

## Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

### 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
1st July 2020	4	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

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

## Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:

- Private prayer (clergy only) - NO
- Livestreaming services (clergy only) - NO
- Private prayer (general public) - YES
- Public worship - YES
- Rites of passage services - YES
- Opening for visitors and tourists - NO

2. Consider the hazards:

- Transmission of COVID-19
- Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church - **PREVIOUSLY ASSESSED AND DEALT WITH BY DEEP CLEANING AND SANITISING**
- Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way – **DIFFERENCE IS 'CONTROLLED' CIRCULATION OF INDIVIDUALS**

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive at the church, including if they will need to wait or queue outside; how people will enter and leave the church; circulation inside: from the entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

**TOILET WILL NOT BE OPENED – WE HAVE NO CONFIDENCE THAT IT CAN BE COVID-19 COMPLIANT GIVEN NATURE AND CONSTRUCTION**

3. Consider who might be harmed and how? Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are not different for larger churches so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.

4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:

- add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
- record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
- consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
- check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.



# Risk assessment template

<b>Church:</b>  <b>ST MARY'S, HAMBLETON</b>	<b>Assessor's name:</b> <b>David Ingall, Linda Ingall, David Brown, Janys Cliff</b>	<b>Date completed:</b> <b>6<sup>th</sup> July 2020</b>	<b>Review date:</b> <b>After each Service</b> <b>w.e.f. from 17<sup>th</sup> July</b> <b>2020</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	<b>THERE WILL BE NO SUCH USE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> . <b>NOT TAKING PLACE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Buildings have been aired before use.	<b>PREVIOUSLY DEEP CLEANED AND SANITISED AND THEREAFTER TO BE OPENED HALF AN HOUR BEFORE USE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	<b>NONE DETECTED AND IN ANY EVENT DEEP CLEANED</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a> <b>COLD TAP TO BE RUN FOR ?? BEFORE WATER DRAWN FOR USE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	<b>ALL WORKING CORRECTLY</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020

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	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	<b>CONFIRMED ALL EMPTY</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	<b>NOT TAKING PLACE AND TO BE RE-ASSESSED IF POSITION CHANGES</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
<b>Deciding whether to open to the public</b>	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	<b>SMALL VILLAGE AND CHURCH AWAY FROM OTHER VENUES</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	<b>ON GOING AS PROGRESS IS MADE</b>	<b>DB</b>	ONGOING - DB
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	<b>NO GENERAL ACCESS. FIXED TIME SERVICES AND NOTICE TO PARISHIONERS AS TO MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY AND ABILITY TO CONTACT CW</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark	<a href="#">Apply here.</a> N/A	'ASSESSOR'	
<b>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism</b>	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	<b>RISK ASSESSED AND ACTIONED 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	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> <b>DEEP CLEANED FOLLOWING RA OF 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	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.	<b>MAIN ENTRANCE. NOT POSSIBLE TO USE A DIFFERENT EXIT AS ROUTE TO THE EMERGENCY EXIT</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020

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		[VESTRY DOOR] HAS TRIP HAZARD AND NARROW ACCESS		
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	PLACING OF SIGNAGE REMINDING OF NEED TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING TOGETHER WITH MARKERS TO INDICATE DISTANCE PLACED ALONG PATH	DB	DB/JC  BY 18 JULY 2020 AND REMOVEABLE ON 19 JULY 2020
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	NOT POSSIBLE TO OPEN WINDOWS WITHOUT REMOVING HEAVY DOUBLE GLAZING AND LIKELY DAMAGE TO EXTERIOR WINDOWS IF ATTEMPTED. MAIN AND VESTRY DOORS TO BE KEPT OPEN DURING PERIOD BUILDING OCCUPIED. <u>SEE ATTACHED PLAN SHOWING VENTILATION</u>  Following the Issue of C of E Guidance – COVID-19 – Church Heating issued 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2020, and after consultation with The Bishop and Archdeacon, we have reviewed the consequences	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020

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		<p>of using the Heating System and the consequential impact on ventilation. As a result, the Main door will be closed during a Service. The Procedure will be:</p> <p>On opening we will have front and back doors open as previously. 15 minutes before service we will turn on heating in main body of the church. The external vestry door will be propped open. The main door will be pushed "to" but obviously will be opened as the congregation arrives.</p> <p>As the service starts the main door will be closed.</p> <p>The objective is to have a flow of fresh air from the vestry door.</p> <p>At the end of the service the heating will be turned off and the vestry door and main door opened.</p>		

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		We will assess the ongoing situation and see whether any restrictions need to be placed on either numbers or door closure.		
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	ALL REMOVED AND SECURED – SERVICE SHEETS TO BE LEFT ON PEWS AND REMOVED BY THOSE ATTENDING WHEN LEAVING OR OTHERWISE DISPOSED OF AS PART OF POST SERVICE CLEANING	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	ALL VISITORS WILL BE SUPERVISED – AREAS MARKED OFF. <u>SEE ATTACHED PLAN</u>  CANDLES TO BE LIT BY SUPERVISORS	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	ALL PEW CUSHIONS AND MOST KNEELERS REMOVED PRIOR TO DEEP CLEAN – REMAINING KNEELERS CLEANED AND SANITISED AND TO BE SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE COVID-19 COMPLIANT TREATMENT	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020



Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<b>ANTIBACTERIAL SPRAY AS NECESSARY</b>		
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	<b>ALL REMOVED AND AREA CORDONED OFF</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	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 (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	<b>SEE ATTACHED PLAN WITH KEY THEREON – RISK MITIGATION WHERE LESS THAN 2M BY SUPERVISION AND USE OF FACE MASKS WHILST TAKING / LEAVING SEAT</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	<b>SEE ATTACHED PLAN</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	<b>SEE ATTACHED PLAN</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	<b>SEE ATTACHED PLAN</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	<b>SEE ATTACHED PLAN</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult <a href="#">advice on gaining temporary permissions</a> . <b>NOT NECESSARY</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	<b>SPECIFIC NOTICES TO BE IDENTIFIED AND THEREAFTER PLACED ON NOTICE BOARD AT BACK OF</b>	<b>DB PROVIDE NOTICES TO DI</b>	DI/DB/JC

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<b>CHURCH AND ALSO ON LARGE BOARD BY (UNUSED) CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA – ALSO ON PILLARS</b>		18 JULY 2020
	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>NO EXPECTATION THAT THERE WILL BE 'REPEATED USE' WITHIN 72 HOURS – IN THE EVENT THAT SUCH USE TAKES PLACE SUCH WIPING / SANITISING WILL TAKE PLACE</b>	<b>SUPERVISORS OF USE TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE 72 HOURS</b>	
	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. <b>NO HANDWASHING FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO VISITORS – HAND SANITISER TO BE AVAILABLE FOR USE ON ENTRY AND EXIT – SEE ATTACHED PLAN FOR LOCATION</b>	<b>'ASSESSOR'</b>	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	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. <b>NONE IN USE</b>	<b>'ASSESSOR'</b>	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	<b>Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>DI/DB</b>	DB – 18 JULY 2020

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	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	<b>MOST VISITORS WILL BE KNOW TO SUPERVISORS AND OTHERWISE IF POSSIBLE RECORD WILL BE KEPT</b>	DI	DI – 13-07-2020
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	<b>TO DO</b>	DI/DB	DI/DB 19 JULY 2020
<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.	<b>INTENDED USE IS ONE DAY PER WEEK AND SO THIS WILL BE OBSERVED</b>  <b>NOTE – NEED IDENTIFIED TO STOP PEOPLE MOVING PEWS ONCE SEATED – SUCH ACTION BREACHES 72 HOUR CLOSURE PERIOD AND PUTS OTHERS AT RISK IN CONSEQUENCE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	<b>WILL BE COMPLIED WITH</b>  <b>SEE NOTE ABOVE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020 DB
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	<b>CLEANERS TO BE CONSULTED AND ADVISED AS TO NECESSARY PROCEDURES AND USE OF SPECIALISED CLEANING SPRAY</b>	DI – MEETING ARRANGED AT CHURCH - 23 JULY 2020 @ 10am	

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	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. <b>DISPOSABLE GLOVES TO BE PROVIDED</b>	See above	
	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>TO BE PROVIDED</b>	See above	
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	<b>PART OF SUPERVISION AFTER EACH SERVICE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	<b>AS ABOVE</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
<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>IT IS INTENDED THAT THIS WILL BE THE NORMAL SITUATION</b>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	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>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020
	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>	'ASSESSOR'	DI/DB – 13-07-2020