

Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public: individual prayer/ Public Worship

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
11 th June 2020	2.4	Head of Estates - Chichester Cathedral
13 th June 2020	2.5	Visitor Experience Manager- Chichester Cathedral
30 th June 2020	3	The House of Bishops Recovery Group
3 rd July 2020	3.1	Visitor Experience Manager- Chichester Cathedral

THIS IS A PLANNING DOCUMENT ONLY. IT WILL BE UPDATED AND CONTENT MAY CHANGE. We will update this document as further information becomes available from both the Government and Church of England.

On 7th June the government announced that places of worship may open for individual prayer in line with social distancing guidelines from 15th June.

The government 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.

On June 23rd the government announced that places of worship may reopen for public worship from the 4th of July in line with social distancing guidelines.

Future versions of this document will be produced when small services such as weddings and funerals with limited numbers 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](#).

Consolidation Risk Assessment (Supplemented by departmental / bespoke services assessments)

Church: Chichester Cathedral	Date completed: 3rd July 2020	Review date: 10th July 2020
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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.	Access Via Eastern Arm	AW/SW/RLG	May 2020 - AW
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Radios to be used and provided for attending staff - No Lone working during opening times currently envisaged.	RLG	June 2020 - AW
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Building opened and aired	AW/SW	June 2020 - AW
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Checked - Guano Cleared and areas pressure washed. No other animal waste.	AW	June 2020 - AW
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Taps to flower ladies area (closed off) and Pantaleon area have water run 20 minutes.	AW	June 2020 - AW
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Not required- electric fans switched off in Vergers office - Hamworthy gas boilers Isolated.	AW	June 2020 - AW
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Empty	AW/SW	June 2020 - AW
Preparation of the Church for individual prayer	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	CONFIRMED	AW/SW	June 2020 - AW/ SW
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Reviewed (See Appendix A)	AW/SW/Vergers	June 2020 - AW/ SW ONGOING

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed - date and name
	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.	Signage available and single point of entry established with separation screen constructed in conjunction with guidance.	AW/SW/RLG	May 2020 - AW/RLG
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation.	Where possible	Vergers	Ongoing
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.	Removed	SW	May 2020 - ONGOING by VERGERS
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed.	Removed / NA	SW	May 2020 - SW
	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.	Walk thru carried out OT/RLG and AW/SW Distances measured & plans created	RLG/AW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - ONGOING by VERGERS
	Determine placement of hand sanitiser available for visitors to use.	Registered with Parish Buying AW - Hand sanitiser dispensers to entrance and separate 500ml pumps in cathedral for clergy - staff issued with personal 30ml pumps - stocks / refill in vergers office	AW/SW	Jun 2020 - ONGOING by VERGERS & ATTENDING STAFF
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Advice on gaining temporary permissions consulted. No physical changes - Temp barriers etc constructed and temp floor signage to apply.	AW	Jun 2020 - AW
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	RLG/SW/OT/AW - Site walkover Monday 15 th AW/RLG	AW/RLG/Vergers	Jun 2020 - RLG/VERGERS

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed - date and name
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Additional free standing signage and wall / door signage applied	RLG/AW/SW	Jun 2020 - RLG/ Vergers
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	As Above	RLG / Vergers	Jun 2020 - RLG/ Vergers
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Anti Bac sprays and cloths, gloves, shields, masks available from Vergers, Additional advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	AW/SW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - AW/ Vergers
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Hand washing facilities available in Pantaleon with anti bac soap pump, paper towels and bin. Vergers to empty bins using appropriate PPE & top up as necessary.	Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers
	PPE provided for Staff/volunteers onsite.	Personal face shields available for staff and volunteers (Stewards, Private Prayer Stewards).	RLG/AW/Vergers	June 2020- Vergers/ RLG ONGOING
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Switch room wc with anti bac soap pump, paper towels and bin. Vergers to empty bins using appropriate PPE & top up as necessary.	Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk of those responsible for removing them.	Vergers to empty bins using appropriate PPE & remove and replace liners as necessary.	Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers
	An updated maximum capacity of Cathedral building to be tracked and enforced.	Capacity management software used by Vergers and additional staff on entrance.	Vergers/RLG	ONGOING
	Cash donation boxes removed.	Removed June 2020. Cash slots in votive stands blocked.	AW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - AW/ Vergers

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed - date and name
Preparation of the Church for Public Worship	Seating area laid out for services. Using distance of 2m	Single socially distanced seating placed in Nave, Presbytery, Lady Chapel.	Vergers	Jun 2020- Vergers
	PPE provided for congregation onsite due to increased dwell time during worship.	PPE available for congregation from entry point (use is voluntary), Comms department to inform.	HW/ Vergers/ RLG/ OT	Jul 2020- HW/RLG
	Changes made to services	Shorter services planned, with no singing (due to infection risk), communion processes amended.	Clergy/ HW	July 2020
	Worship schedule amended to safely accommodate reduced building capacity	Capacity in worship spaces to be	HW/Vergers/RLG	Jun 2020- HW/ Vergers/RLG
	Booking and tracking system required to support NHS Track and Trace.	% of (free) tickets for services available online, staff and volunteers to log additional attendees.	RLG/Vergers	ONGOING
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms) Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for cleaning.	Initial clean to be performed pre-opening by Vergers then daily cleans with anti-bacterial sprays to handles and low level surfaces likely to be touched.	HW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Rota to be agreed pre-opening with SW/Vergers	HW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers ONGOING
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Gloves and PPE provide and available in vergers office	HW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers ONGOING
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Existing cleaning materials to be used.	HW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers ONGOING

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed - date and name
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	CDC waste collection Services - Initial storage in lidded waste bins in separated external bin store which is a secure area.	AW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - AW/Vergers ONGOING
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site - suggested daily removal.	Daily removal from building to separate waste site with collections carried out weekly.	CDC/AW	Jun 2020 - AW/Vergers ONGOING
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	TBC - Recommended that in the event of known contamination cathedral is closed 72 hours and deep clean of areas carried out by vergers wearing PPE.	Dean/Communar/AW/Vergers	ONGOING
	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.	HW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - AW/Vergers
	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.	HW/Vergers	Jun 2020 - Vergers

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APPENDIX A

Keeping church buildings clean

Version Control

Issue Date	Version	Issued by
22 nd May 2020	1	The Archbishops' Council, Cathedral and Church Buildings Division

This document will be kept under review and updated as events develop, with each update issued as a new version. The current version will always be available to download from the Church of England website via the [Coronavirus FAQs page](#).

This advice is based on the recently produced (11th May 2020) Government guidance on how to work safely during coronavirus, and guidance issued by Historic England (links to these documents can be found at the end of this advice.) None of the advice was written specifically for churches, so needs to be interpreted based on the local context and situation.

General Questions

What do we need to do to keep the church buildings clean?

For routine cleaning, frequently clean those areas that are used, using your usual cleaning products. Pay particular attention to objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, and to busy areas. For advice on cleaning historic parts of churches please see below.

What if someone with symptoms has attended the church building?

If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then refer to the [specific guidance](#).

Is there any way we can reduce the amount of cleaning we need to do?

You may want to consider restricting access to certain parts of the church to reduce the area of cleaning required.

Who can clean?

Anyone who is considered vulnerable and with an underlying health condition should be encouraged to stay at home and not assist in cleaning at this time. Whilst churches are only open to ministers for private prayer and live streaming, only the minister or a household member should be regularly entering the church, other than for maintenance or building work. At this time, cleaning should be proportionate and depend on the use of the building.

Once others are allowed to enter individual prayer, then cleaning will become essential. Numbers going in to clean should be kept to a minimum, and social distancing complied with at all times.

What about cleaning the historic elements of church buildings?

If historic fixtures and fittings have been restricted from access, they should not need to be cleaned. If they form part of the accessible areas that will be touched by the general public, such as pews, the following advice should be followed.

Historic England advises the following when cleaning historic parts of buildings:

Metal/wood/stone/glass/ceramic/modern painted surfaces can be cleaned with a dilute solution of non-ionic conservation-grade detergent or sensitive washing up liquid and distilled water, rinsed with distilled water and dried immediately with white paper towel or soft cotton cloth. Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times (a minimum contact time of 20 seconds is currently advised by PHE) for all detergents.

Examples of conservation grade non-ionic cleaners include:

- [Orvus WA paste](#)
- [Dehynon LS45](#)
- Synperonic 91/6

Getting hold of conservation grade materials may be difficult. If you can't get hold of conservation grade materials, try to use products with as few additives as possible but that will still clean a surface, such as detergents with no added perfumes and no harsh chemicals. The Ecover range, for example, has few harsh chemicals but will be effective if used correctly. Other examples include Boots Sensitive, and Surecare.

Do NOT use any household detergents or disinfectants containing chlorine (1000 ppm dilution) on any historic surface since these could cause permanent damage.

Cleaning materials should be disposed of appropriately

Seek advice from [a Conservator](#) before undertaking any cleaning to more fragile historic surfaces.

What should we do about general hand Hygiene: hand washing, sanitation facilities and toilets?

Signs and posters can help build awareness of good hand washing technique, the need to increase hand washing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely. Try not to stick posters and signs to historic fabric - use free standing signs or noticeboards.

What about toilets?

Ensure toilets are kept clean, use liquid rather than a bar of soap, and where possible, provide paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers in hand washing facilities.

If regular cleaning of toilets is challenging you may need to think about shutting them or limiting access.

What about upholstery and soft furnishings?

Available information suggests that unless they have been soiled soft furnishings do not need to be cleaned other than as part of your usual cleaning processes, which may include vacuuming with a soft brush attachment

Should we wear personal protection equipment (PPE)?

The Government advises that additional PPE is not generally beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and not through the use of PPE. Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high or there is a problem with mould or bat droppings (which would have required the use of PPE in any case), the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited.