

## **We are now open our on Sundays worship at 10.30am**

*Version 3. Updated 8<sup>th</sup> August 2020 re face coverings.*

In preparation for re-opening, the Vicar and Standing Committee have undertaken a Risk Assessment (at the end of this document), based on the Church of England template, which has been presented to the PCC.

Services will look different to how we remember them from March; the purpose of this document is to let you know what to expect so you can make an informed decision on attending.

### **What services are we planning to open for?**

Initially just one service at 10.30am every Sunday, which will be a shortened communion service. The service will follow the Anglican liturgy with confession, absolution, reading, sermon, prayers and communion.

### **Who can come?**

Whilst coming to church is open to everyone, we are sure that you understand that there are circumstances under which individuals should *not* attend where they pose a risk to others or themselves

- Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household.
- Those who are considered to be extremely clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 will have been advised to shield and are currently advised to follow Government advice, including where this states not to meet more than one person from outside of their own household, and therefore are not currently advised to attend places of worship.
- Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend a place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household.

- Where individuals are self-isolating due to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the household, or because they have been requested to so by NHS Test & Trace, they should not be going out.

Young children are welcome to attend and must be supervised by their parent or guardian and appropriate hygiene precautions followed. We are not able to offer any separate children's activities at this time and have removed the children's corner containing toys to avoid contamination.

### **Do I need to book a ticket?**

No. Our capacity is limited but we believe we can accommodate the numbers we think will attend. If numbers exceed our safe capacity then, sadly, we will not be able to let everyone in and we will look to introduce additional services as quickly as we can.

### **As you arrive.**

Please do not come too early, we are asked to minimise the time people spend in the building.

Please wait at the door (tape will indicate 2m to help you maintain social distancing) and stewards will show you to your seats.

We ask everyone to use hand sanitizer as they arrive and leave.

Government guidance includes a request for names of attendees to be recorded and kept for 21 days to assist 'track and trace' if required; we will tick people off against the electoral roll, and will request name and contact number for those not on the roll. Records will only be used for this purpose and will be kept on paper only in the safe and destroyed after 21 days.

The toilets and kitchen will not be made available.

The doors will be left open.

### **Where can I sit?**

Seating for the service will be socially distanced following the 2m rule and will include small groups of up to 3 or 4 seats for the same household or "bubbles". Sidespeople will direct you, but it is likely that not everyone can sit in their 'usual pew'! In the aisles people may pass

within 2m of people seated; this will not be within 1m and will be brief, with stewards and the priest wearing a face covering. Face to face seating will be avoided.

### **What differences will I see in the service?**

**All soft furnishings** (pew cushions, kneelers) have been removed.

**Pews.** Some will be taped off and notices will remind you of the importance of maintaining distance and hygiene

**Foodbank collection point** will not be present; the foodbank is needed but there are collection points at Wolfe Garage and the Coop.

**Orders of service.** We are not producing weekly orders of service but will use the Common Worship red service books; these will be on pews indicating where people should sit and should be left in place when you leave (i.e. so that they are ‘quarantined for at least 72 hours)

**Singing** is not currently permitted, so our choir will not be robed or sit in the choir pews. Initially any music played as we arrive or leave, and during the distribution of communion, will be on a CD.

**Newsletter.** This is still being produced weekly and is available online; either via the website or it can be emailed (sign up on the website). For those without the internet please let them know to call the Church Office and this can be posted.

**Offering.** Giving to God is part of our worship, and we have bills to pay. However we cannot receive cash or cheques at the moment and ask everyone to consider giving using the contactless card reader in the building, the button on the website or by setting up a standing order (details available at the church entrance.)

**Communion.** This will be “in one kind” only i.e. just the bread / wafer. *Face coverings should only be removed to receive Holy Communion.* The priest will consecrate with the wafer covered then put on a face covering and bring it to the pews to distribute. As the priest will need to come within 2m to distribute he will wear a face covering and not speak (The words of distribution will be said once at the beginning.) The wafer will be dropped into your hands without contact; please not speak to the priest. There is no obligation to receive communion; you can receive a silent blessing or just indicate for the priest to pass by.

We will not be sharing the peace.

## **Should people wear face coverings?**

*Face coverings are now required by law in places of worship (See Government information for exceptions for health, age, or equality reasons).*

Please remember that they are mainly intended to protect other people, not the wearer, from coronavirus COVID-19 and that they are not a replacement for physical distancing and regular hand washing.

## **After the service**

**Refreshments.** At this time we cannot offer refreshments at the end of the service.

**Leaving the building.** People will be directed to leave one pew at a time and are asked to wait until they are outside in the churchyard to chat (maintaining social distancing).

I am sure we all appreciate that nothing in life can ever be “completely safe”, but we are following Church of England guidelines as we undertake a risk analysis to make the service as safe as we reasonably can. I am mindful that some will be nervous about this and, for practical reasons, some may not be able to attend.

We are hoping to livestream the services for those who cannot attend. For those without the internet we will continue to produce “Thoughts on a Sunday...” i.e. the sermon, to be posted out.

There’s a lot here, much of it will not be welcomed, but I encourage you to work within this new environment to keep others, and yourself, as safe as possible so we can be free to worship our God.

Revd Kevin Barnard

Attached is the risk assessment, based on the Church of England template, produced by the Standing Committee and presented to the PCC.

## Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public. St Mary's, Westerham.

### 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
1st July 2020	4	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13<sup>th</sup> June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15<sup>th</sup> June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4<sup>th</sup> July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

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 any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

## Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
  - Private prayer (clergy only)
  - Livestreaming services (clergy only)
  - Private prayer (general public)
  - Public worship
  - Rites of passage services
  - Opening for visitors and tourists
2. Consider the hazards:
  - Transmission of COVID-19
  - Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
  - Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive at the church, including if they will need to wait or queue outside; how people will enter and leave the church; circulation inside: from the entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

3. Consider who might be harmed and how? Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are not different for larger churches so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate.
4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:
  - add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
  - record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
  - consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
  - check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

## Risk assessment template

<b>Church:</b> St Mary's, Westerham	<b>Assessor's name:</b> David Booker, Rev. Kevin Barnard.	<b>Date completed:</b> 16/7/2020	<b>Review date:</b> 3/8/2020
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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>  <b><u>NOT CURRENTLY PLANNED.</u></b> <b><u>2/7/2020. DB</u></b>	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	South door only. West door to be unlocked as a fire door. Tower door to be chained.	DB	DB/CC
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be <a href="#">found here</a> . N/A as no recording.	N/A	N/A
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Aired before and during private prayer sessions from 22/6/20	DB	24/6/20. DB/CC
	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> Water samples taken 1/7/20	DB. 18/6/20	18/6/20 DB.
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Water heaters turned on 18/6/20		18/6/20. DB
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.			1/7/20 DB
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	N/A.	N/A	N/A
<b>Deciding whether to open to the public</b>	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Numbers are low enough on a Sunday morning to not need to liaise for Sunday services.	PCC/DB	1/7/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Ongoing – Kevin B to liaise with Gillian Burmester on this.	GB/KB	Ongoing process
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Not believed to be necessary due to max of approx. 45. Church to be opened 10 mins before service time.	DB	1/7/20
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain ‘Good to Go’ standard mark	<a href="#">Apply here</a> . Not planned at the moment	PCC/DB	1/7/20
<b>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism</b>	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Carried out as part of opening for Private Prayer		1/7/20
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below). Cleaner engaged for Weds AM each week.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here</a> .	DB/CC By 26/7/20	
	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.	South door only. West door to be unlocked and Tower door to be chained shut		1/7/20
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Stewards to monitor any queue and put tape into porch area at 2m spaces. 10 minute opening before service starts for public worship.	DB/CC By 26/7/20	
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Doors to be open/ajar as necessary to prevent noise intrusion.	DB/CC before each opening and after	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Bibles etc. removed. To use red service books placed at each seat	DB/CC by 26/7/20	
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	None identified.	N/A	N/A
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	To be removed	DB/CC	15/7/20
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Items removed	DB/CC	1/7/20
	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 (or 1m with risk mitigation if absolutely necessary).	Pews taped off as necessary for services. Communion to be administered in pews by vicar so as to avoid people having to move around. Pews labelled with names for weddings and funerals.	CC/KB/DB	
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Tape to mark off where people cannot sit	DB/CC/KB by 26/7/20	
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Tape and arrow markings. 15/7 – tape etc. ordered.	DB/CC	
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.			
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. Sanitiser at church entrance.	DB/CC by 26/7/20	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		Stewards to monitor use.		
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult <a href="#">advice on gaining temporary permissions</a> . None identified other than seating restrictions.	CC/DB by 26/7/20	
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.			
	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> . Any surfaces to be identified but areas are likely to be in quarantine for over 72 hours after use. Service books	DB/CC - by 26/7/20	
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. No access to toilets or kitchen	N/A	N/A
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. No access to toilets or kitchen area.	N/A	N/A
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Liners used. Bin removed from church area.	DB/CC	DB 11/7/20
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact	To use Electoral role and note other names.	CC/DB	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	details; retain each day's record for 21 days	List to be stored in safe for 21 days before shredding.		
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	To publish via Newsletter and social media. Initial advice sent 11/7/20 in Newsletter.	GB/KB	
<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.	To check re any previous funerals etc. Cleaning is done Weds AM otherwise monitor any services in relation to Sunday opening esp Tower door handle and light switches..	DB/CC Ongoing	From 11/7/20 DB/CC
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Current cleaner, via Gold service is not vulnerable or self-isolating as 1/7/20	DB	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Shonagh/Gold Service reinstated.		1/7/20. Office
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options. Gloves ordered		1/7/20
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Register with <a href="#">Parish Buying</a> for procurement options.	DB/CC by 1/7/20	1/7/20
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Those closing up to dispose of anything. Remove waste bin by choir vestry door.	CC/DB	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	After each service	DB/CC by 1/7/20	
<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.	<b>To initiate as necessary.</b>	DB/CC/KB	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a>		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>		
<b>Bell Ringing</b>	One ringer to ring one bell for public worship services. To review this as conditions dictate.		KB/Tower Captain	