

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public: individual prayer and funerals

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 nd May 2020	1	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
8 th June 2020	2	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
12 th June 2020	3	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

Churches and cathedrals are legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provides for churches to open for funerals from 15th June.

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 individual private prayer. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for individual private prayer or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context.

Future versions of this document will be produced when different forms of public worship and access are allowed.

A risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers forms part of an updated document giving advice on access for these groups. This can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Risk assessment template

Church: Holy Trinity Sunningdale	Assessor's name: Revd. Jon Hutchinson	Date completed: 18 th June 2020	Review date: When the next change to church usage is allowed.
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	The main church entrance is the only practicable entrance.	JGH	JGH 18 th June
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	We have a lone working policy. The Main doors are locked if anyone is in the church alone.	Anyone being in church alone.	
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Completed	Ted	Ted – 15 th June
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Completed	Ted	Ted – 15 th June
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Water has been run into the sink and the toilets flushed and cleaned	Ted	Ted - 15 th June
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Electrical systems stayed on. Heating has been switched off. Church was checked regularly during lockdown	JGH	JGH - various
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Not applicable		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Preparation of the Church for individual prayer and funerals	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Done	JGH / Ted	15 th June
	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.		
	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.	Main porch door Entry North door exit	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors open assuming the weather is suitable.	JGH and TWH	
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	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 person.	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Done	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Considered and actioned	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Completed	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Not necessary	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Completed	JGH and TWH	18 th June
	If the church has been used in the last 72 hours ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes.	Church will only be open on Sundays – thus a week between use. If a funeral is conducted cleaning will proceed and follow.	JGH and TWH	Ongoing
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Usual facilities meet this guideline		Permanent
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Usual facilities meet this guideline		Permanent
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Usual facilities meet this guideline		Permanent
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no	Noted		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Consultation with Ted. See Note	JGH	18 th June
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Usual practice	Ted	Weekly routine
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Yes	Office orders	As required
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	yes	Office orders	As required
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Disposal is by Ted	Ted	Weekly
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	NB – with church used once the following cleaning removes all waste	Ted	Weekly
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.		JGH	When required
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Public Health England guidance available here.		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.		

Note – Ted has a health condition. His general and regular cleaning is not affected however if we are required to clean within 72 hours of known infection Ted will not take part.