

## 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: All Saints Staplehurst</b>	<b>Date completed: 22/06/20</b>	<b>Review date:</b>
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<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Controls required</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
<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: West Door.	
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> .
	Buildings have been aired before use.	
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	See <a href="#">Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies</a>
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	
<b>Preparation of the Church for individual prayer</b>	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	
	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> .
	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.	West door. All doors to be hooked/held open to discourage touching of handles etc.

		When wind/weather makes this impractical/dangerous, church to be locked with explanatory sign displayed on door.
	Church to be opened from 10 -4 daily.	Publicity in Notices, website, signs.
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation.	West door entrance left open daily
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.	To be covered over or removed. Signage to request people to bring own prayer books if required.
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items.	Surfaces cleared or covered
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed.	To be removed from pews which are in use.
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Soft toys covered, cupboards barred.
	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.	In our large church, signage requesting adherence to physical distancing rules.
	Clearly zones to maintain physical distancing	Signage indicates pews which CAN be used.
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Signage and arrows

	Limit access to places where the public does not need to go.	Signage, physical barriers, chapel, choir vestry and kitchen locked
	Determine placement of hand sanitiser available for visitors to use.	Further supplies ordered. Table with sanitiser, tissues and bin and signage in entrance porch
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Not required at All Saints, just signage reminders
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Signage requesting physical distancing as leaving church
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	At entrance table.
	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 <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> . Daily cleaning rota. Instructions for cleaning with cleaning materials.
	Access limited to certain areas of the church to facilitate cleaning.	St George's chapel and many pews to be closed. Signage
	Votive candle stand to be moved out of chapel and placed across aisle to chapel. Encouragement to bring own matches or use hand sanitiser after lighting. Donations for candles to be placed in wall safe. Candles to be replenished as usual.	Warning to keep alcohol based sanitiser away from flames!  Signage

		Stock of new candles held by SW
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Signage requesting anyone using facilities specifically sanitises hands before use and washes with soap and water prior to leaving. Disinfectant wipes available in toilet.
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk of those responsible for removing them.	Supplies to be checked Ordered from Parish B Bins emptied regularly
	Kitchen to remain closed.	Signage
	Rector's vestry to remain closed.	Contact warden if access required and agree H&S: ST to advise re funerals/BoA CH to access safe key if needed on Mondays
	Choir vestry to remain closed	Signage CH to enter on Mondays if needed for access to safe.
	Access to bell tower by 2 designated ringers	As required for maintenance checks. CB to report back to NW any adjustments to clock
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no</b>	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for cleaning.	

<p><b>known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b></p> <p>Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a></p>	<p>If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.</p>	
	<p>Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.</p>	<p>Daily cleaning rota organised by MF</p>
	<p>All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).</p>	<p>Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.</p>
	<p>Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.</p>	<p>Cleaning materials and instructions to be left on table in coffee area.</p>
	<p>Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.</p>	
	<p>Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.</p>	
<p><b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b></p>	<p>If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.</p>	<p>Signage to include request that if any visitor to church becomes ill, they should inform c/warden who will communicate with others and keep church closed for 72hrs</p>
	<p>If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.</p>	<p><a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a></p>
	<p>If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.</p>	<p>Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a></p>