

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, Denmead	Assessor's name: Revd Emma Racklyeft	Date completed: Friday 12 th June 2020	Review date: Friday 26 th June 2020
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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	Clergy, Church Wardens and staff access the church via the rear door by Parish Office.	N/A	Ongoing
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	This forms part of our Health and Safety Policy recently reviewed and renewed in May 2020.	N/A	Ongoing
	Buildings have been aired before use.	There has been little call to do this, but if needed our windows can be opened to ventilate the building.	REVD EMMA CH. WARDENS	Ongoing
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		REVD EMMA CH. WARDENS	Ongoing
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Our water system has remained in use so no need to flush.		12.06.2020 ER
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	All electrics have been checked.		12.06.2020 ER


Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	No water stoup. Font is empty and covered.		12.06.2020 ER
Preparation of the Church for supervised, individual prayer (and funerals).	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	12.06.2020 ER
	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.	All visitors will be asked to enter and exit through our church porch doorway. A supervisor will monitor to make sure people maintain the 2 metre social distance.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	During each session the doors will be left open to ensure good ventilation.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	We have removed all hymn books, leaflets, prayer books, carousel, noticeboards, library etc.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	We have removed all devotional objects.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	We have cordoned off the main church body so visitors cannot access pews or kneelers. 	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	The children’s area has all been packed away. No resources have been left out.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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.	The Church Wardens, our Lay Minister and myself (Revd Emma Racklyeft) have walked through our open space making sure there is a safe flow and movement, always keeping 2 metres from each person. We will only allow a maximum of eight people in the church (including two supervisors.)	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	<p>Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.</p>	<p>We have set out three main seating areas:</p> <p>The first is at the back of the main body of church. Here we have three individual chairs facing our north window.</p>  <p>The next seating area is next to our Organ (in what was the Children’s area) This area allows for either an individual or a couple to sit together.</p> 	<p>REVD EMMA CH WARDENS</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	As stated above, we have cordoned off access to the main body of church and no access will be given to toilets/offices/hall.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	<p>We have set up a large table in our entrance area with hand sanitiser for visitors to use on entry and exit.</p> 	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	<p>In the entrance area as your first come in through the porch door we have set up a large noticeboard on which will be a reminder about safe practices, social distancing etc.</p> 	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	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.	Our initial plan is to open for two 2 - hour sessions, the first on a Wednesday morning (10am-12noon) and the second on a Saturday afternoon (12noon -2pm) – this allows 72+ between sessions. However, in addition we also plan to wipe and clean all chairs, pew ends, door handles, any point of contact.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	We are using hand sanitiser as the main hand washing provision. However, we also have in plenty paper hand towels and appropriate bins if needed.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	We are keeping our toilet facilities closed.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	12.06.2020 ER
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	We have a good supply of disposable liners for bins.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	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.	As noted above, we will have 72+ hours between sessions – but to be extra safe we will also clean surfaces, chairs and points of contact as an extra precaution.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	N/A		Ongoing

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	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	The two supervisors at each session will stay at the end to clean and wipe all surfaces etc.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	We have in a good supply of disposable gloves which we will use for all cleaning.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	We have in a good supply of anti-bac spray and cloths and will purchase more as required.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Either Revd Emma or a Church warden will be responsible for removing any contaminated waste daily.	REVD EMMA CH WARDENS	Ongoing
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 needed...
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.			If needed...
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.			If needed...

