

Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public – St Michaels’s Galleywood v1 from 4 April 2021

Version Control

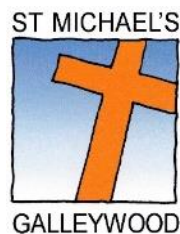
Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
25 th March 2021	9	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update has been reviewed to reflect the [roadmap to ease restrictions](#) issued by the UK government and is intended for use from 29th March onwards ('phase 1b'). It incorporates sections on singing, workplace testing, and planning for wider use of buildings including for non-worship purposes. At all times churches should check national and, if relevant, local restrictions to ensure the activity planned is currently permitted. Risk assessments carried out using an earlier template may still be valid but should be reviewed regularly and checked against this latest version of the risk assessment.

England entered the government’s roadmap out of lockdown on 8th March with the re-opening of schools and other education settings, and an increase in permitted reasons to leave home to meet one person outside for social purposes. As they have been throughout the third lockdown (from 5th January) churches are permitted to open for communal worship, private prayer and a number of essential purposes where they can be carried out in a Covid-safe way. There may be specific local regulations recommended by local authorities, that place additional restrictions on certain activities. Before completing this risk assessment you can see what is permitted by checking the guidance on permitted activities on the national church coronavirus webpage. Guidance on opening cathedral and church buildings to the public during COVID-19 can also be found [there](#).

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, the template 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. Specific guidance linking to advice on the lockdown period is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

The government acknowledges that places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership for many individuals, and in bringing communities and generations together. However, their communal nature also makes them places that are particularly vulnerable to the spread of the virus. In drawing up a risk assessment for your church, or revising it in the light of the current situation, you will need to think carefully whether the public benefits you achieve by opening are justified by the risks involved, however much you can mitigate them. This judgement will vary depending on the location and nature of your church building and the make up of your congregation and visitor profile. You will need to discuss the factors with your governing body, whether the PCC or chapter. Remember that this is your collective choice whether to open: while our churches are permitted by government to open, they are not obliged to do so. If you decide not to open, you can continue to have a valuable role serving the community in a number of ways. Guidance on this can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).



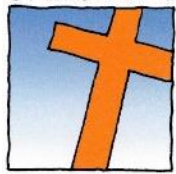
Guidance indicating how churches might arrange access and events in a Covid-safe way has been produced as part of a government initiative to encourage re-opening in a safe and reasonable way. This includes a number of case studies that may help you think about your church building.

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.

Separate risk assessments for outdoor worship and for access by contractors and construction workers are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Summary of St Michael's precautions opening from 4 April 2021 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. These will be signed for, so can use them in the service and take home and bring back to use the following week or when next attending. 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 two previous live-streamed services mainly coming from people's homes 10am and also the 9.30 live stream for kids. There will be a children's talk incorporated into the 10am service. From 11 April 2021, 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 service team of max 13 people: two wardens, 3 welcome team, one sound desk, one laptop and screen, one service leader, one preacher, one musician, one doing readings, one prayer and one mission focus. The service leader only is responsible for the computer doing the live streaming and receiving in messages. Both the service leader and laptop operator will touch the laptop for projecting the words – so suitable handgel must be used between users. As these people will be named on the rota, they do not have to book an Eventbrite ticket.
- 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. The vicar will also record a video showing the congregation what to expect. 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.
- All adults attending are expected to wear face coverings (unless exempt) 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 sit on the stage and wear a face covering when seated, taking it off when speaking to the congregation and then putting it back on again. All other participants in leading the service will sit in the congregation and only come to the front for their item.
- The maximum number allowed in the congregation is 30, tickets will be booked in advance via Eventbrite and people entering will be ticked off against their ticket, this will also serve as registration of name for contact tracing.

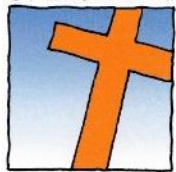


- One person from the Welcome team will tick off people against their Eventbrite ticket so only one person is handling any pens. Weather permitting this will be mainly done outside so to prevent crowding at the door and entrance and back of church. Contact details will be kept in a book for 21 days. The QAR code will be displayed both outside and inside for visitors to scan using the NHS Track and trace mobile app.
- 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.
- 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.
- There will be no congregational singing. Music may be played for the congregation to listen to.
- 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 clearly shown as not in use by the congregation during Sunday services.
- 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

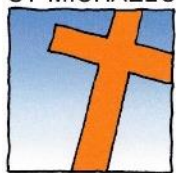
Church: St Michael's Galleywood	Assessor's name: Anne Pepper Churchwarden	Date completed: 30/03/2021	Review date: 31/05/2021
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for purposes of recording and/or livestreaming services (with no congregation present) Risk: contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	Consider if anyone required for recording or broadcasting is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Can someone else fulfil their role in the recording/livestreaming? Ensure that the people who need to attend the church building to enable the livestreaming or recording to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely. Make sure that only those essential for livestreaming or recording enter the church.	Advice on livestreaming and recording can be found here .	Live streaming is only done by the vicar on his own. Other leaders who live-stream currently do so from their own homes	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible.		N/A	
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .	not needed	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building.		N/A	
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard		David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21



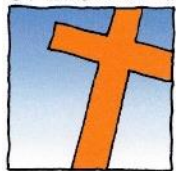
Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Ideally the welcome team hold the hand gel and pour it into people's hands so only one person touches the bottle.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce or download signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law and requiring these for all except those exempt.	Advice on face coverings can be found here . We will have new face	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	Consult advice on complying with Track and Trace . We have a ticket system and also a book to record names. We have put an additional QAR code up outside to reduce congestions at the entrance.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities	Consider how the national lockdown applies to the particular circumstances of the church and the worship or other activities envisaged. For gathered congregations or other activities drawing people from a wide area, consider the implications of where people travel from and the distance involved.		David Cattle with PCC and MLT	David Cattle 30/03/21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.		N/A	
	Check if any clergy, staff or volunteers required for opening to the public fall into clinically extremely vulnerable categories or have members of their household who do, and ensure there are enough people safely able and willing to facilitate opening and cleaning the building.		David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
	Consider whether to discourage clinically extremely vulnerable members of the congregation or visitors from attending services altogether or setting aside a time for them to attend for individual devotions.		David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.		David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
Deciding whether to have a choir or music group singing/performing Risk: Aerosol spread of coronavirus may be increased by singing and playing of wind instruments	Check current guidance on singing to establish what is permitted. This can be found in the Church of England guidance on conducting public worship and on in the Government guidance for places of worship .	We are not having any live singing (i.e. a singer at the front singing to the congregation) to start with – this may be reviewed once we have been open for a while.	David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
	Ensure that singers from different households can be socially distanced from one another, and from anyone else present (including a conductor, camera or microphone operator or, if present, a congregation).			
	Put in place measures to create a physical barrier between singers and any congregation.			
	Remind any members of congregation present that at present they are not allowed to sing indoors.		David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21



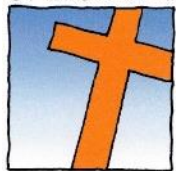
Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
#Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.	Confirm that all steps (above) for access for livestreaming/broadcast have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering. Clearly state the limits on attendance for weddings, funerals, commemorative events and any other permitted activities where upper limits apply (or provide a link to this document).	Information is mainly going onto Facebook as the website is not updated as frequently at the moment.	David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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.	Advice on face coverings can be found here .	David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
	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. Reminder will be given verbally at the end of the service and stewards will also assist people in leaving the building without congregating.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Will have cones out to mark 2m gaps outside for queuing. Will also have an additional QAR code outside and one person outside offering hand gel.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Make any temporary arrangements for managing the approaches to the entry points and any parking areas to ensure social distancing can be observed (taking into account any consequential risks arising from changes to circulation).	As above.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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.		
	If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in.	Guidance on church heating can be found here .	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Remove items such as Bibles, prayer and hymn books that are used by multiple people.	You could consider a long-term loan system for Bibles and other books to ensure people have access to these.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to sanitise hands before picking one up, and request that people take these home with them.	No using any – all being displayed on a screen.	N/A	
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces.	Only kneelers are in chancel – not to be used for communion.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	David will make a video to show this. Only priest will move to administer communion.	David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21



Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	person (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).			
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Seating areas marked by where sets are placed, all checked as 2m.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon is needed.	Martin room, Play room, upper room all not in use for main services.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions .	N/A	
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
Use of the church for baptisms, weddings, funerals, commemorative services and ordinations	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place.	<p>Advice on baptisms can be found here.</p> <p>Advice on weddings can be found here (scroll down to Can weddings go ahead?).</p> <p>Advice on funerals can be found here.</p> <p>The government's advice on commemorative events can be found here.</p>	David Cattle	David Cattle 30/03/21
Use of the church for permitted activities other than private prayer or worship	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place. Check that any external group using the church has COVID-secure working practices in place, including their own risk assessment where necessary, and will comply with what is required by the church.	<p>The government's guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities for permitted activities (including formal childcare and support groups) can be found here.</p> <p>Advice on use of churches as vaccination centres can be found here.</p> <p>The government's guidance on the use of hospitality spaces can be found here.</p>	N/A	



Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<p>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</p> <p>Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.</p> <p>Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.</p>	If the church building has been closed for 48 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	It will be 48 hours in between uses but in addition here will be weekly cleaning.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Identify surfaces that are frequently touched and by many people (often common areas), e.g. handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets, and specify the frequency and level of cleaning and by whom.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets deemed essential for services should be quarantined for 48 hours after use.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.		Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21



Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If 48-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	Anne Pepper 30/03/21
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	Anne Pepper	Anne Pepper 30/03/21