

Covid-19 Risk Assessment

As a trustee of the building, you have a duty of care to protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 to those who use the building. This is called a risk assessment and it will help you manage risk. You need to consider:

- Identifying what activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus.
- Think about who could be at risk.
- Decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed.
- Act to remove the activity or situation, or if this is not possible, control the risk.
- How to track incidents in an accident log book in accordance with the Health & Safety policy for the church/circuit

Full government guidance can be found [here](#). This assessment¹ is based on guidance from [HSE's Working Safely during the Covid-19 Outbreak](#).

Name of Church	Assessment undertaken by
Gillingham Methodist Church	Rev Paul Arnold, Mr Robert Rickards, Mr Phil Butler
Address	Area of the building assessed
High Street, Gillingham	Welcome Area, Main Worship Area, High Street Lobby Area, Vestry
Postcode SP8 4AG	
Date of Initial Assessment 17 th June 2020	Assessment Review Date July 2020

Social Distancing

Questions to Consider

1. In our building, where will social distancing be more difficult? **Main and High Street entry/ exit points, Toilets, Welcome Area**
2. What areas or tasks are more likely to increase the risk? How can we change work and tasks so people keep 2m apart or are separate? **Distanced queuing to get into the building, multiple hand sanitizer stations either side of entrance into Main Church, doors wedged open, clear signage, stewards on hand to guide.**
3. Can we re-organize our building to reduce the likelihood that coronavirus will spread? **Arrange seating as required to maintain appropriate social distancing. Stewards and/or signage in place to direct worshippers to sanitization stations/ seating/ toilets.**
4. Do we need to add or change things in our building to reduce the likelihood of spreading coronavirus? **Remove all magazines, books etc to safe storage. Those who need them should be issued with a bible/ hymn book and told to keep them for their personal use. Remove unused chairs to safe storage.**
5. If the building is listed, any changes need to be sensitive and reversible. Please consult the [Conservation Officer](#) about these changes. **Not applicable**

You should think about how you can organise the building so that you can keep both users and visitors 2m apart, where possible:

1. Physically arrange communal areas to keep people 2m apart.* **Chairs to be placed 2m apart – families to be allowed to group seats if staying in the same household.**
2. Mark areas using tape or floor paint to help people keep a 2m distance.* **Seating should be sufficient so that there is no need to queue in church (no coming to communion rail for communion.**
3. Provide signage to remind people to keep a 2m distance.* **Signage to be provided**
4. Using screens to create a physical barrier between people.* NA
5. Use more than one exit or entry to reduce numbers of people coming together. **Entry by main door, exit by High Street door**
6. Set up a register to track who enters the building. Stewards will write down names to reduce risk of spread. **Subject to consent and only to be kept for 21 days**
7. Permit only essential trips within the building to maintain social distancing as much as possible. **Only the two disabled toilets will be in use, both of these are unisex and single use.**
8. Social distancing also to be adhered to in communal areas. **No refreshments, attendees to be guided to seats on entry. Unfortunately, remaining for social fellowship after the service will have to be discouraged.**
9. Leave doors open that can be left open (taking fire safety and security issues into consideration) to reduce the need for people to touch door handles. No tea/coffee served, no cooking – electric cookers switched off at wall, reduced fire risk means that fire doors can be wedged open.

Where you cannot keep a 2m physical distance, you should think about:

1. Put in place systems such as 'one in, one out' in communal areas if it is not possible to maintain social distancing. Toilets as above
2. Assigning one person per area or reducing the number of people in the area. Toilets as above
3. Assigning people to teams (sometimes known as a cohort), that is people working on the same teams to limit social interaction. **NA until tea/coffee is served**
4. Keeping the number of people working less than 2m apart to a minimum. **NA**

Hazards/Risks <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	Persons Affected <i>Think of anyone who might have contact</i>	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Additional Covid-19 Controls – Reducing Risk <i>Think of what changes could be made in each scenario to reduce the spread of Covid-19</i> <i>*If the building is listed, any changes need to be sensitive & reversible, please contact the Conservation Officer for further guidance.</i>	Action Plan <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
Entrance/ Welcome Area	Congregation Stewards, Preachers & Ministers	3	1	1	1 x Door Steward stands in a place where he/she can welcome people without breaching social distancing and directs them into the main body of Church via Collection Box and Hand Sanitizer Station 1 x Steward in main body of Church shows people to seats as appropriate whilst ensuring maintenance of social distancing. Collection box placed in suitable position in Welcome Area to avoid holdups. Hand Sanitizer Stations with appropriate signage after Collection Box. In the event of bad weather, those attending are to be asked to place outer wear on the floor under seats.	Instructions for Stewards Ministers and LPreachers Guidance for Members/ Visitors in Notices Prepare Signage, obtain stocks of Hand Cleansing Gel Stewards, Property Team
Toilets	Congregation Stewards, Preachers & Ministers	3	1	1	Only Welcome Area and Side Entrance Disabled Toilets will be in use. People will need to be made aware of this. Both are unisex and single use. There is not considered to be any need to control use as they will be self-regulating. Paper Towels and liquid soap dispensers will need to be provided	Instructions for Stewards Ministers and LPreachers Guidance for Members/ Visitors in Notices. Obtain sufficient stocks of paper towels, toilet rolls, liquid soap dispensers Stewards, Property Team

Likelihood

- 1 = Low (seldom)
- 2 = Medium (frequently)
- 3 = High (certain or near certain)

Severity

- 1 = Low (minor cuts/bruises)
- 2 = Medium (serious injury / incapacitated for > 3 days)
- 3 = High (fatality or number of persons seriously injured)

Risk Rating

- 1-2 = low priority
- 3-4 = medium priority
- 5-6 = high priority

Refreshments	Congregation Stewards, Preachers & Ministers	3	3	3	While Covid 19 risk is still high, there are no plans to serve refreshments, including water for preachers. People are to be encouraged to bring their own drinks with them	Instructions for Stewards Ministers and LPreachers Guidance for Members/ Visitors in Notices Stewards, Property Team
Communion	Congregation Stewards, Preachers & Ministers	3	3	3	There are no immediate plans to conduct Communion services. When Communion services are re-instated, it is planned that Communion materials will be prepared in advance in accordance with appropriate guidelines and, at the relevant point in the service. brought to individuals where they are sitting	Review results of returned questionnaires Instructions for Stewards Instructions for Ministers Guidance for Members/ Visitors in Notices Stewards, Property Team
Worship	Congregation Stewards, Preachers & Ministers	2 (No singing) 3 (with singing)	2 (No singing) 3 (with singing)	2 (No singing) 3 (with singing)	Chairs are to be distributed so as to ensure that social distancing is maintained. Groups from the same household will be encouraged to sit together. A record of attendees at each service is to be kept for 21 days to assist with track and trace should any attendee subsequently test positive for Covid 19. In the event of attendance outgrowing capacity then it may be necessary to begin holding a second service at another time and asking members to register their preference in advance.	Review results of returned questionnaires Distribute chairs accordingly. Store surplus chairs temporarily in Hall. Attendance list to be recorded and retained for 21 days Stewards, Property Team, Pastoral Secretary.
Hymn Books/ Bibles/ Magazines	Congregation	2	2	2	All books (including Bibles) are to be stored away. Magazines are to be removed and Book Racks to be covered up or removed. Members needing a hymnbook are to be issued with one and invited to retain it for their exclusive use	Instructions for Stewards Ministers and LPreachers Guidance for Members/ Visitors in Notices Stewards, Property Team

IT and Audio Equipment	Operator, Preachers & Ministers	2	2	2	Sound system surfaces and controls, PC Keyboard and screen and equipment cabinets are to be cleaned after every use with suitable disinfectant wipes or spray. Microphone and transmitter sets are to be cleaned after every use with suitable disinfectant wipes. Where practical, all equipment is to be locked away in the cabinets for at least 72 hours before being re-used.	Obtain stocks of suitable disinfectant wipes/sprays. Operator, Stewards
An attendee subsequently reporting/ found to have been Covid19 positive	All attendees	3	3	5	Names and contact telephone numbers of all attendees on the day in question to be provided to the authorities as required	Duty Steward

Likelihood

- 1 = Low (seldom)
- 2= Medium (frequently)
- 3= High (certain or near certain)

Severity

- 1 = Low (minor cuts/bruises)
- 2 = Medium (serious injury / incapacitated for > 3 days)
- 3 = High (fatality or number of persons seriously injured)

Risk Rating

- 1-2 = low priority
- 3-4 = medium priority
- 5-6 = high priority

Cleaning

You need to think about how to keep the areas being used in the building clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces. Government guidance on cleaning can be found [here](#). If the building is listed, you should review Historic England's [How to Clean Historic Surfaces](#) and speak to the [Conservation Officer](#) before cleaning historic items such as stained glass. You should consider the following:

1. What areas or items of the building are regularly touched and would need cleaning and sanitising? **Areas in use currently to be limited to Welcome Area including Disabled Toilet, Main Church, Vestry, High Street Entrance – Corridor and Disabled Toilet**
2. What can we do to reduce the need to clean or to make cleaning easier and more effective? **See Risk Assessment Controls and Action Plan**
3. Who will do the cleaning? **Cleaning contract to be established**

What needs cleaning and sanitising?

1. Identify common areas of the building that are likely to have items that need regular/ frequent cleaning such as door handles, light switches and reception areas. **As Above**
2. Identify objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them. **See Risk Assessment**
3. When receiving or handling goods, you will need to decide what cleaning is needed and talk about how to make sure it's done. **To be defined**

Making cleaning easier and reducing the need to clean

1. Keeping surfaces clear of objects makes it easier to clean and reduces the number of things that can become contaminated. **See Risk Assessment**
2. Put in place 'clean as you use systems' for areas such as meeting rooms, printers etc., to keep up with cleaning requirements. **Not Applicable at present**
3. If customers or others need to come to your work, put in place measures to clean after the visit. **See Risk Assessment**

Who will do the cleaning and when?

1. Decide if the current cleaning arrangements are enough to ensure adequate cleaning. You may choose different levels of cleaning for different areas. Deep cleaning once a day and then supplementary cleaning, e.g. wiping high contact surfaces throughout the day. **A cleaning contract is to be established to carry out cleaning for one day per week (Wednesday proposed) of only the areas in current use. The possibility of increasing hours/ cleaning days will be discussed as and when it is decided to open up all or part of the rest of the building**
2. Providing information and instruction to those doing the cleaning to ensure they know what to clean and how to make it effective. Instructions on how to clean. **It is planned to rely on professional cleaning contractors who should only need to be told which areas to clean.**
3. 'Clean and sanitise as you go' may need to be put in place for areas such as meeting rooms, printers etc. **Not applicable at present but will become necessary if external groups restart their activities on the premises.**
4. Signs around the workplace can be a good way of letting people know what they need to do to keep it clean and sanitised. **To be defined and signage developed**
5. If people cannot clean straight after touching surfaces, then provide hand sanitiser. **See Risk Assessment**
6. For higher-risk cleaning areas (toilets, etc.), you will need to ensure people know what to do to protect themselves. **To be defined and signage developed**

Hazards/Risks <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	Persons Affected <i>Think of anyone who comes in contact</i>	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Additional Covid-19 Controls – Reducing Risk <i>Think of which prevention strategy could be used in each scenario to reduce the spread of Covid-19</i> <i>*If the building is listed, any changes need to be sensitive & reversible, please contact the Conservation Officer for further guidance.</i>	Action Plan <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
Cleaning of all surfaces between services	Congregation Stewards Preachers/ Ministers	3	3	3	Limit access to a single service on Sunday. Encourage use of hand sanitiser on entry and exit. Worshippers to take away any single use service sheets they have used, any hymnbook/bible issued to them and any personal rubbish e.g. tissues. Cleaning to take place midweek by contract cleaner.	Engage professional cleaning service with relevant knowledge and expertise. Provide multiple hand sanitiser stations. Display appropriate signage
Cleaning of Toilets	Congregation Stewards Preachers/ Ministers	3	3	3	Paper towels, liquid soap dispensers to be provided for personal use. Users to be encouraged to wash hands for 20 seconds or use the sanitiser before and after each visit. Cleaning to take place midweek by contract cleaner.	Engage professional cleaning service with relevant knowledge and expertise. Provide hand sanitiser etc. Display appropriate signage.
Deliveries	Stewards, Property Committee members, Minister	1	1	1	Recipient to wash hands before and after handling deliveries. Deliveries to be appropriately labelled and quarantined for 72 hours e.g. in Room 3	Display signs at appropriate locations

Likelihood

- 1 = Low (seldom)
- 2 = Medium (frequently)
- 3 = High (certain or near certain)

Severity

- 1 = Low (minor cuts/bruises)
- 2 = Medium (serious injury / incapacitated for > 3 days)
- 3 = High (fatality or number of persons seriously injured)

Risk Rating

- 1-2 = low priority
- 3-4 = medium priority
- 5-6 = high priority

Sanitisation of IT and Audio Equipment	Operator, Preachers & Ministers	2	2	2	Equipment is to be wiped down after every use with suitable disinfectant wipes/ sprays. Where practical, equipment should be left for 72 hours before next use	Operator
--	---------------------------------	---	---	---	--	----------

Good Hygiene

You need to think about:

1. Ensuring that you have handwashing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels and reminding to wash regularly for 20 seconds. Signs
2. Replace hand dryers with paper towels and bins that are emptied frequently to safely dispose of waste. Paper towels
3. Providing handwashing facilities (running water, soap and paper towels) at entry and exit points. People should be able to wash their hands when they arrive and leave. If this is not possible, provide hand sanitiser. Hand sanitiser
4. Providing hand sanitiser in multiple areas in addition to washing facilities. Yes
5. Providing tissues throughout the building.
6. Using signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique – reminding those in the building to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Recommendations include:
 - a. [Public England’s Covid-19 Employer’s and Business Guide](#)
 - b. [NHS Hand-Washing Technique](#)
 - c. [Follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#)
7. Setting clear guidance for the cleaning of toilets, showers and changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean. signs

Personal Protective Equipment

Face Masks and Gloves

- Face coverings and gloves are not a replacement for social distancing and regular handwashing, which remain the most important actions.
- The government has advised people to consider wearing face coverings in enclosed public spaces, which would include churches, to help reduce the spread. Consider if face coverings are necessary
- Public urged not to buy medical grade masks so they can be saved for frontline health and care workers, and instead make their own face coverings at home.

Likelihood

1 = Low (seldom)
 2= Medium (frequently)
 3= High (certain or near certain)

Severity

1 = Low (minor cuts/bruises)
 2 = Medium (serious injury / incapacitated for > 3 days)
 3 = High (fatality or number of persons seriously injured)

Risk Rating

1-2 = low priority
 3-4 = medium priority
 5-6 = high priority

Information and Guidance

Questions to consider:

1. What information do Church members need to make sure they understand how to keep safe during the outbreak?
e.g. Signage, entry and exit, refreshments, use of books, removal of single use service sheets/ rubbish
2. Who else do we need to share information and guidance with and what is the best way to do it?
e.g. External groups, need to carry out own risk assessments, need to follow cleaning/ sanitisation protocols, letter of guidance
3. How will people know when information and guidance is updated? **Updated letters provided as guidance changes**
4. Making sure you pass on the correct information and guidance to those using the building is an important part of reducing risk.
 - Decide what people need to know so they can use the building safely. **Reviewed regularly**
 - Decide the best way to pass on information and guidance to those using the building. **E-mail list**
 - People often need to hear messages more than once and in different ways to remember. Think about ways to reinforce the message.
e.g. Display appropriate signage
 - Think about how to interact with those who do not regularly use the building such as contractors and delivery drivers. **Prepare procedures/ protocols to be followed by tradespeople or require copies of their trade protocols to verify safe working practices.**
5. Updating information and guidance
 - Be prepared by thinking about what measures can be put in place to update people in the event of adapting the current guidance.
 - Decide if the current ways of sharing information and guidance are enough to update people or if you need to do more.
 - As information is key to reducing risk, decide how you are going to make sure that everyone who needs the information gets it.
6. Ensure that all those who use the building know what the [current guidelines](#) are about self-isolation if they or someone in their home has symptoms. Full guidance on testing can be found [here](#) and here is the [link](#) to apply for a test.
 - Agree how you will let people who use the building know that you are self-isolating and make sure that you don't go into the building.
 - Agree how you will look after someone who falls ill in the building. Do you need to isolate them until they can go home? Where will that be? What do you need to do to clean afterwards?
 - Decide what support and reassurance needs to be in place for the person who is self-isolating and agree what support and reassurance will be in place for other people in the building.

Hazards/Risks <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	Persons Affected <i>Think of anyone who comes in contact</i>	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Additional Covid-19 Controls – Reducing Risk <i>Think of which prevention strategy could be used in each scenario to reduce the spread of Covid-19</i> <i>*If the building is listed, any changes need to be sensitive & reversible, please contact the Conservation Officer for further guidance.</i>	Action Plan <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
Keeping people informed	Congregation Stewards Preachers Ministers External Groups				Review information regularly	Review Information regularly and send updated information regularly

Likelihood

- 1 = Low (seldom)
- 2 = Medium (frequently)
- 3 = High (certain or near certain)

Severity

- 1 = Low (minor cuts/bruises)
- 2 = Medium (serious injury / incapacitated for > 3 days)
- 3 = High (fatality or number of persons seriously injured)

Risk Rating

- 1-2 = low priority
- 3-4 = medium priority
- 5-6 = high priority

Summary of Action plans

Action – List out what needs to done	Ownership – List out who complete	Date to be Completed by	Date of Completion
1. Instructions to Stewards re: control of Entrance, Toilets, Refreshments, Books	Stewards, Property Stewards, CC Secretary	TBD	
2. Instructions to Congregation re: use of Entrance, Toilets, Refreshments, Books	Stewards, Property Stewards, CC Secretary	TBD	
3. Instructions to Local Preachers and Ministers re: use of Entrance, Toilets, Refreshments, Books	Stewards, Property Stewards, CC Secretary	TBD	
4. Signage Social distance, hand washing,	Stewards, Property Stewards	TBD	
5. Purchase Paper Towels, Hand Sanitiser & Disinfectant	Stewards, Property Stewards, Treasurer	TBD	
6. Chairs Socially Distance & check numbers, store others	Stewards, Property Stewards	TBD	
7. Books & Magazines Store away	Stewards, Property Stewards	TBD	
8. Review information regularly, update and disseminate	Stewards, Property Stewards, CC Secretary	TBD	
9. Cleaning Contract Agree cleaning requirements, review as necessary as building is opened up	Stewards, Property Stewards	TBD	
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			

After assessing the risk and making the changes, you could put this [sign](#) that states that you had taken the necessary precautions.

Further resources:

HSE guidance on consulting and involving your workers www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/

General government guidance on keeping workplace settings safe open www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19

General Scottish Government guidance www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-businesses/pages/business-and-social-distancing/

Welsh Government advice for employers <https://gov.wales/business-and-employers-coronavirus>

Guidance for social distancing in educational settings - www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings

Historic England's Guide to Cleaning Historic Surfaces - <https://historicengland.org.uk/coronavirus/historic-places/cleaning-historic-surfaces/>

Government guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing

Likelihood

- 1 = Low (seldom)
- 2 = Medium (frequently)
- 3 = High (certain or near certain)

Severity

- 1 = Low (minor cuts/bruises)
- 2 = Medium (serious injury / incapacitated for > 3 days)
- 3 = High (fatality or number of persons seriously injured)

Risk Rating

- 1-2 = low priority
- 3-4 = medium priority
- 5-6 = high priority