

## Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

### Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Updates
16th July	1	
24th July	2	Masks

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13<sup>th</sup> June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15<sup>th</sup> June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4<sup>th</sup> July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

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 any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

<b>Church:</b> St Mary's, Chipping Norton	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Martha Simpson	<b>Date completed:</b> July 2nd 2020	<b>Review date:</b> Ongoing
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming</b>	Please see Risk Assessment - Opening Church Buildings to the Public: individual prayer			MS 11th June 2020
<b>Deciding whether to open to the public</b>	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Booking not anticipated for Summer Sessions, but RSVP requested for indication of numbers. Not necessary for Thursday Worship, but may need to be reviewed when returning to regular Sunday worship.	n/a	n/a
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	Not open to tourists at this time	n/a	n/a
<b>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the</b>	Confirm that all steps for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		MS	MS 11th June 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism</b>	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	No changes from previous risk assessment	MS	MS 11th June 2021
	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.	One way system in place - in main door, out through the tower door. Publish info pre-event and on a sign at entrance.	MS/staff	MS 8th July 2020
	Manage exit at the end of service to maintain distance and avoid mingling.	Thursday Worship, Weddings and Funerals to be dismissed one pew at a time, from the back rather than using one-way system inappropriate for more elderly.	Service leader	Ongoing
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Queue not anticipated, trust people to distance as usual. Review if problematic after first service.	n/a	n/a
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Leave doors open	Stewards	Ongoing
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets		Staff	11th June 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed from regular open area for prayer, left in place in wider area used for occasional services. Review when regular worship re-commenced.	Staff	11th June 2020
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	All toys and books removed and stored.	Staff	11th June 2020
	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 (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	Walkthrough undertaken with Church Warden. Calculate capacity of 80 2m apart.	TW/MS	5th July 2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Roped off area already in place for private prayer. Alternate pews to be blocked off with chairs for public worship. Stewards to help seat people to maintain distancing during services, until congregation familiar with what’s needed.	Stewards	When necessary for public worship times

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.	One way system, including those using the toilet who will need to re-enter via the main church door to avoid a bottleneck. Details published before events and on welcome poster.	Staff	When necessary for public worship times
	Limit access to places where the public does not need to go, maybe with a temporary cordon if needed.	Cordon already in place for private prayer. Will remain so for Thursday Worship unless additional space required, but removed for Summer Sessions and when extra seating required.	MS/staff	Ongoing, staff/stewards.
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	One on entry to the porch, one near tower door. Both to be administered by a steward for Summer Sessions, and Thursday Worship where possible. Signs if no steward available.	Stewards	In place for private prayer - June 11th 2020. Ongoing for public worship.
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Posters in place already for private prayer. Additional info can be added where necessary and details published before hand.	MS/staff	June 11th 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Weekly clean by cleaners covers high risk surfaces and touch points.	Cleaners	Every Thursday from June 11th 2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Cleaners to check, system already in place pre-covid	Cleaners	Existing
		Hand driers to be switched off, paper towels only.	Cleaners	Existing
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Cleaners to check, system already in place pre-covid	Cleaners	Existing
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days for Test and Trace scheme.	Not necessary for Summer sessions and Thursday worship as we already have clear ways to contact and communicate with whole congregation. Review when regular worship begins again and more visitors likely.	n/a	n/a
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	Via weekly email and online service, posters and social media. Neighbours n/a	Staff	MS from Friday 10th July 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Congregation, ministers and volunteers to wear masks.	Have some spare ones available at all times. Minsters may remove masks for leading/preaching but should wear them when moving around the church.	Congregation	Communicated on 24th July.
<b>Managing music and technology</b>	Ensure music and use of technology is designed to maintain distance and hygiene controls.	No wind instruments to be used unless behind screen. Use of clear screen to enable worship leader only to sing.	Worship leader/Wardens	Wardens to provide screen before 26th July if possible.
		Microphones for one person only, not to be passed around or shared during the service. Set up/down of sound equip to be done by one person or team using gloves to avoid cross-handling of equip.	Tech team	Ongoing
		2m distance maintained between sound and video operative at the back of church.	Tech team	Ongoing
		Sound operative to move from desk at the end of the service when people filing out, or review need for screen blocking off the aisle access.	Tech team	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Collection of offerings</b>	Minimising risk of transmission to those wanting to give during gathered worship.	No offering plates to be passed around. Offerings not taken at Summer Sessions, people encouraged to give by BACS or using contactless giving in porch. Those wishing to give at Thursday Worship should leave offering in a stationary plate by exit. Service leader to deposit on Emily O Shea’s desk for 72hr quarantine and then wash hands immediately.	Service leader	Ongoing
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	Summer sessions and Thursday Worship times chosen to retain 72hrs between and minimise cleaning reqs.	n/a	n/a
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	No concerns here	n/a	n/a



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	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Jane and Julie will clean every Thursday morning from 8am. Additional cleaning after funerals/weddings to be undertaken by vergger. No additional cleaning after Summer Sessions needed as 72 hrs before church open again.	MS	MS 11th June 2020
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Self supply	Cleaners	Ongoing
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Self supply	Cleaners	Ongoing
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Church warden or deluged steward to do this after Summer Sessions	Warden/steward	Ongoing
<b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	Vicar to communicate this if necessary	Vicar	If necessary
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Cleaners	Cleaners	If necessary
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Cleaners	Cleaners	If necessary