

## 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:</b>	<b>Assessor's name:</b>	<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>Review date:</b>
St John the Baptist, Sevenoaks	Fr RDE Jones	13 June 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020

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	Main entrance used. Door to be propped open if at all possible. Clear signage saying number of people and social distance	Fr R	13/6
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> .	No need – building will not be attended.	
	Buildings have been aired before use.		Fr R	Late May
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		Fr R	Late May
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a>	N/A for Church	
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.		N/A for Church	
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.		Fr R	Early Match
<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.		Fr R	13/6

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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> .	Fr R	13/6
	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.	One entrance point as normal. Not vast numbers expected. Not possible to use different exit and create manageable space.	Fr R	13/6
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Door to be left open if possible at opening	Fr R	13/6
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Completed	Fr R	13/6
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Completed	Fr R	13/6
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Removed	Fr R	13/6
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Room closed and barrier created	Fr R	13/6
	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.	6 chairs socially distanced at rear of Church	Fr R	13/6
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Markings to arrive Monday. Chairs are obviously spaced	Fr R	13/6
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	N/A – trickle rather than flow of people expected	FR R	13/6

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 if needed.	Completed	Fr R	13/6
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. At main entrance and exit and in Sacristy	Fr R	13/6
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult <a href="#">advice on gaining temporary permissions</a> .		
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		Fr R	13/6
	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> . <b>Read – seats to be wiped down daily at EP, card machine, tables, door handles and light switches.</b>	Fr R	13/6
	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. No handwashing facilities available at this point to the public.	N/A	
	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. Lavatories are closed for present time.	N/A	

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.	Bin orderd and liners (arrival Monday)	Fr R	13/6
<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.		N/A	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Fr R happy to take risk	Fr R	13/6
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Cleaners requested to mop area	Fr R email 13/6	13/6
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.	Gloves purchased	13/6
	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.	Fr R	01/06
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		Fr R	13/6
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Fr R to momitor and use judgement as to when needed	Fr R	13/6
<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.		Fr R to monitor	
	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>	Fr R to deal if needed	

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 <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .	Fr R if needed	