

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 Thornton Hough	Assessor's name: V Barrett	Date completed: 13/6/2020	Review date:
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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	No separate entry feasible. Use south door.	VB	VB 13/6
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .	VB	VB 13/6
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Doors open all morning on 15/6	MG/IS/SS	IS/SS 15/6
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		MG/VB	15/6
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	(Water in Flower Vestry) See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies	MG	MG 15/6
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.		IS	IS 15/6
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	N/A	N/A	N/A
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.		VB	Confirmed. VB 15/6
	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 .	MG/VB	Reviewed VB 15/6

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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.	South Door for entrance & exit. Flower Vestry to be kept unlocked for emergency use during opening. Signs outside entrance and in church.	VB/SS/MG	VB 15/6
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors to be kept open during opening hours, weather permitting.	VB/MG/SS/IS/PB (Aired in readiness.)	VB/MG/SS/IS 15/6
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.		MG/VB	MG/VB 10/6
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items		VB SS	VB/SS 15/6
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Stacked away	MG	MG 10/6
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Placed in choir vestry	MG	MG 10/6
	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.	To be kept under review after opening.	MG VB SS, IS	VB/MG/SS/IS 15/6
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.		VB, SS, MG	VB/SS/MG 15/6
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Posters on display to indicate directions of travel and distancing.	VB, MG, SS, IS	VB/SS/IS 15/6
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon if needed.	Temporary cordon from steps into choir and altar	VB, SS MG	VB/SS/MG 15/6

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Tables & sanitiser set out in porch for entry and at back of church for exit.	VB, SS	VB, SS 15/6
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions .	N/A	N/A
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.		VB/SS	VB/SS 15/6
	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 cleaning church buildings can be found here .	MG/VB	Ongoing
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Sanitiser provided. Bin with liner, tissues.	MG	MG 13/6
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	No toilet facilities available when opening for private prayer.		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		MG	MG 13/6
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.			
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.	Verger advised of risks and in good health.	MG	MG

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.		VB	VB 16/6
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	MG	MG 15/6
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	MG/VB	MG/VB 10/6
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		MG	MG 10/6
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Daily	MG	MG 10/6
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	We will close for 72 hours if this is the case		
	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.		
	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.		