

c/o 21 Beverley Close

Oulton Broad

NR33 8QQ

Tel: 01502 587697

16th July 2020

Dear Friends

St Peter's Church Carlton Colville Update 2

It seems little time since the last update and yet a month has passed, and we have much to share with you. The PCC met for the first time in full, since February, last night (14th July 2020).

Church Opening

As you will have seen the Government has said that churches can now open for public worship. The emphasis has been on the 'can' not on the 'must', however we are pleased to say that we will recommence a form of weekly public worship from Sunday 9th August 2020.

There are many things we will need to do at St Peter's before that date. The 'headline' rules, amongst others, as at today, are:

- (a) still to adhere to a 2m safe distancing rule, where possible, and we can within our building,
- (b) provide appropriate signage, and floor markings, to denote restricted areas/walkways etc,
- (c) there is to be no public singing at any public service,
- (d) ensure adequate hand sanitising stations are available,
- (e) soap and paper towels (only) and safe disposal of them are available in the toilets,
- (f) we can enter and exit the building and grounds safely,
- (g) we remain safe whilst in the building, through minimal movement during the service.

Bob had carefully re-ordered the main body of the building prior to our PCC meeting, taking into account that 2m safe distance rule. We can then confirm that any service would be limited to 18 persons sitting individually within the main body of the building with the addition of a worship leader, 2 readers and a prayer leader taking up space in the Choir area, and Bob 'patrolling' as only a churchwarden can to ensure we all remain safe. I expect you will be asking 'what if we can sit together?', unfortunately as we would have marked out the walkways it will not be possible to join chairs together. Even if we initially set up 2 seats + 2 seats across, a single person will then take up 2 seats. You will be asked to take your seat and expected to stay there for the duration of the service. This will of course be reviewed as we gain experience.

As above, the toilets will be available but due to the pinch point of the old vestry corridor, access would only be available via the outside Parish Room door. The Parish Room itself is out of bounds, being the storage area for the spare chairs. If you do need to use the toilet facilities during the service, please ask the warden (or his deputy if on duty) for the key. Refreshments will not be served.

Whilst not required by law today, we would be asking the congregation to voluntarily wear facemasks whilst in the building. We appreciate with the best will in the world not to sing, when we hear music some of us find it very hard not to sing along, so a mask would at least minimise that risk to others (You know what I mean)!

18 seats per service means that there will have to be a booking system as much as that sounds so inappropriate for a House of God. Linda has agreed to 'police' this through mobile calls (07732 741 636) or

emails to the church email address (carltonandmutfordchurch@yahoo.co.uk). She will endeavour to ensure that all those that would like to come to a service would be able to come to a service of their choosing or to be offered a seat at the next available service. This will take some time to embed into our way of worship so we would appreciate it if all could be sensitive to the needs of others at this time. And that goes especially to our attitude to our brother, Bob, (and his deputies when he can't make it), who as churchwarden will have the task of looking after our safety in the building, and to Linda too who may have to say that a particular service is fully booked (oh that sounds so wrong). If there become too many issues then we will have to reconsider how to move forward, so we must all work together on this one.

As a consequence of there being no singing, any service would probably last no longer than 45 mins and will take the form of a service of the word (Morning Prayer or Worship For All). Rev Peter Baxandall may be able to assist with some services.

Entrance and Exit will continue to be through the main door, but we need to make it clear that that door will be for entrance only at the beginning of the service and exit only at the end of the service. The Priest door at the east end of the building was considered but as it opens to uneven grass and trip hazards was discounted.

For now, there will only be the one service per Sunday, at 10:30am. (This is partly as we can then leave the church for 72 hours without having to employ a team of cleaners to clean it before the next service). St Andrew's intend opening from the 9th August too. I (Mark) may be commuting across to St Andrew's occasionally (like the old days) for a 11:00am service there once per month if they can find no other Minister.

Whilst we would dearly love to consider the church and the worship open to all at this time, we have had to remove all creche area items, hymn books, Bibles and service leaflets, and with the limitations in worship imposed we will probably be unable to make any service fully inclusive to all generations.

Online Services

As per Church of England guidance we will endeavour to continue to run the weekly online service through YouTube, for those still self-isolating or are unsure about attending church at this time. Hopefully the format will remain much the same as at present and will allow you to sing as loudly as you like in your own home. As you will appreciate, we are very dependent on a very young man to make this happen for us, who does have other pressing commitments, and for whom I cannot utter enough thanks.

Vacancy

We have been advised that there have been 3 positive approaches from Clergy considering our Priest-in-charge vacancy, with visits/interviews to take place sometime in August/September. Please pray that one of those is the shepherd we are looking for at least over the next 3 years. It is therefore 'touch and go' whether a Priest-in-charge would be in post before Christmas.

We appreciate that all these changes to ways of doing church are frustrating (especially if you find you can't get to the service you want to) and confusing but we trust in the Lord that he will see not only St Peter's through this crisis but the whole of his creation.

Grace, Mercy and Peace to each one of you.

Mark

Lay Chair to the PCC, and Reader