter/ leave the building Sanitiser at the toilet entrance Vestry	Clergy Wardens Getting the church ready team	At entrance and exit Near toilet 30.6.2020
	To keep a ' register ' to comply with track and trace	Name and number to be written by the sides person A tick on the electoral roll register BUT CONSENT FORM to be signed by everyone The sides person to wear a facemask	Clergy Wardens Sidespeople	On going Welcomers to have training Register available 30.6.2020
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Positioning of pews Restricted Access to areas Seating at either end of the pews – maintaining social distance	Clergy Wardens	Pews spaced out 30.6.2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO hugging • Sharing peace • Shaking hands • Sitting next to a person • Wear a mask 	Hand washing posters are in place Clear posters about distancing to be displayed New 'rules' to be explained on entry and constantly during worship Use of A boards	Clergy Wardens Getting the church ready team	Posters are in place ON GOING Masks worn first by all 15/7/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	<p>To limit items brought into church</p> <p>Donations/ collections to be placed in the bag provided</p>	<p>Preferably NO handbags, to limit services being used.</p> <p>To encourage contactless as much as possible or DONATE on the website.</p> <p>If money is collected it must NOT be touched for 72 hours</p>		
	<p>During communion, The presider to cover all the wafer(individual) whilst saying the Eucharistic Prayer, only holding up their own wafer.</p> <p>The Distribution of Communion The Presider goes to the people</p> <p>People to come up row by row, as directed by the wardens.</p>	<p>Presider</p> <p>People respond quietly</p> <p>Remain seated. EITHER, The Presider will bring communion to you OR Wait to be directed Masks need to worn Hands stretched out Sanitise if there is touch Return to seats down the outside of the church</p>	<p>Presider Wardens and welcomers</p> <p>Presider</p> <p>Presider Welcomers Wardens</p>	<p>From Aug 2nd and ongoing</p>
	<p>If the church has been used in the last 72 hours ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have</p>	<p>Before a service to wipe down the pews a Squirt and wipe</p>	<p>Clergy Wardens</p>	<p>30.6.2020 – all services</p>

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	been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes.	from a cloth) – <i>non ionic conservation detergent (£22)</i> <i>OR sensitive washing up liquid and distilled water</i> Onto <i>paper towels</i> Sweep the floor Handles to be washed	Getting the church ready team	cleaned ready for opening ON going
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate <i>soap dispenser</i> and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Sidespeople to check and to let Clergy/ Wardens know if we are short.	Clergy Wardens Getting the church ready team	Paper towels on order Complete 8.7.20
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	LIMITED access to toilets – only the DISABLED toilet open for use	Wardens Sidespeople	30.6.2020 set up On going
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Keep <i>bin liners</i> upto date	Wardens Sidespeople	On going
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.	<i>Keep a record</i> of when the church is in use Maybe Sunday and Wednesday to open	Clergy	On going
Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Get together a small cleaning group	PCC	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Small teams to work at 2M apart to get the church ready	Clergy Wardens	Still to be arranged

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	All cleaners provided with gloves and aprons (ideally disposable) .	To dispse at the end into bin liner	Clergy Wardens	Available 30.6.2020
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	We need – non ionic conservation detergent (£22)	PCC	
	Confirm people responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Sidespeople of the day	Sidespeople	
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	After each opening of the church	PCC	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	Track and trace in place Wait 72 hours Get professional cleaning team in	PCC	
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Small cleaning team or Get professional cleaning team in.	Cleaning Team	