

## 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.

**Risk assessment template:**

<b>Church:</b> Holy Trinity Church, Bosham.	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Rev'd Canon Martin Lane <b>Covid Committee:</b> Carol Bishop (Hon.Treasurer), Laura Ritchie (Churchwarden), Dan Lambert (acting Churchwarden), Kate Cameron (Church administrator/acting secretary to PCC).	<b>Date completed:</b> 2/7/20	<b>Review date:</b> 07/08/20
--	--	----------------------------------	---------------------------------

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	<b>South door in and North door exit; wheelchair access available through North door.</b>	MJL	14/6/20
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> .	MJL	31/5/20
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Aired during private prayer, MJL recording, services. Ongoing	MJL	Ongoing
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Shirley increasing cleaning in church Monday & Thursday mornings.		23/6/20
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a>	MJL instruct Shirley.	11/6/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	N/A		
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	N/A		
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Live-streaming continued in church from 17/5/20. Appropriate checks in place.	MJL	17/5/20
<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.	No changes necessary.		
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Update Bosham Church website.	KC/AM	Ongoing
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	To use Eventbrite for reserving a place at Sunday morning services; 8am & 9.30am.	KC	Ongoing
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	<a href="#">Apply here.</a> To consider at a later date.		
<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.	Above steps taken for safe opening for Private Prayer 5/7/20 and return to worship 23/8/20. Covid Committee meeting regularly to assess ongoing and new advice.	MJL/KC/CB/LR/DL	Ongoing review and assessment in place
	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>	MJL	11/6/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Choose one point of entry into the church to manage flow of people and <b>indicate this with notices</b> , keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit.	<b>South door in and North door exit; wheelchair access available through North door.</b>	MJL/KC/DL	04/07/20
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside). Queue management to reduce congestion and contact. Clear signposting or assistance with sufficient “stewards” to help maintain compliance.	Agreed to mark 2 metres along the Church path leading into the South door with Social Distancing notices. (Ruled out the option of tape which will not stay in place). Agreed to arrange a rota of 3 sides persons. Sides person 3 to manage queue. DL arrange 1.-1.5 m posts. A4 laminated notices. KC Poor weather advice: In case of bad weather, the need to maintain a social distance whilst queuing means that parishioners waiting will not be able to come in for shelter.	MJL/DL/KC	13/08/20
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	<b>MJL Lock and unlock.</b>	<b>MJL</b>	Ongoing
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Completed at point of lockdown.	MJL, LR, DL, KC.	24/3/20
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Completed at point of lockdown.	MJL, LR, DL, KC.	24/3/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Completed at point of lockdown.	MJL, LR, DL, KC.	14/6/20
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Completed at point of lockdown.	MJL, LR, DL, KC.	24/3/20
	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).	Completed.	MJL, LR, DL, KC.	14/6/20
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Completed.	MJL, KC, DL	04/07/20
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Completed.	MJL, KC, DL	04/07/20
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Completed.	MJL, KC, DL	04/07/20
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. Hand sanitiser and anti-bac purchased and clearly labelled in dispensing bottles. Completed.	MJL/KC	25/6/20
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult <a href="#">advice on gaining temporary permissions</a> . Closed areas: Crypt, Chancel & Kitchen. Signage and barriers created. Completed.	MJL/KC/DL	04/07/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Social Distancing posters displayed on pillar inside church. Completed.	MJL	26/6/20
		Hand sanitising stations clearly indicated on entry and exit with posters. Completed.	MJL/KC/DL	04/07/20
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> . <b>Building cleaned by Shirley Monday and Thursday mornings.</b>	MJL	23/6/20
	Check that handwashing 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.  Paper towels purchased. KC. Hand sanitising stations in place on entry and exit. Completed.	MJL	4/7/20
	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. Paper towels, antibac soap & bin provided. Toilet facilities available for use by cleaner. They will not be available for general use on return to worship. Completed.	MJL	4/7/20
Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Waste paper baskets in place in Church with disposable liners. Completed.	MJL	4/7/20	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	Using on-line booking system Eventbrite. Names will be retained for 21 days. Any additional names of worshippers not recorded to be collected by Sides persons on entry to the Church at Sunday worship.	MJL/KC	Ongoing
	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.	Notice of return to worship to be posted on Church noticeboards and on Church website.	MJL/KC	21/8/20
<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> .	<i>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>			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Church cleaned twice a week by Shirley. Holy Dusters rota suspended. MJL sanitise pews following weddings.	MJL	Ongoing
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Shirley increasing cleaning in church Monday & Thursdays.	MJL	23/6/20
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.  Shirley wearing gloves.	MJL	23/6/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Hoovering only. Antibac spray & gloves purchased. Completed.	KC	23/6/20
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	MJL to remove at end of service.	MJL	Ongoing
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Remove at the end of each service.	MJL	4/7/20
<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 closed in-between private prayer and Sunday services (allowing for 72 hours closure) and cleaned in-between, unless open for a Wedding (see above).	MJL	Ongoing
	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>	MJL	
	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>	MJL	
<b>Bellringing</b>	A risk assessment to be carried out by Bellringing team and appropriate measures implemented following guidelines from CCCBR & government:  In order to maintain a distance of 2 meters between ringers only 3 bells will be rung: 1, 3 and 5.	Advice available from The Central Council of Church Bellringers: <a href="https://ccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/">https://ccbr.org.uk/coronavirus/</a>  Three bellringers (Jane West, Dave Hanwell, Mandy Rodgers) will go to the tower Thursday 6th August, at 4.30pm to raise and lower all the bells to complete the checks	MJL/Bellringing team	6/8/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	<p>If two members of the same household are available to ring then 4 bells will be rung: 1, 3, 4 and 6.</p> <p>A ringer will take one bell for the entire session so there will be only 3 (or 4) ringers present.</p> <p>A leader will be appointed for each session who will assign bells to ringers and arrange the sequence of ringing. Only the leader will touch the bell spider and lock/unlock the ringing chamber.</p> <p>Ringers wash their hands before leaving home</p> <p>Arrive at church 25 minutes before the service start time wearing a face mask (which will be worn throughout the session).</p> <p>Enter the church using the one way system.</p> <p>Sanitize hands on arrival. Mount the stairs to the ringing chamber maintaining a 2 meter distance; leader goes first to unlock the room.</p> <p>Raise bells in peal – ring Rounds, plain hunt on 3, call changes, then ring down. 15 minutes maximum ringing time.</p> <p>Leader releases the clock strike and puts ropes back on spider.</p> <p>All sanitize hands.</p> <p>All leave ringing chamber allowing social distancing; leader last to lock up.</p> <p>Ringers who are not staying for the service leave the church using the one-way system.</p>	<p>necessary to be confident that they are safe to ring prior to the service on the 23rd August.</p> <p>Arriving 0905 – use North Door for social distancing purposes.</p> <p>Additional documentation provided: Bellringers resumption of ringing.</p> <p>Completed.</p>		

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