

Covid statement Sunday 18 July 2021



"You will know that the so-called 'Freedom Day' is this coming week on the 19th July. As part of that there will be no more legal restrictions on communal worship - which will be welcome news to many of us. This has been confirmed in the revised guidance for places of worship which I had sight of yesterday evening.

We realise however that covid cases are increasingly high, that the threat of having to isolate continues well into August even for those with jobs which could impact on holiday plans, and that some amongst us still feel a measure of anxiety about the whole situation.

There are 4 main things that the elders want to say about the situation at Forest Fold.

*1 – **Singing.** We look forward at last to being able to sing God's praises more freely again and shall begin doing so from next Sunday. Initially the songs will still be played through the system to assist with the volume.*

*2 – **Other precautions.** We feel however that it is wisest in the circumstances to maintain many of the other safety measures at least during August. So, we are still encouraging people to wear face coverings and will still be maintaining social distanced seating during this summer period.*

*3 – **September.** We will keep the constantly changing situation under review – but are particularly planning to review things at the beginning of September. We would like to move to a situation of less restriction when the time is right. This may involve at first, for instance, keeping social distance seating for just certain areas of the church building.*

*4 – **Single morning service.** One thing that will change however is that from the first Sunday in August (2 weeks' time) we plan to return to just a single morning service at 11.15. We usually have a smaller congregation during August so anticipate that the chapel and overflow will adequately cope with the numbers expected. Our thanks goes to the tech and stewarding teams for all they have done to keep the two services running for so long.*

So singing from next week, other precautions stay in place until at least end of August, Reviewing the situation after that, and down to a single morning service in 2 weeks' time.

I realise some may feel relieved and others disappointed or frustrated. It is plain that there is a spectrum of views on these matters. This is however how we as elders feel it is right to approach things at this moment. We also respect that other churches too will take different routes. Each situation is different, and they must do as they see fit. In all want to follow the pattern of Phil 2 in having Christ-like humble unselfish minds by being thoughtful for the perspectives and opinions of others.

John Cowley for the Forest Fold Elders.