

N.B. This document will be updated and contents may change as government guidance regarding places of worship has been published reflecting latest position

On the 2nd December 2020 government announced that places of worship may reopen for public services as well as private prayer with social distancing and all the necessary risk mitigations. The law requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building and site open to the public.

Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. Control measures to be revised and updated when the latest government guidance is reviewed and published. Diocesan guidelines will also be updated for ease of reference reflecting the government directives and liturgical guidance.

Face Coverings: it is mandatory for face coverings to be worn within places of worship. Churches do not need to supply face coverings for visitors. Clergy to wear face mask for distribution of communion.

Children: While children are unlikely to become very ill, they are capable of both being infected by the virus and of spreading it. Parents or guardians bringing children into a church should not be discouraged from doing so, but it will be important for parents to manage their children appropriately, particularly ensuring they touch as few surfaces as possible for their own safety.

Vulnerable People: It remains a person's own choice to come to church to pray. Churches may wish to consider setting aside a section only for people who are more vulnerable to serious disease if infected, and clearly signposted as such, or otherwise having a designated time only for people who are more vulnerable and wish to pray privately.

Completion of the risk assessment

Places of worship are also workplaces and should therefore be aware of their responsibilities as employers under existing health and safety law. Places of worship have a duty of care to volunteers, to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

This document provides a template risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. It relates to, as well as offering guidance on best-practice,

A risk assessment is the **process** of looking for hazards that have the potential to harm people, in the objects being used, work environment and / or work processes adopted. Some risks are visible; others are only evident and able to be understood when a work task is observed.

The use of a risk matrix will assist you to better understand the *severity* of risk which in turn enables you to prioritise which hazards to address first. A risk matrix considers:

- The *consequence* of the potential harm.
- The *likelihood* of the harm occurring. Guidance notes and Risk Matrix are at the end of this document



Version Number	Changes made	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved
0		S. Cripps	H. Foley	
1	Face Covering, numbers, track and trace	S. Cripps	H. Foley	



Coronavirus Risk Assessment

Parish / Location St Stephen's church, Oliver's Battery						Date Assessed: 30-11-2020	Assessed by: Sean Reidy			
Task: Access to church buildings for clergy for the purposes of private prayer /services and/or livestreaming Activity:						Review Frequency: Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance	Reference Number: GRA -001 Rv1			
			Risk rating before implementing control measures			Controls Measures in Place	Risk rating after implementing control measures			Additional Information
Activity/ Task	Hazard/ Risk	Persons at Risk	Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk Rating		Severity (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk Rating	
Lone Working	Physical / Verbal Assault	Clergy and staff	5	5	4	Diocese Lone working Policy	5	2	10	
Opening church after closure	Legionella	All	5	4	20	Ensure that all taps, toilets and other water storage devices are run well to flush the systems before anyone uses them, especially if the church has not been in use for some time. Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	5	2	10	Compliant

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Opening church after closure	Lapse of compliance certificates	All	5	4	20	Review Parish certificates for Gas safe, Electrical Inspections etc and instruct specialists where necessary. Check emergency lighting and fire extinguishers.	5	2	10	Compliant - Next fixed wiring inspection due March 2021. Fire, PAT & emergency light tests are the responsibility of St Peter’s school & are in date at last check.

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Opening church after closure	Harm due to Legionella/ Gas/ electrical non-compliance	All	5	5	25	Health and Safety walk-round to identify hazards, e.g. blocked exits etc	5	2	10	n/a as church has remained in use for private prayer & by the school.
Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Contact with Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by not maintaining social distancing	All	5	4	20	Face coverings must be worn at all times during service.	5	2	10	Compliant. Signs in place to remind people.

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Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Contact with Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by not maintaining social distancing	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	5	25	<p>One-way entry/exit system in place wherever possible (frailty of some parishioners) keeping emergency exits available at all times. Stewards available to support & advise as required. Single point of entry to facilitate recording of contact details for track & trace.</p> <p>Signage posted around the church to remind/instruct congregation on safety procedures e.g. maintain 1m distance at all times, and face coverings to be worn at all times.</p> <p>High level windows to aid ventilation. Maintain as much ventilation within the church space as possible. Assess weather conditions to see if doors can be left open.</p>	5	2	10	Diocesan guidance for services reviewed and implemented.
Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Contact with Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by not maintaining social distancing	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	5	25	<p>Seating clearly marked out including exclusion zones.</p> <p>Indicate at entrance maximum number of occupants. Seating and numbers restricted. Admission to mass by pre-booking.</p> <p>Hand sanitiser placed around the church inc. at entrance and exits.</p> <p>Advent wreath must be lit by a member of the clergy to maintain social distancing & to avoid sharing</p>	5	4	20	<p><i>Max. number of occupants is 50 individuals; though there is capacity for more people as households may sit together. Discretion of stewards based on household bubble numbers.</i></p>



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						the means of lighting the candles e.g. lighter, taper etc. Only 2 people to be in the sacristy at any one time. Stewards will ensure one-way movement & safe distancing is maintained while seating people, controlling the order in which people go to receive communion, and ensuring people leave the church by invitation, not all at once.					



Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by touching contaminated surfaces	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	5	25	<p>If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open, then there is no need for cleaning. If opening more frequently cleaning to be scheduled in between services or occasions of private prayer.</p> <p>School staff will clean on Fridays and after any use by the school staff/children if <72 hours until parish use.</p> <p>Waste bins have disposable liners, paper towels/wipes go into general waste disposal.</p> <p>No contaminated waste.</p> <p>All surfaces cleaned at the end of each session if the church is to be in use within the next 72 hour period.</p> <p>Cleaning rota established to cover opening arrangements.</p> <p>PPE available with cleaning materials in Sacristy.</p>	5	2	25	<p><i>Fogging machine used to clean whole church after doors are closed but anti-bacterial wipes used by individuals as they leave their seat during private prayer sessions.</i></p>
Preparation of the church for services	Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by touching contaminated surfaces	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	4	20	<p>Kneelers are hinged and should be left down to avoid the need to touch them.</p> <p>All reading materials and cushions removed.</p> <p>Physical veneration of objects or relics such as statues, crucifixes & shrines is not permitted.</p>	5	2	10	<p><i>Toilet is available for emergency use only. If an emergency situation, toilet will be fully cleaned before re-use.</i></p>



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						Handwashing facilities are available in the sacristy with disposable paper towels.					

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Responding to visitor falling ill potential coronavirus exposure	Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by touching contaminated surfaces	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	4	20	If a visitor presents with temperature and/or persistent cough, NHS 111 should be called for advice and the church should be vacated. The church building must then be closed for 72 hours with no access permitted. If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	5	2	10	All people present in the church must be instructed to self-isolate for 14 days. Visitors have been requested not to attend if they have any known symptoms. Visitors to be verbally assessed on arrival prior to accessing the Church Premises	

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Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services	Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	4	20	At least two stewards present in the church throughout the time it is open for services Stewards to ensure that hand sanitisation occurs at entry and exit points, social distancing including a one-way system is maintained by people in the church and if a pre-determined capacity is reached, restrictions imposed on entering the church. People with Flu like symptoms or cold should not be asked to enter.	5	2	10	Training for stewards provided and documented. Verbal Walk-Through of requirements and expectations Initial Roles outlined

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Communication with Parishioners	Lack of understanding / compliance	Clergy Stewards volunteers Visitor	5	4	20	Risk assessment published on parish website. Notices in Church indicating capacity. Announcement in parish newsletters. Track and Trace Implemented. Advice on face coverings. Announcements reflecting local situation at the start of services.	5	2	10	

Risk/Priority Indicator Key

Severity (Consequence)
1. Negligible (delay only)
2. Slight (minor injury / damage / interruption)
3. Moderate (lost time injury, illness, damage, lost Parish)
4. High (major injury / damage, lost time Parish interruption, disablement)
5. Very High (fatality / Parish closure)

Likelihood
1. Improbable / very unlikely
2. Unlikely
3. Even chance / may happen
4. Likely
5. Almost certain / imminent

RISK / PRIORITY INDICATOR MATRIX						
LIKELIHOOD	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		SEVERITY (CONSEQUENCE)				

Summary		Suggested Timeframe
12-25	High	As soon as possible
6-11	Medium	Within the next three working days
1-5	Low	Whenever viable to do so

Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth



Guidance notes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

<https://www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

All restrictions on making alterations or any permanent damage to surfaces of listed buildings still apply.

Current Diocese Fact sheets regarding services, weddings, funerals and Life Events.

Control Measures

Control measures need to make sure that the risks are reduced so far as is 'reasonably practicable' and ask what more can be done to control the risk. When identifying controls, you need to remember:

- The more effective the control measures, the more lasting the effect of control.
- At times it may be necessary to implement more than one type of control to effectively manage the risk.
- Sometimes a control cannot be actioned straight away due to costs / resources.
- There may be a need to implement immediate (short term) and medium (long term) controls until such time a long-term solution is implemented.
- Controls should be selected in response to the level of risk posed by the hazards, and the practicability of the control.

