

St Peter RODMARTON

9 July 2020

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

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
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 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th 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

Church: St Peter's Rodmarton	Assessor's name: Simon Biddulph (SB)/Susie Esmond Rees (SER) (church wardens) APPROVED: Rev T G Kemp Rector	Date completed: 9 July 2020	Review date: 9 August 2020
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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	St Peter's Church only has one usable point of entry. Social distancing signage in place, and tying door open to prevent contamination risk from constant handling of door and to improve sightlines.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Note: Ministers do not carry key to padlock and so arrange entry with keyholders in advance.	N/A	
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Also see above for in use: Done pre-opening and will be aired for each opening day. Diary/checklist attached.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Done pre-opening and will be done before each opening. Cleaning rota & opening and	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		shutting church rotas attached.		
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	N/A There is no water connection	N/A	
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	All lights turned on and functioning Heating working as normal All electric sockets checked and working, and ongoing for each opening day.	SB	SB 9.7.20
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Font only	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	No livestreaming intended	N/A	
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.	No incompatibility concerns.	N/A	
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Worship times notified by email, whatsapp, social media, and on the benefice website	SB/SER/TK	
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	People to indicate their intention to come to a specific service to PCC secretary and/or Rector, and contact names of attendees will be	SB/SER/TK	

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		requested and kept for 21 days before being destroyed.		
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	Apply here. Opening times restricted to one day a week for private prayer, with safety guidance in place. Any passing tourist will be met by usual signs, and no consumable hospitality is offered.	N/A	
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		SB/SER	SB/SER Confirmed complete 9.7.20
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here. Checked and understood the guidelines. More than 72 hours between each opening time. Restricted access to parts of church, with roped off areas. Frequently clean used areas. Normal cleaning products. Wear gloves. Hand hygiene, and 60%+ hand gel. Cleaning and church opening & shutting rotas advised.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Choose one point of entry into the church to manage flow of people and indicate this with	One point of entry/exit only.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	<p>notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit.</p>	<p>Signage on way in to remind users about social distancing, compulsory hand gel use before entering and not touching fabric more than necessary. Max number of 20 households permitted in building at any one time. Unattended apart from worship, and notices and signs in place. During services, 2-way flow of people monitored to ensure distancing measures.</p>		
	<p>Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).</p>	<p>When open for Sunday worship, personal welcome outside the church to ensure safe distancing maintained.</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	<p>Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.</p>	<p>Door open, windows do not open. Door will be propped open during opening times.</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	<p>Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets</p>	<p>Removed to north aisle for safekeeping (area roped off) Rector will supply disposable service sheets for each service</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	<p>Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)</p>	<p>Removed to vestry (area roped off)</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

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	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed to north aisle for safekeeping. (area roped off)	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas		N/A	
	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).	Notices re keeping 2 metre distancing, in compliance with current advice. Area roped off from front of nave, no public access to chancel, altar, north aisle and bell tower/vestry except during services when the church will be fully open.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	See above re roped off exclusion zones. Seating areas marked out with signs, and personal guidance to seats during services. Notices re social distancing in place. As unsupervised apart from during services, visible signage.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Notices re Social Distancing. There is one aisle and limited scope for managing flow of movement with only one access point. There is no option other than to remind	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20	

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		<p>people of the need to maintain social distance and assume they will be considerate and observant of others moving into and out of the building to pray. This is a higher level of risk than ideal but unavoidable and acceptable given the relatively low numbers of people expected. Flow of people entering and leaving the building will be monitored during services.</p>		
	<p>Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.</p>	<p>Area roped off, as above, from front of nave, apart from during services.</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	<p>Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.</p>	<p>Hand sanitizers in porch, & notices to use on entering and leaving church Sanitiser is Nettox 60% alcohol . DEW for children and those with allergies.</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	<p>Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing</p>	<p>Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions. It is not possible to undertake any meaningful changes to ease the flow of people in and</p>	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

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		around the building given the limitations of its historic and fixed fabric		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notices in porch and throughout open areas: Keep 2 metre distancing (current advice); use hand gel on entering and leaving church; max 10 at any time for private prayer, more for services when restricted areas opened up; do not touch other people or surfaces, door handles, church fabric as far as possible	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Opening hours Sundays, 11.00 am – 4.00 pm only. More than 72 hours between use. Diary/checklist kept in the bell-tower (roped off area) to be completed each time the church is used or accessed, also for cleaning or maintenance. Cleaning and opening and shutting rotas in place. Checklist includes wiping surfaces and touch points. Church warden responsible for keeping diary	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

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		<p>so that record is up to date but task could be delegated onward.</p> <p>This is 'ongoing' as it requires constant monitoring. If PCC/Wardens/Rector agree to open with less restrictions, cleaning process needs to be upgraded accordingly with appropriate anti-viral products etc.</p>		
	<p>Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.</p>	<p>St Peter's has no running water. Hand sanitizer only.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.</p>	<p>No toilet facilities.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.</p>	<p>Disposable liners in waste receptacle (one only provided, in porch). Wear gloves (provided). Bin liners to be removed at the end of each open day, tied and placed in larger bin bag, in grey refuse bin. Church opening and closing rota attached.</p>	<p>SB/SER</p>	<p>SB/SER 9.7.20</p>

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	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	Congregants asked to notify PCC secretary or Rector ahead of time if possible; otherwise, to provide a note of their name and contact details which will be destroyed after 21 days.	SB/SER	JM 9.7.20
	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 given out with regards to new opening times and services.	SB/SER	JM 9.7.20
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .	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.	Opening hours Sunday only, 11.00 am – 4.00 pm , closed for 72 hours between periods of being open, no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surface noted.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.		N/A	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Cleaning rota with an initial list of personnel (to be added to), is attached, with opening & closing rota, and diary/checklist	SB/SER	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Disposable gloves provided, in porch. Checking adequate supply of gloves and cleaning products is on checklist.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

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.	Cleaning materials provided. As above	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Bin with disposable liners provided, to be disposed of as above with disposable gloves. Church opening and closing rota attached.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	At the end of each day the church is open. As above.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	St Peters Church will remain closed for 72 hours after each occasion it is entered before it is reopened as per the diary plan (attached) including all opening times, cleaning rota and Wardens fabric inspections. The minister will not enter the building for prayer at any time that complicates the management of the building to be open to the community.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	At present the building will remain closed for 72 hours between each access.	SB/SER	SB/SER 9.7.20

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	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .		

This Risk Assessment Plan for St Peter Rodmarton has been approved by the Incumbent, Church Wardens and PCC on(date)

It will be reviewed after one calendar month to ensure it is still appropriate unless circumstances require an earlier review.

All stakeholders and users should be encouraged to comment and suggest improvements at any time as the use of the building reveals any flaws or weaknesses in this guiding plan.

In line with Government recommendations this document will be available publicly on the website but attachments such as cleaning rota's will not be as they may contain personal data.