

## 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> Holy Trinity, Norton Malreward.	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Geoffrey Thomas. Churchwarden. (1 of 2 Wardens)	<b>Date completed:</b> Sunday June 21st	<b>Review date:</b> According to developments
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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	The West door.	Churchwarden. and Retired Churchwarden.	Opening and Closing daily
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Yes. In Health and Safety Policy: Isolation catch inside inner door installed for anyone alone in church.	Both Churchwardens and PCC Chairman	15.06. 20
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Main door has been opened and closed at intervals to allow fresh air flow	Churchwarden and Reader, singly.	“
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Church swept, but hardly needed.	Churchwarden	“
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Yes. Taps run, and loo flushed well.	Reader. Churchwarden.	“
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Electricity has been on during lockdown, but Water Heater isolated, and Heating system Off.	Churchwarden	“
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Yes. The font is empty	N/A	
	<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.	Church clean, safe, and orderly for entry	
Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).		Rota Cleaning Fortnightly.	Two people, one from village, one from congregation.	
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.		The West door will be the one entrance and exit, with arrows to advise clockwise movement round the church...	Reader	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	The building is airy and exchanges air with the outside		
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Hymn books and booklets covered. Pew Bibles bagged and locked in Vestry	Churchwarden, and Reader	12.06.20
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items.	Wardens' staves removed to locked Vestry; likewise Crosses and candlesticks.	Churchwarden, and Reader	12.06.20
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	All long pew runners stacked in Vestry. Hassocks rendered inaccessible.	Churchwarden	
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Toys removed to locked Kitchen.	Churchwarden	
	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.	Chancel partly taped off for prayer. Directional arrows for clockwise, distanced movement round the nave and aisle.		
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Very few people anticipated. RH/LH sides of Nave indicated by Notice on alternate days of week		
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	LH entry. RH exit... marked with arrows.		
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon if needed.	Chancel limited access...partly cordoned.		
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Large pump-bottle of gel prominent in the Porch, and on table inside Church. To be used on the way in and way out.	Reader and Warden	15.06.20
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the	No.		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	building to facilitate social distancing			
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Large Notices on social distancing and hand gel use on Church Noticeboard and in the Porch.	Reader	
	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.	Daily cleansing of door handles and frequently touched surfaces.	By person opening the Church	
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	The Loo and Kitchen are closed, handle spindle removed, and Notice up.		
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Closed, except in the event of a Funeral.		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Bin in porch has bin liner		
<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.			
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Yes	Churchwarden	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Arranged by phone. Fortnightly.	Churchwarden	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Yes		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Dettol disinfectant spray. Cif All Purpose Flash Spray Cleaner. Hoover and box of cleaning equipment placed by organ as Kitchen is locked	Churchwarden	21.06.20
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	N/A. Loo Locked; but if a Funeral, by cleaner/warden... ... to be arranged.		
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	5x a week. Wipes in sanitised bin by Porch hand gel	Churchwarden	
<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.	Yes		
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Yes		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Yes		