

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

### Version Control

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

<b>Church: St John Baptist, Membury</b>	<b>Assessor's name: Sara Cranfield</b>	<b>Date completed: 13/6/20</b>	<b>Review date: 13/6/20</b>
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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>  <a href="#">General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.</a>	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	There is only one point of entry.	Sara Cranfield and ditto for all answers	10/6 – 14/6
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> . Not relevant		
	Buildings have been aired before use.	As much as can be.		
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Yes		
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a> No water tap inside Church. One tap outside.		
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Open only in daylight. Heating not in summer use.		
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Yes.		

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<b>Preparation of the Church for individual prayer and funerals</b>	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Yes.		
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .  Cleaning will be done on 14 June, and in between openings thereafter.		
	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.	There is only one point of entry.		
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Agreed.		
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Agreed. One Bible will be open at the reading for the day and covered with a cleanable film sheet.		

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	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	N/a		
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	No kneelers. Cushions will be removed.		
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	To be removed to lockable area.		
	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.	Plenty of room, with 2 aisles, for distancing. Not expecting many people at all.		
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Not necessary for occasional individual coming for private prayer.		
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	The main body of the Church can be seen on entry, and so it will be easy for visitors to distance.		

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	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	We shall consider when shops are open to buy ribbon/tape.		
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. Being bought by the Opener/Closer/Cleaner.		
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult <a href="#">advice on gaining temporary permissions</a> . None needed for private prayer.		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Agreed.		
	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.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> . Agreed – will be done.		
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. There is no basin, toilet or kitchen in the Church.		

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	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. N/a		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Done		
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>  Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>	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.	Noted.		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Only one person involved who is a retired health professional and has recently worked in a Care Home so she is well aware of infection control measures. (Care Home not affected by Covid, and Sara is not working there at present)		
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	One person.		

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	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. <b>Self providing.</b>		
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. <b>Self providing – historic surfaces not being cleaned.</b>		
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	<b>N/a</b>		
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	<b>N/a</b>		
<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.	<b>Openings planned for Wednesdays and Sundays – so almost 72 hours for one gap, and over the next.</b>		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a> <b>Noted</b>		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours,	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a> <b>Noted.</b>		

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	then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.			