

## 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 risk assessment. It relates to opening up church and cathedral buildings to clergy and members of the public entering for any permitted purposes. It offers guidance on best-practice, and ensure we can open safely based on our local circumstances, resources and context. You can read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

This document will provide the basis for updates 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. The activities we are planning for are:
  - Private prayer
  - Livestreaming services
  - Public worship
  - Rites of passage services
  - Occasional meeting of small groups
2. Hazards considered
  - Transmission of COVID-19
  - Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
  - Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

Following the guidance this assessment addresses relates specifically to SS Peter and Paul, Rustington. We will 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 toilets.

3. We will consider who might be harmed and how. We will look at how the guidance and activities we are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks can be properly managed, and but everyone must be aware of their responsibilities.
4. Using the risk assessment we will:
  - add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances we have;
  - 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 regularly and review.

A key element to the outworking of this assessment was a 'trial run' for Sunday service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July. Completed Satisfactorily. This risk assessment has been updated and feedback from Church watchers/Clergy has been positive that the measures in place so far are working. This is the second update.

<b>Church:</b> SS. Peter and Paul, Rustington	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Natalie Loveless, Carrie Mcleod, Jackie Gordon.	<b>Date completed:</b> 12/09/20	<b>Review date:</b> 01/11/20
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed date
<b>Access to church buildings</b>	Point of entry to the church building via North door. Public entry via West door.		All who enter – Wardens and sidespersons	12/09/20
	Lone working policy has been consulted when clergy are live streaming by themselves. If anyone is in church on their own they must lock the door.	Those who need to go into the church are to take precautions re hygiene (wipe down surfaces they have touched and preferably wear a face mask and have to book in so we know when they are there.	NL/CM with assistance from Administrators	12/09/20
	Buildings have been aired before use.	North doors are also fully open before public entry	NL	12/09/20
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		NL	12/09/20
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.		NL	12/09/20
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Checks are undertaken regularly as per H&S Policy	Christopher Simmance	22/06/20
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Done on Church closure		March 20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed date
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard		Bill Dodd	Ongoing
<b>Public opening</b>	Practical arrangements of the churchyard mean queuing, if necessary is easy (i.e. no adjacent houses or business)		N/A	
	Clergy and Churchwardens or church watchers only will open the buildings. Other keyholders must ask permission before entry and book into the office.		Administrator	05/07/20
	Website updated and emails sent out to inform congregation and keep updated.	Emphasis on no entry for anyone displaying symptoms. Reminder of latest government guidelines.	Administrators	Ongoing - weekly
	Booking for services via phonenumber and website. Numbers are capped at 50 for regular services. No admittance for anyone who has not booked Sidespersons will hold a list of those permitted.	If there is a significant amount of space extras may be permitted but their names and numbers must be taken.	Administrators/ Wardens/ Sidespersons	12/09/20
	Meeting to brief those supervising individual prayer and guidance notes produced		Completed	22/06/20
<b>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship</b>	Cleaning products provided and church watchers aware of duties	Rota produced by John Force and questions to CM. Updated correspondence to include wearing of facemasks and taking of details for track and trace	NL/ John Force /Administrator	10/09/20
	Cleaning, using the Ecover products provided will be done after every morning opening session and in between services. This will be done by church	Briefing sheet provided and included in all group risk assessments	Church Wardens / Church watchers/	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed date
	watchers and sidespersons. Particular attention is paid to 'touch points'		group coordinators	
	Glass doors remain open at all times to avoid further touching			Ongoing
	Sidesperson outside to ensure queuing, if necessary, is distance appropriate. Entry will be via West door and exit via North.	Disabled exit via west if necessary after others have left		
	Where possible doors are kept open for air flow.			
	Removed: Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets		Completed	March
	Access prohibited to Chancel and vestry and toilet unavailable for public use. Toilet may be open during groups if cleaned thoroughly afterwards.	Notices in place	Completed	12/09/20
	All soft furnishing removed and benches out of use.	Notice placed on benches		July
	Children's resources and table/chairs removed.			March
	Chairs removed from church and physical distancing in place between seats, aisles, ensuring a safe flow of visitors. 2m in all directions from each person (or 1.5m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	Checked regularly	CM/JG/NL and Jean Bulley	Ongoing
	Seating is fixed but can be moved by sidespersons if necessary. However, no extra seats should be put in place.			Ongoing
	Signs mark out entry and exit and remind people to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Reminders before each service and activity	Admin/NL	12/09/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed date
	Congregation briefed at beginning of the service and facemasks must be worn		Clergy / sidespersons	Ongoing
	Hand sanitiser available for visitors to use and at entry and exit points. Sink also available at back of church.	Large sanitiser to refill if necessary	CM/JG	Ongoing
	Special attention will be needed to ensure the safety of those at 'occasional' worship surfaces. Extra sidespersons will be required. Numbers are capped at 30 for these services.	Vergers will be present. Details of Next of Kin will be kept and they will be contacted re track and trace	NL / vergers / Administrator	
	Notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. practice hand washing etc.		Completed	12/09/20
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Church watchers and sidespersons briefed to do this after each service/session	CM/JG/NL	Ongoing
	Handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.		NL	
	Toilet facilities are closed unless of emergency	Door locked	NL	12/09/20
	All waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Replaced daily by church watchers		Ongoing
	Booking provides safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; all group leaders take records.	We will retain each day's record for 21 days	Admin / church watchers / sidespersons / group leaders	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed date
	Groups using the building whilst temporarily unable to use the hall will be in a small area and will follow risk procedures in line their hall risk assessment and in line with guidance from government re their particular activity.	Discussion with NL to ensure risk is managed and covered in this setting	NL /Christopher Simmance	Ongoing
<b>Activities outside of the church</b>	Any church group/activity wishing to resume outside the church building or the hall must contact the Vicar who will explore government guidelines with them. Once she is satisfied they can meet, the Church Wardens will be informed. They will inform the PCC at the next meeting in line with the offsite permission policy. Where possible groups including vulnerable adults and committee meetings are still encouraged to meet online.	The group leader must carry out a risk assessment as advised by government.	NL / Group leaders	Ongoing.
<b>During worship</b>	Sidespersons may arrive 20 minutes before the service. The doors will open 15 minutes before the published start time. The congregation will be asked to leave immediately at the end maintaining social distancing and moving clear of the door outside.		Clergy	Ongoing
	No bible on lectern. A printout will be provided. Congregation will need to bring their own bibles.	All bibles in church have been removed	Jean Bulley	Weekly
	All words will be on a screen on Sundays. On Wednesday attendees will find a service book on their seat. On exit it must be put in the box by the door and it will be quarantined until the next week.		Bill Dodd/Henry Bott/Benedict Loveless/ NL / Sidespersons	Ongoing
	No sharing of the peace, the priest will not speak during the distribution and will sanitise their hands		Clergy / CM	Ongoing

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	directly before. The wafers will remain covered during the service. Singing will be occasionally and by a small socially distanced choir			
	Communion will be distributed in a socially distanced line following removal of mask and hand sanitisation. The sidespersons will direct people for communion, entrance and exit. The congregation are required to stay in their seats for the duration of the service. Hand sanitiser is available throughout.	Anyone not adhering to social distancing measures, wearing of masks, hand sanitising will be asked to comply. If they do not do so, they will be asked to leave.	Sidespersons and Clergy	Ongoing
	Messy church: most chairs will be removed and rugs will be placed for families to sit in family groups. (These will be quarantined afterwards.) All craft materials will be prepared well in advance and placed in individual bags. Hands will be sanitised during preparation. Children will be required to stay with their parents in their groups. Any movement will be socially distanced as advised by helpers.	There will be four helpers at each service who will be briefed before.	NL /Gill Renny	Ongoing
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>	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.	This is possible in chancel for Morning Prayer		
	Cleaners should be warned that if they are in a vulnerable group they are potentially taking a risk to their health. They volunteer at their own risk. No one should come if self-isolating.		NL / Dot Mitcham / John Forse	
	Waste put daily into plastic bag which is tied and placed in black sack in cupboard.	Black sack containing potentially contaminated waste removed weekly	NL	Every Wednesday



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	All cleaners provided with gloves.		NL	12/09/20
	Cleaning materials provided in line with CofE guidance.		NL	12/09/20
<b>Managing the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	The building will be closed for 72 hours with no access permitted.		NL/CM/JG	
	The Vicar and Church Wardens will meet and make action plan.		NL/CM/JG	
	Public health will be informed. All attendees at church service (if applicable) will be informed.		NL/CM/JG	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.		NL/CM/JG	
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, we will carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.		NL/CM/JG	