

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: St Matthew, Darley Abbey	Assessor's name: Peter Barham, Vicar Peter Taylor and David Brierley, Churchwardens	Date completed: 15 June 2020	Review date: After church has been opened for 3 afternoons, or 30 June (whichever is sooner)
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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	Vestry door has been used since this was allowed	Peter Barham	Peter Barham 150620
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here.	Peter Barham	Peter Barham 150620
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Doors open while church was cleaned	Wardens	Wardens 110620
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Checked before cleaners started	Wardens	Wardens 090620
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies	David Brierley	David Brierley 090620
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.		David Brierley	David Brierley 090620
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	No stoups, font always empty	David Brierley	David Brierley 090620
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.	Peter Barham, David Brierley and Peter Taylor met on 080620 and 120620	Peter Barham	Peter Barham 150620

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<p>Cleaning team of six people (working in groups of two) did a major clean of the church on 110620 – six hours of individual work</p> <p>Church employs a cleaner to do 2 hours a week. She came on 120620 and concentrated on the Fellowship Room and toilets. She will continue to come weekly.</p>	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.	David Brierley	David Brierley 080620
	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.	Entry via west door, exit via south door (unless unable to cope with steps, in which case use west door)	Agreed by all, Peter Barham to produce signage before opening	All 080620
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors were opened while cleaning and will be opened when church is open. No opening windows	Stewards when opening	Agreed, all 080620
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Everything removed. Peter Barham producing single use leaflet	Wardens 090620	Wardens 090620
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Altar rail closed	Wardens 090620	Wardens 090620
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Pew cushions and kneelers have been thoroughly cleaned, as has wood underneath	Cleaning team 110620	Wardens 110620
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas		Wardens 090620	Wardens 090620
	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.		Peter Barham and Wardens 120620	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Every other pew to have a “No sitting” notice	Peter Barham	In hand
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.		Peter Barham	In hand
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Altar rail closed. No entry signs for Fellowship Room, Choir vestry, Walter Evans Room and vestry	Peter Barham	In hand
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	West door, south door, vestry door	David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	None will be needed	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Is anyone (at Diocesan or CE level) producing standard templates?	Peter Barham	In hand
	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.	Materials available. Stewards will clean as people visit, and members of teaming clean are ready to return if necessary	David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Paper towels on order, everything else present – David to keep watching brief	David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Paper towels on order, everything else present – David to keep watching brief	David Brierley	David Brierley 120620

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
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 open Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons – will clean as required in between	David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.		David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.		David Brierley	David Brierley 120620
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	David Brierley	David Brierley 080620
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	David Brierley	David Brierley 080620
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		David Brierley	David Brierley 080620
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.		David Brierley	David Brierley 080620
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	If this happens, we will close the church for 72 hours	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620
	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 .	Noted	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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.	Noted	Peter Barham and Wardens 120620

Our plan is to open on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons, 2 to 4 pm. We will have two people on duty on each occasion, and currently have 8 volunteers. David Brierley is in charge of the rota.

Church will be opened and closed by one of the three of us. This ensures we can check the building and arrangements, assure the stewards are briefed, and pick up on any concerns at the end of their time.

We will advertise opening on the church facebook page and website, and by notices outside. In the past when we have opened for these hours, we have never had more than a handful of visitors – we will see what difference there is this year, and adapt our plans accordingly.

St Edmund's Allestree (which is usually left unlocked) is not opening at present due to the ceiling work being carried out. When this is done, we will look at plans to open.