

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

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
6 th August 2020	5	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update includes risk factors around the requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship from 8th August.

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th 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](#).

Risk assessment template

Church: Banbury St. Leonard	Assessor's name: J. Lewis and C. Barber.	Date completed: 18/06/2020, revised 10/10/20, in line with v5 of church guidance.	Review date: Whenever guidelines change
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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	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	Main door to be used.	None required	
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Lone working policy written.		
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Main door may be locked. Red doors can be hooked open, and south door and/or vestry outside door may be opened if required. Most windows not readily openable.	Vicar	
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Done		18/6/20 JL and CB
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Kitchen and vestry taps run Toilet and related taps run.		
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Heating now available if needed		
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Checked, and empty		18/6/20 JL and CB

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
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.	Done		18/6/20 JL and CB
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).			
	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.	Main door for entry. South door for exit. One way system in nave. Marking of route has been done.	JL/CB	
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Outer west door to be kept open. Red doors can be hooked open, and south door and/or vestry outside door may be opened if required. High level vent above dais is always open. Most windows not readily openable.	Any key holder present.	
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Done.	JL/CB	
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Done.	JL/CB	
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Kneelers removed.	JL/CB	
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Done	JL/CB/SA	

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	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar rail, including safe flow of visitors. Was 2m, now 1m plus in all directions from each person, as masks compulsory.	Various options on seating. Distancing notices on display. Masks compulsory.		
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Done	JL	
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Floor marking and tapes done	JL	
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Taping off done	JL	
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	By entrance and on “welcome” table	JL	JL/CB 16/8/2020
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	No changes needed.		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notices on display	JL/SB	
	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.	Cleaning procedure in use after Saturday prayers before Sunday 10:00 service and after other services/activities when the church is being used again in less than 72 hours.	AB/SB/LS Rota and procedure in vestry	
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	JL has stocks	JL	

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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.	JL has stocks	JL	
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Liners in stock.		
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.	Cleaning after Saturday morning opening before Sunday use.		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Cleaners are in vulnerable groups but are aware of risks		
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Rota and procedure in vestry	AB/SB/LS	Ongoing
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Gloves on “welcome” table		
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Supplies already available.		
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Rota in vestry		
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Procedure in vestry		
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	To be decided in event of exposure		

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with Coronavirus symptoms	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Noted		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Noted.		