



Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public – St M version 3 - 30 September 2020

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
6 th August 2020	5	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](#).

Summary of St Michael's proposed strategy for extending opening for an 8.30am BCP communion service and a 10am Morning service (which is also live-streamed)

- The 8.30am BCP communion service will be every week except 2nd Sundays. There will be 10 chairs in the chancel 2m apart. Each participant will be given a quarantined personal copy of BCP to borrow for the duration of these arrangements, so can use in the service and take home and back. Books will be signed out. There are a maximum of 20 books available. Arrangements for receiving communion will be explained to participants.
- The 10am Morning service (Communion on 2nd Sundays) will replace the previous live-streamed 10am and also the 9.30 live stream for kids. There will be a SONlight children's group available during the service which will have a separate risk assessment. For the main 10am service, there will be a rota of 2 welcome team, one sound desk and one service leader and one preacher. The service leader is responsible for the computer and projection of the words for the service.
- We will put up notices saying when church is open and the precautions we are going to take. Both physical notices and one the church website and Facebook. Copies of these notices are attached to this risk assessment as an appendix.
- We will provide guidance to people so they know the procedures they need to be aware of when visiting the building and for participating in the service and receiving Holy Communion. The guidance on taking Holy Communion will also be explained verbally to those attending.
- Following updated guidance that people are expected to wear face coverings, we will include this in our notices and guidance and have available disposable masks for anyone who asks for one.
- The service leader and preacher will wear a face visor – face visors are not allowed for others as a replacement for face coverings or masks but service leaders are not required to wear face coverings so this is a greater precaution than is expected.
- We will have 50 chairs in total available for sitting on for the main 10am Sunday service, suitably distanced in rows of approximately 10 chairs spaced as 2, 2 and 1, a few groups of 3 are also available - these grouped chairs allow people from the same household to sit together.
- All other chairs are stacked so they cannot be used.
- The welcome team will keep a count of the number of people in the building at any time and will record the details so there are no other people handling pens.
- Visitors will be asked to provide contact details which will be kept in a book for 21 days OR visitors are asked to scan the QAR code displayed using the NHS Track and trace mobile app.
- There will be no books, Bibles or service sheets available – all words for the service will be projected onto a screen. The service sheets will also be sent out by email for those who wish to print their own copy or read it directly from a phone or tablet.
- The service will be spoken – there will be no singing.
- Kitchen will be closed off – not to be used.
- Rear toilets will be open with access from outside and through the vestry. Accessible toilet will be open with access through the pre-school room.
- Stage area, Martin room, upper room and play room all barred from access during Sunday services and notices saying not being used.
- Vestry and pre-school room open for walk-through access to toilets for visitors only.
- Vestry will be used as the area for SONlight with direct access to outside and the rear toilets.
- The weekly cleaner has been moved to a Friday to ensure all areas being used on a Sunday have been freshly cleaned from any activity that may have taken place during the week. Weekly/fortnightly or one off activities will all have their own risk assessment and will have a copy of this risk assessment.

Risk assessment template

Church: St Michael's Galleywood	Assessor's name: Anne Pepper, Churchwarden	Date updated: 30.09.2020	Review date: 30.11.2020
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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 St Michaels is not open for live-streaming and not open specifically for private prayer. Any private prayer will follow the Holy Communion service so see entries in that section.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible		Done for opening on 21 June 2020	16-18 June 2020 Anne Pepper
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .		
	Buildings have been aired before use.			
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.			
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies		
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.			
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.			
Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Only using one mobile phone for live streaming at present.	David Cattle	27 Sep 2020	
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.		N/A	N/A
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.		David Cattle	30 Sept 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Have put out enough chairs for expected numbers	Paul Wehren	7 July 2020
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	Apply here.	N/A	N/A
	Include details on requirements such as bringing a face covering in communications.		David Cattle	1 August 2020
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.		Anne Pepper	9 July 2020
	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.	Anne Pepper	30 Sept 2020
	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.	Note visors are not allowed as an alternative to face covering.	David Cattle	30 Sept 202
	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.	There is only one door in and out of main building. Notice in place.	Anne Pepper	18 June 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).	Not expected – will reassess risk if needed.	Anne Pepper	7 July 2020
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Windows do not open in main church. Doors will be opened prior to public arriving.	David Cattle & Welcome team	each 8.30am and 10 am service.
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Quarantined BCP are available to be borrowed and taken home and returned by anyone attending the 8.30am communion. Books will be numbered and signed out, no books will be shared.	Anne Pepper	30 Sept 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Most items will be placed in the Martin room and notice saying the room is not in use.	Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Only kneelers are in chancel – not to be used for communion.	Anne Pepper	30 Sept 2020
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Rooms needed as walk through but toys clearly covered and notice saying room not in use.	Anne Pepper	30 Sept 2020
	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).		Anne Pepper, David Cattle, Paul Wehren and John Robertson	7 July 2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.			
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	One way sign in porch.	Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Martin room, Play room, upper room all not in use for main services.	Anne Pepper	30 Sept 2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.		
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions .	Anne Pepper and David Cattle	7 July 2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.			
	Update notices with new guidance on wearing of face coverings. Have some disposable face masks available.			25 July 2020

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	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .	Anne Pepper	9 July 2020
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Anne Pepper	9 July 2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		Anne Pepper	18 June 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		David Cattle and welcome team	each 8.30am and 10 am service
	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.		David Cattle	10 July 2020
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.	It will be 72 hours in between uses but in addition here will be weekly cleaning.	Anne Pepper	9 July 2020
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.		Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Updated as more use is in place.	Anne Pepper	30 Sept 2020
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	N/A as cleaning is additional	N/A
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Anne Pepper	18 June 2020

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	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.		Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.		Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Public Health England guidance available here.	Anne Pepper	18 June 2020
	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.	Anne Pepper	18 June 2020