

Corona Virus – Covid-19 Information

Under the current tier restrictions, the following regulations are in place. This will be reviewed regularly in line with any Government and Church of England updates.

Church Services:

We will have a service at St. Bartholomew church at 11:00am and a service at St. George's at 9:15am each Sunday

There will be no midweek services, 8:00am services, baptism or marriage services across the team at the moment. Funeral / burial / burial of ashes services may be permitted but with strict limits on the numbers attending and social distancing measures in place.

We are unable to open St. Thomas' church for worship without further consultation with the school and detailed risk assessments and action plans in place.

Please do not attend:

- If you have symptoms or a diagnosis of Covid-19 / Coronavirus
- If you are in a household where a member has symptoms or a diagnosis of Covid-19 / Coronavirus
- If you have been asked to isolate as part of a contact tracing programme

You may wish not to attend:

If you are in a high risk or vulnerable group

We have produced a risk assessment and update this in line with the latest information & guidance from the Government and the Church of England. We believe that we have minimised the risk as far as is possible provided everyone follows the guidance on hand sanitisation and the social distancing measures in place. If you have any concerns or want further information, please see the websites listed at the end of this sheet or contact the clergy / parish wardens.

Pattern of Services:

The services will not all be communion services but will also include Services of the Word.

Arriving at Church:

Please follow all the guidelines concerning social distancing and note that attendance will be limited.

- You may have to queue along the path from the lych gate to enter church at 2m / 6 feet intervals
- Entrance will be via the main door
- You will be asked to register so that we can have a contact tracing system in place. Attendance sheets are stored for 21 days and destroyed in line with Data Protection Measures. This is NOT a school form attendance register.
- Alcohol gel will be available to clean your hands. You will be directed into church following the one way system
- **THERE WILL BE A CAP ON NUMBERS ATTENDING of about 50 people.** Once this is reached, we will have to turn people away and we may need to introduce a booking system to control attendance.
- **Face coverings are mandatory in line with Government regulations for all those over the age of 11 unless they have a medical exemption.**

Within the Church:

Social distancing will be strictly observed.

- The layout of seats will look very different – do not try to move them.
- The Lady Chapel will not be available
- Doors will remain fixed open to avoid people touching door handles / door panels
- No books will be handed out or used
- There will be a table with service sheets. You will be invited to take one and you must take this home with you; please do not leave it behind.
- The offertory plate will also be on this table. There will be no offertory taken during the service.
- Please take a seat immediately – do not gather in groups to chat or block routes around the building
- Families / "bubbles" may sit together but there must be a 2 seat gap between individuals / families.

Children / Young People's provision:

We are not able to offer this to comply with social distancing

- The toy box, children's books and soft play bags will not be available
- Families must sit together in church; gathering in the back room or narthex is NOT allowed.

The Service:

The form of the service will be very different to comply with Church of England guidelines.

As an example

- It is recommended that services are shorter
- Robes may not be worn
- There will be less movement during the services – no standing / sitting or processions
- Congregational singing is not allowed at any services; the choir are allowed to sing in line with restrictions placed upon choirs
- There may be only one or two readings
- A sermon may not be preached if printed on the pewsheets
- Sharing the peace is not allowed
- At communion services, only the bread will be administered; the altar rails will not be used and people will be advised to come forward in a distanced queue, receive and return to their seat following the one-way system in place

After the service:

We are not allowed to serve refreshments and you are asked to leave quickly.

- Please leave in a socially distanced manner following the one-way system and the designated exits
- Do not congregate to chat especially if this blocks exit routes and exit doors.
- You may gather in a socially distanced manner outside the building away from the doors for a chat

School Form Signing:

There is new guidance in place and attendance can be registered from 13th December

- Church attendance can now be recorded but we cannot do this in ways that would be unsafe, break social distancing rules or put anyone attending at risk of transmitting or catching Covid / coronavirus.
- We have, therefore, suspended the forms that were signed at St. George's / St. Bartholomew's and the cards that were stamped at St. Thomas' churches to avoid sharing pens, paper and crowding around tables for signing / stamping cards which all break distancing regulations.
- **From Sunday 13th December, if you do attend a service within the team or would have attended a service had restrictions not been in place** [i.e. you would have attended St. Thomas' church, a Café Church Service, an 8:00am service] or where you cannot attend due to limits placed on attendance, **please e-mail:**

bdhww.churchattendance@gmail.com

giving both your name / your child or children's names and the church you would usually attend.

- You will need to do this even if you attend a service and sign in as these sheets are for contact tracing purposes only and must be destroyed after 21 days.
- Only one e-mail per week will be counted [even if you would have attended more than once in any week].
- Please do NOT use any other e-mail address to register church attendance as these will not be included.

Please contact us:

Team Rector: Revd Carol Pharaoh 01942 859251 carol.pharaoh@gmail.com

Team Vicar: Revd Angela Wynne 01204 468150 revawynne@gmail.com

Further Information:

Please see also the Parish website www.westhoughtonchurches.org.uk

Church of England website <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

Government Coronavirus website <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
and safe use of places of worship [places of worship](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/places-of-worship)

Or e-mail the Parish Office westhoughtonparish@outlook.com [NB not staffed 24 hours]
Please note that this is a rapidly changing situation which is being updated frequently. We will aim to provide the latest information available.

Edward McHale [Deputy Churchwarden] 12/12/2020 update