

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: All Saints Hampreston & Stapehill	Assessor's name: Rev Sarah Pix	Date completed: Friday 31 st July 2020	Review date:
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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	There is only one entry.		
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Two stewards on duty when building open.		
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Done	wardens	3rd July
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Volunteer cleaners enlisted	Wardens/ Sarah	3rd July
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Not relevant		
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Not relevant		
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Not relevant		
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.		Sarah/ Wardens	3rd July
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	As the building has been empty, it is safe from the virus. A general clean will be undertaken.		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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. N/A	There is only one entry. However a one-way system around the building has been identified and will be marked	Sarah/Wardens	3rd July
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	No windows that open. Door will be left ajar.	Stewards each time of opening	3rd July
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Bibles removed. Other literature in roped off areas	Wardens/Sarah	3rd July
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Some areas roped off	Wardens/Sarah	3rd July
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed to the small room for storage.	Sarah and David Libby	26 th June
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	To be roped off	Wardens/Sarah	3rd July
	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.	Completed.	Wardens/Sarah	3rd July
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Use of signage to denote available seats	Wardens/Sarah	3rd July
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Floor arrows - Notices	Michael Dye	3rd July
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Chancel, coffee area and small room to be roped off	Wardens/Sarah	3rd July

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	In Porch	Stewards	6th July
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	None		3rd July
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices		Wardens	3rd July
	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.	Opening hours to be arranged around a clear 72 hours. Mon 12 – 2 pm; Friday 10 – 12 am	Stewards after each opening	
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Toilet facilities unavailable – noted on information sheet	Helen	30 th June
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Toilet facilities unavailable		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		Stewards	Daily as rota
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	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.	Plan to close building 72hours prior to and post funerals and between opening for private prayer	Wardens/ Sarah	3rd July
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	N/A		
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Initial clean to be done by volunteers. Each space used	4 Volunteers	29 th June 30 th June

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		Each space used Each space used be cleaned down by stewards		
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Purchased	Wardens/ Sarah	3 rd July
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Spray bottle with conservation cleaning solution for pews	Wardens/ Sarah	3 rd July
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Stewards to take used PPE home	Wardens/ Sarah/Steward	Daily as rota
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Once a week.	Steward	Weekly as rota
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.		Wardens/ Sarah	3 rd July
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	N/A	Wardens/ Sarah	3 rd July
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.		Wardens/ Sarah	3 rd July
	Total visitors permitted = 8			