

## Covid restrictions at Forest Fold - 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021

We have been able to review the covid restrictions here at FF as promised.

We have decided on a way forward which will allow us to experience more normality in worship & fellowship, but in a way that we feel will be sensitive to the range of views and shows concern for the safety & wellbeing of us all.

We will put a copy of what I say on the website. Obviously, the situation is still a moving scene, so we will keep things under review, but this is what we feel is right for us here at this stage and will take effect from next Sunday (12<sup>th</sup>). Then remain the way forward for the current time.

The three main areas are social distanced seating, face coverings & mixing.

**Social Distance seating.** From next week we will continue to have social distanced seating in just some parts of the building. In the rest of the chapel you will be able to sit in every pew.

There are about a dozen who have requested social distance seating. There may be others too rather keen on it. We wanted to err on the side of giving a generous area. So the back pews - the straight pews - on both sides of downstairs will be social distanced seating. Malcolm & Steve B will be spacing out those pews during the week so that they are in the right place to ensure this and we will no longer have to have taped off pews. So, if you would like social distanced seating the stewards will guide you to these pews. **There may well be spare social distance seats. We suggest that those can be taken – especially nearest the main entrance - by families with young children – who often understandably like to be nearer the back.**

If you are not wanting social distanced seating then it will be helpful if you sit towards the front or upstairs. Although in these areas people will be closer together, we still feel it is best for you to sit with those you normally mix with such as families & close friends. It may also be sensitive to leave little gaps between households and groups. There is no need to pack in like sardines, which could feel strange given what we have been through.

**Face coverings.** From next week we are making the wearing of face coverings optional which we know will be a relief to many. Its at your discretion if you wear one or not. The exception to this is the social distance pews at the back, where we would like you to wear a face covering. Those sitting there are feeling the need to be more cautious so it seems right & sensitive to keep face coverings on in those seats. For other areas it is optional and we

trust you will respect the choice that others make, as you expect them to respect the choice you make.

**Mixing.** It is still generally best to mix outside if at all possible. We all know this reduces risk. So please socialise outside if you can. Both exits will be still be used to allow people to get out easily. If the weather is wet then you can mix inside if you wish, but we would encourage you to be sensitive in giving space to others and where possible spreading out – perhaps into the Sunday School hall.

So those are a few changes that we hope you will feel are appropriate at this stage.

Other things still remain in place. Enhanced ventilation, monitoring of the air & appropriate cleaning arrangements will still continue.

We still ask that you be cautious & thoughtful. If you clearly have main covid symptoms we please stay away and get a test in line with the guidance. Where you have had close contact with someone who has been tested positive, we would encourage you to use discretion & caution, taking a lateral flow test before being in a big group.

If you have further questions then do speak to Malcolm or one of the elders.

We are thankful for the spirit of compliance and understanding that you have demonstrated over the months. We pray that a spirit of Christ-like love and humility will continue as we steer our way through the changing situation.

John Cowley on behalf of the elders