

## 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><br>St Mary's, Bozeat | <b>Assessor's name:</b><br>Revd Dawn Airey (Curate) | <b>Date completed:</b><br>13th June 2020 | <b>Review date:</b><br>27th June 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><br><br><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             | Clergy will enter same entrance.  | Curate          |                           |
|   | A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.  | See safeguarding policy. Agreed with leaders that two church members to be available when possible. | Curate          | 10/6/20                   |
|   | Buildings have been aired before use.   |   | Curate          | 15/6/20                   |
|   | Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.   |   | Curate          | 12/6/20                   |
|   | Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.  |   | Curate          | 12/6/20                   |
|   | Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.   | Heating not tested but will be as required.   | Curate          | 12/6/20                   |
|   | Holy water stoups and the font are 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. |   | Curate          |                           |

| 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).  |   | Curate          | 13/6/20                       |
|               | 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. | Note above.   | Curate          |                               |
|               | Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.  |   | Curate          | Each day the building is open |
|               | Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user.   | Visitors will be able to light a candle using matches.                                      | Curate          | 12/6/20                       |
|               | Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items   |   | Curate          | 12/6/20                       |
|               | Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance   | These to remain for now - keep under review. Each seat to be used once in a 72 hour period. | Curate          |                               |
|               | Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas   | Plastic toys could be used later- to be reviewed.   | Curate          |                               |
|               | 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.           |   | Curate          | 12/6/20                       |

| Area of Focus | Controls required   | Additional information   | Action by whom? | Completed - date and name  |
|---------------|---|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
|               | Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.  | Curate to guide people to particular seats to ensure distance.                             | Curate          | Each day building is open. |
|               | Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.                                      | Signs to be put up and visitors asked to read the guidelines before entering the building. | Curate          | 15/6/20                    |
|               | Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.  |  | Curate          | 12/6/20                    |
|               | Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.   | Had sanitiser on table to entrance/exit.   | Curate          | 12/6/20                    |
|               | Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing   |  |                 |                            |
|               | Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.   |  | Curate          | 15/6/20                    |
|               | 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. | Touch points will be sanitised but there will be 72 hours between each session anyway.     | Curate          |                            |
|               | Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.  | Toilet and basin will not be in use.   | Curate          | 12/6/20                    |

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|--|---|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
|  | Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.                         | Toilet and basin will not be in use.    | Curate          | 12/6/20                   |
|  | Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.                      | Bin with plastic bag by the front door. | Curate          | 12/6/20                   |
| <b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b><br><br>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. | There will be 72 hours between opening. | Curate          |                           |
|  | If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.   |   |                 |                           |
|  | Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.  |   |                 |                           |
|  | All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).   |   |                 |                           |
|  | Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.  |   |                 |                           |
|  | Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.  |   |                 |                           |
|  | Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site - suggested daily removal.                                 |   |                 |                           |

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| <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.  |                        | Curate          |                           |
|  | If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. |                        |                 |                           |
|  | If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.      |                        |                 |                           |