

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: St. Bartholomew's Otford	Assessor's name: Russell Edwards, Janet Hunt, Clive Southgate & Phil Gardner	Date Completed 19/6/2020	Review date: 6/07/2020 10/7/2020 reviewed
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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	Automatic doors to the lobby, then in through doors to Church which will be held open by wedge	Person opening Church daily to wedge doors to Church open	Daily
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .	N/A Church will not be staffed	15/6
	Buildings have been aired before use.		Building aired	15/6 & 19/6
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.		Visual inspection no animal waste found. General cleanliness good	15/6 – all present
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies	N/A for Church opening	15/6
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.		Lights tested, heating not required	15/6 RE
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.		Font empty, no Holy water stoup	15/6 JH
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.	All previous steps completed. Parish in Clerical Vacancy	RE, JH, CS, PG	15/6

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 cleaning church buildings can be found here .	Suitable cleaning supplies have been purchased to enable appropriate cleaning	15/6 CS
	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.	Notices have been prepared and reviewed Use main door only		19/6
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Roof vents opened, door to Church held opened, draft created as and when main doors open.	All	Ongoing daily when opened
	Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.	Cling film round book-case by entry door, physical barrier in place for book cabinet by South door. Notice to advise not to use books from Church	Completed	19/6
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	Move Book of Remembrance, Candle stand & spare candles	CS	CS completed 19/6
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Pew cushions have been moved to Church Centre and kneelers removed and stored	CS	Review 10/7 CS completed
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	To be moved to Church centre which will still not be in use	CS	No children’s resources in Church 19/6
	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.	Measurements taken and seated measured to maintain safe distancing of seats	RE, JH, CS, PG	Reviewed by all 19/6
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Seats to be marked as available, or not available 10/7 new signage on	CS	Seating clearly marked –

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		pews to indicate which ones available for use		reviewed by all 19/6 & 10/7
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Arrows on floor to indicate route for travel in Church	CS	CS completed 19/6
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Rope to cordon off area from pulpit to War Memorial	CS, RE	CS & RE completed 19/6
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	In lobby close to entry door	To be in place on 22/6 for opening
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions .	None required	15/6 All
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Notices to be prepared by Laminated and placed into position	CS	Notices in place 19/6
	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 .	Not used in previous 72 hours	15/6
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	N/A none available in Church	19/6
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	N/A none available in Church	19/6
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		N/A none available in Church	19/6
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known	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.		Building will have been closed for 72 hours before being	19/6

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exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.			opened for private prayer	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.		N/A	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Rota to be arranged	JH	Rota in place 19/6
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Gloves to be provided either disposable if available or personal if not	Disposable gloves available. Meeting on Monday 22/6 to go through open / close procedures and cleaning schedule
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	Cleaning materials received	15/6 – new cloth to be used each day 10/7
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Person closing the Church will clean and remove potentially contaminated waste (usually tissues)	All closing Church	19/6 – plastic bags to be available for disposal of waste
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Daily check when cleaning and closing the Church	Whoever is closing	19/6 bin to be placed in corridor (behind locked doors) for disposal of bagged potentially

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				contaminated waste
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	The Church would be closed for 72 hours if notified of a possible case of Coronavirus symptoms by a visitor to Church	Notice to be prepared in case of this eventuality CS	CS 19/6
	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.	N/A	
	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.	Normal cleaning would be done prior to re-opening	CS , RE, JH to advise whoever due to open up after 72 hour period.