

All Saints Church Somerford Keynes 6th 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: SOMERFORD KEYNES	Assessor's name: DAVID CROFTS	Date completed: 7 th JULY 2020	Review date: 1 st 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	The tower entrance is the second point of access and the key is held by D Crofts CW <i>Note clergy have agreed not to use churches for private prayer to avoid complicating maintenance. Required access to be in consultation with Wardens. Livestream technically not possible.</i>	D Crofts to be available to unlock this door if required	7/7/20 D Crofts
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	We do not have a specific lone working document. If the clergy were inside the church then we would have a Church Warden would be in attendance.	D Crofts or Sussanne Lock available outside the church	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Buildings have been aired before use.	We open the three doors, Vestry, porch and tower to air the church	Carried out weekly on Fridays by D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Church is checked weekly on Fridays for all damage, dirt or water ingress	Carried out weekly on Fridays	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	There is no water supply in the church	NA	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Electrical systems checked each Friday by D Crofts	Carried out each Friday by D. Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	These are always empty	Checked by D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	We have no internet connection and have no equipment	Checked by D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
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.	The Church is remote and there is no conflict with other venues or businesses	D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	The Church does not have an individual website but shares one with the Benefice and the village web site. Rector to update benefice website.	The village website will be updated when the church opens for worship or prayer	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	We think that with the 2m rule we can accommodate 25 to 30 people of there are some family groups. Given a normal attendance of 10-12	Planning for a Benefice service would include the priest to plan	7/7/20 D Crofts

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		we would introduce a booking system if we were hosting a Benefice service	and manage numbers	
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain ‘Good to Go’ standard mark	The Church is on the Thames Path and does attract visitors. The Church will be locked and not available to visitors	Church Locked	7/7/20 D Crofts
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.	The Church to be checked by the Church Wardens prior to any use of the church	Church Wardens prior to any use of the Church	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	The church will now be open on a Wednesday and Sunday. Any general cleaning will be carried out at the end of these days by either of the Church Wardens	Church Wardens	7/7/20 D Crofts
	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.	The main door of the church will be open during times of general private prayer. During a service people will enter by the main door and be directed to their seats and told to remain in them. The church will be filled from the front. At the end of the service they will be directed to leave by the porch door	The Church Wardens will manage this at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts

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		and people will be directed to leave from the rear pews first		
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	We have sufficient room on the paths leading to the porch and we will use a PCC member to maintain Social Distance.	The Church wardens will manage this at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	We have no windows but during any service the tower, vestry and porch doors will be open. The porch door will be open during the periods of private prayer.	The Church Wardens will manage this at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	These have been removed from the pews and the church building to storage. The hymn book storage area is also screened off.	D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	These are only on the alter and no members of the public will be allowed to go beyond the alter rail.	This to be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	These have been removed to storage	D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	These have been boxed and stored	D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts

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	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).	We will mark out places on pews using an alternative staggered seating arrangements. In some cases the distance will be 1.5 to 1.8 m. but this is controlled by the fact that people will not be facing each other.	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	When the church is open for private prayer the rear of the church and all pews in the nave except for the first two will be cordoned off.	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	People will be asked to enter by the porch and move up into the church and fill the pews in sequence. Exit will be by reversing this procedure. For times when the church is being used for private prayer the maximum number allowed in the church will be 6.	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	During services the screen will limit people to the nave and the tower doors will be closed. When the church is open for private prayer the rear of the church and all	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts

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		pews in the nave except the first two will be cordoned off.		
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	We have a dispenser available at the porch entrance and other gel sanitisers for use if required	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	We don't think this is required. If 2m is compromised it will be as a walkway/access and not a significant risk		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notices to be printed and displayed in the porch and inside the church. Instructions on the use of the church for private prayer to be by the signing in book and on the porch door.	D Crofts	This action is ongoing but will be in place before any service
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	This is done during the Friday clean.	Friday cleaning rota	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	We have no water, all hand cleaning done with gel etc		
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	The port a loo is closed at the moment		7/7/20 D Crofts

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	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Bins are lined with disposable liners and cleared every Friday. <i>Safe practice with potential contaminant is (wearing disposable gloves) to tie the bin liner place in a second bag and secure then dispose as normal</i>		7/7/20 D Crofts
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	We will provide a visitors book for each worshiper to enter their names and a contact number. <i>At this station we need a bottle of gel and wipes for pens</i>	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	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.	When a service is planned we will use the village website and the Parish Council email system to advise the community. The Benefice will be responsible of notifying other parishes. The church will only be used for a service conducted by a priest.	D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	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.	Assuming the service is a Sunday then the church will be cleaned on the following Friday. The church will also be	D Crofts	7/7/20 D Crofts

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Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.		open to visitors for private prayer on Wednesday and Sundays and locked between these times.		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	We will not allow vulnerable people to clean. Only the Church Wardens will clean in the church.	D Crofts, S Lock	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	These will only be the Church Wardens.	D Crofts, S Lock	7/7/20 D Crofts
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	These are available with the cleaning materials	D Crofts, S Lock	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	These are available in the tower room	D Crofts, S Lock	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	This is part of the cleaning rota and waste is disposed of in the council waste bins	Cleaning rota	7/7/20 D Crofts
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Contaminated waste only generated on a Friday during Clean and after any service	Cleaning rota on Friday and Church Wardens on closing the church after any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	All doors locked including porch entrance door. <i>Note: if this happens we should contact PHE or</i>	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens	7/7/20 D Crofts

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		<i>appropriate local body and also contact any on the 'visitor' list for track and trace</i>		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<u>We will lock down for 72 hours and then follow with a full clean</u>	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	See above.	This will be controlled by the Church Wardens at any service	7/7/20 D Crofts