

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

Church: Christ Church, Dartford	Assessor's name: Michael Smith Sharon Jarvis	Date completed: 06/07/2020 Reviewed: 11/09/2020 Updated: 3/12/2020 Updated: 24/3/2021 Updated: 26/3/2021	Review date: 01/01/2021 or prior to being used for home group meetings
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date
Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer, recording and/or livestreaming Risk: contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	Consider if anyone required for recording or broadcasting is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Can someone else fulfil their role in the recording/livestreaming? Ensure that the people who need to attend the church building to enable the livestreaming or recording to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely. Make sure that only those essential for livestreaming or recording enter the church.	Current church practice is for service leaders to record their service inputs either in their own home or at the church on their own. These recordings are then sent electronically for editing prior to upload to YouTube. Current service leaders or members of their household are not deemed to be clinically extremely vulnerable.	Done	24/3/2021
	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	Entrance & exit via glass porch	Done	06/07/2020
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Already agreed by PCC. Lone working sign in / out Handgel provided	Done	18/06/2020

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	Buildings have been aired before use.		Done	18/06/2020
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		Done	18/06/2020
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	All systems flushed regularly during lockdown. Log in place.	Done	18/06/2020
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.		Done	18/06/2020
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Not applicable		
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Not applicable		
	Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building.	Wardens to manage the entrance to building for Sunday Services such that the entrance porch is kept clear, people to queue in the car park under social distancing regulations until asked to enter for seating by steward.	Done	24/3/2021
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Hand cleansing stations are available on entry/egress to the building and prior to the taking of Holy Communion.	Done	24/3/2021
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce or download signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law and requiring these for all except those exempt.	Face coverings are mandatory for all except those exempt. Signage with respect to this is present within the church.	Done	24/3/2021
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of	Inner church doors are left open.	Done	24/3/2021

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	people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.	Exit door left open or ajar and opened by warden or delegate to reduce contact of people with surfaces Service liturgy is shared via electronic means		
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	QR code information removed as the system of recording attendance is via the seating plans	Done	24/3/2021
Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities	Consider how the national lockdown applies to the particular circumstances of the church and the worship or other activities envisaged. For gathered congregations or other activities drawing people from a wide area, consider the implications of where people travel from and the distance involved.	Not applicable		
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Not applicable		
	<i>Check if any clergy, staff or volunteers required for opening to the public fall into clinically extremely vulnerable categories or have members of their household who do, and ensure there are enough people safely able and willing to facilitate opening and cleaning the building.</i>		Done	1/12/2020
	Consider whether to discourage clinically extremely vulnerable members of the congregation or visitors from attending services altogether or setting aside a time for them to attend for individual devotions.	Provision has been made available for clinically extremely vulnerable members of the congregation	Done	24/3/2021

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		or visitors to attend church for individual devotions via appointment with the Church Office		
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Website, Facebook & A church near you updated	Done	06/07/2020
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	<i>Currently not required. Being kept under review</i> A booking system has been instigated for all Sunday Services since Christmas 2020	<i>Leadership Team</i> Done	 24/3/2021
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	Not applicable		
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	Not applicable		
Deciding whether to have a choir or music group singing/performing Risk: Aerosol spread of coronavirus may be increased by singing and playing of wind instruments	Check current guidance on singing to establish what is permitted. This can be found in the Church of England guidance on conducting public worship and on in the Government guidance for places of worship . Guidance states - From the 28th March indoors: a single small group of singers will be allowed to perform, or rehearse for performance, only where essential to an act of communal worship. This should be limited to as few singers as possible. Communal singing should not take place and strict physical distancing should be observed.	Current church practice is to have one lead musician who sings with no congregation singing. This will be reviewed in line with the change in guidance and this RA updated as to the outcome	Leadership Team	

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	<p>Ensure that singers from different households can be socially distanced from one another, and from anyone else present (including a conductor, camera or microphone operator or, if present, a congregation).</p> <p>Put in place measures to create a physical barrier between singers and any congregation.</p> <p>Remind any members of congregation present that at present they are not allowed to sing indoors.</p>			
<p>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism</p> <p>Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.</p>	<p>Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.</p>		Done	18/06/2020
	<p>Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering. Clearly state the limits on attendance for weddings, funerals, commemorative events and any other permitted activities where upper limits apply</p>	<p>A review of the information available on our website, our A Church Near You page and any relevant social media to be undertaken to ensure the correct information is available for visitors to the church.</p>	Leadership Team	
	<p>Update your website to remind people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 to stay at home as much as possible and observe social distancing guidance, and either strongly discourage them from attending church in person during this time or indicate a time for them to attend for individual devotions.</p>	<p>A review of the information available on our website to be undertaken to ensure the correct information is available for the clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.</p>	Leadership Team	
	<p>Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).</p>		Done	18/06/2020

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	<i>Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law requiring these for all except those exempt.</i>	<i>Signage in place</i>	<i>Done</i>	<i>1/12/2020</i>
	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.	General Entrance & Exit via Main door Staff access via glass porch door. Access to toilets & office restricted Signage in place		06/07/2020 11/09/2020
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Currently not applicable Stewards & Warden to manage, if required Wardens to manage the entrance to building for Sunday Services such that the entrance porch is kept clear, people to queue in the car park under social distancing regulations until asked to enter for seating by steward.	Done	24/3/2021
	Make any temporary arrangements for managing the approaches to the entry points and any parking areas to ensure social distancing can be observed (taking into account any consequential risks arising from changes to circulation).			
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors to be kept open during periods when church is open	Done	18/06/2020
	<i>If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in.</i>		<i>Done</i>	<i>1/12/2020</i>
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets unless they are absolutely essential and participants cannot bring their own. Hardcopy literature should be quarantined for at least 48 hours between use.	A Bible is provided for readers in services, if required. This Bible is only used by one	Done	16/06/2020

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		<p>person and then not used for at least 48 hours.</p> <p>No hardcopy communications are being routinely handed out. Any that is, is quarantined for at least 48 hours between use.</p>	Done	24/3/2021
	If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to sanitise hands before picking one up, and request that people take these home with them.	Single use leaflets, if utilised, are placed in each seat 48 hours prior to use and if used then people are asked to take leaflet home with them.	Done	26/3/2021
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	<p>Altar rail closed to prevent access to altar. Chapel screened off</p> <p>Chapel has been cleared of all devotional objects or items and opened up to allow for additional seating. Sanctuary area has been closed off to prevent access.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Done</p>	<p>18/06/2020</p> <p>24/3/2021</p>
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	<p>Pew cushions removed & stored in chapel</p> <p>Pew cushions removed & stored in church centre</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Done</p>	<p>18/06/2020</p> <p>24/3/2021</p>
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	If toys have to be loaned, they will be wiped down and	Done	18/06/2020

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		isolated for 48 hours after use.		
	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).	Written proposal for safe system of work agreed by PCC	Done	27/06/2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Agreed locations on pews marked.	Done	03/07/2020
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Signage & flipchart instructions	Done	03/07/2020
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Signage in place for office & toilets Chapel screened off	Done	18/06/2020 11/09/2020
		Chapel has been cleared of all devotional objects or items and opened up to allow for additional seating. Sanctuary area has been closed off to prevent access.	Done	24/3/2021
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	At Entrances, outside toilets & at the front of the pew area	Done	18/06/2020 11/09/2020
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Not required		

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	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Flipchart at entrance	Done	03/07/2020
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes		Done	03/07/2020
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Only available in toilets	Done	11/09/2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Done. Disabled toilet available for visitors, Other toilets restricted for staff use only.	Done	11/09/2020
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Bin provided, with liner, by flipchart	Done	03/07/2020
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	Warden on duty or deputy records names of attendees @ private prayer & 9am worship. Lists stored in office Seating plans as part of booking system will be utilised as per the attendance list for each Sunday service. These will be maintained for 21 days.	Done Done	11/09/2020 24/3/2021
	<i>Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.</i>	<i>QR Code displayed Written sign in sheet also available – pens not re-used</i>	<i>Done</i>	<i>1/12/2020</i>

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		QR code information removed so that the system of using the seating plans for attendance is used	Done	24/3/2021
	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.	Notices displayed on gates & fence	Done	11/09/2020
Use of the church for baptisms, weddings, funerals and commemorative services	Church leaders consult the current appropriate guidance in the event of an in church baptism, wedding, funeral or commemorative service such that additional controls and limits on attendance are in place.		Done	24/3/2021
Use of the church for permitted activities other than private prayer or worship	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place. Check that any external group using the church has COVID-secure working practices in place, including their own risk assessment where necessary, and will comply with what is required by the church.	Church and church centre is not being used for any activity other than private prayer or worship. Risk assessment will be updated as and when the church and the church centre are used for things other than private prayer or worship.	Done	24/3/2021
Arrangements for Worship and Private Prayer	Lighting of Candles, used for memorial / remembrance	Tea lights are provided, lit by a steward and placed on one of the sand trays. They are blown out at the end of the session and are disposed of at the start of the next session	Done	11/09/2020

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	Clergy leading public acts of worship	Clergy will comply with relevant guidance from CofE	Done	11/09/2020
	Staffing in support of public access to church	Two stewards will be available for all service sessions, to guide visitors and worshippers, as required.	Rota arranged by Administrator	11/09/2020
	Use of chancel area	Social distancing will be maintained in positioning on chancel area, including the use of 2 lecterns, where appropriate	Done	11/09/2020
	Use of microphones	Lectern microphone used by multiple users, without contact and at a suitable distance. Individual microphones will be provided for all other service participants, with 48 hrs between use	Done	11/09/2020
	AV / PA Systems	Operated by a single operator for each system, with 48 hrs between operator.	Rota arranged by M Smith	11/09/2020
	Sung worship during services	Keyboard, piano & singers all positioned to ensure social distancing, in accordance with government guidance	Done	11/09/2020
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone	If the church building has been closed for 48 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	Usage no less than 48 hours apart	Done	18/06/2020 1/12/2020

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with Coronavirus symptoms) Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	All cleaning agreed / approved by Wardens / Administrator	Done	11/09/2020 1/12/2020
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Ad-hoc cleaning to be arranged by Wardens / Administrator		11/09/2020
	<i>Identify surfaces that are frequently touched and by many people (often common areas), e.g. handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets, and specify the frequency and level of cleaning and by whom.</i>		Done	1/12/2020
	<i>Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.</i>	Monitored by leadership team	Done	1/12/2020
	Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets deemed essential for services should be quarantined for 48 hours after use.		Done	24/3/2021
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Available in cleaning cupboard	Done	11/09/2020
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Available in cleaning cupboard	Done	11/09/2020
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Wardens / Administrator	Done	11/09/2020
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Checked & removed as necessary	Wardens / Administrator	11/09/2020
Cleaning the church after known exposure to	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Agreed	Done	18/06/2020 1/12/2020

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someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Agreed	Done	24/3/2021
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Agreed	Done	18/06/2020 1/12/2020

Notes: 1/12/2020

- new items noted in italics.
- Cleaning requirements etc adjusted from 72 to 48 hr intervals, as per latest guidance

Notes 24/3/2021

- New items noted in blue text

Notes 26/3/2021

- New items noted in green text