# Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public: individual prayer and funerals

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| **Church:****St Elisabeth’s Church** | **Assessor’s name:****Rev Alison Mitchell** | **Date completed:****October 20th 2021** | **Review date:****November 23rd 2021** |

| **Area of Focus**  | **Controls required**  | **Additional information** | **Action by whom?** | **Completed – date and name**  |
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| **Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming**[General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches) | One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible(PADLOCK to remain on the gate for the foreseeable future)To sanitise hands before entering the Nave. (door to the High Altar to remain closed) | Designated people only to enter via the VestryTony GeoffAngie BrianAlisonYoga Teacher (Key given)Richard (Organist) Key givenShelley, Susie, Caroline, Keys givenDettol wipes are available to wipe handles, locks, alarm pad down when leaving.Register to keep a track of who entersSanitiser by the sink in the Vestry to be used. | TonyAngieAlisonTonyAngieAlisonAlisonBrianClergyWardensThose who enter | On going and in placeIn placeIn placeIn place |
| A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. Especially regarding working alone on dark nights | Each individual to add parts to make relevant to their roleTo meet with people who might be in the building alone and update for their roles. | Alison | Sent out October 2021 |
| Buildings have been aired before use. | Doors both open | Wardens | On Going |
| Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.  |  | TonyBrianGeoff | On going |
| Holy water stoups and the font are empty. |  | TonyGeoff | On going |
| **When we are open…** | Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible. |  |  | N/A |
| Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media. | Website updated for Individual PrayerVideo shown on FB/ Instagram and Twitter | AlisonJT | Web site up to date. Video shown |
| **People can now attend services without booking in first** | We are capped at 60 (Children included)  | AngieAlison | On going |
| **Preparation of the Church for individual prayer, worship, and funerals****Heating in Church****FUNERALS****BAPTISMS****WEDDINGS****Cleaning the Church, before or after a wedding/ funeral/ service** | Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building. | By Angie, Alison, Geoff, or Tony | Wardens | Check before each session |
| 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. | Entry is by the SW door.Exit is by the SW door/ Tower doorMarkers and tape are on the floor to indicate the direction of flow | WardensClergyGetting the church ready team | June 30th 2020Changed October 2021 |
| Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.IN WARMER CONDITIONS | Both doors at exit and entrance to be left open to minimise touch and keep the air flow.Due to new advice the doors can be closed when worship is in progress. | WardensTwo people on ‘duty’ | On going |
| To have the heating on 24 hours before a serviceTo open doors 30 minutes before the start for ventilation.To close the doors at the start of the service | Both doors to be open whilst people enterDoors to be closed with designated wardens the ones responsible for open and closing them to limit touchIf there is touch to sanitise and wipe the handles down, immediately | Wardens(SW doors and Tower door) |  |
| Remove from use all books (inc. hymn books and Bibles) plus leaflets except single use material that will be removed by user. | No items left for people to look at and touch.Information board turned around to avoid touch | Getting the church ready team | All removed 05.11.2020 |
| People can now light candles for loved ones | Votive candles with one candle lit to enable lighting | Getting the church ready team | FromSeptember 21 |
| Remove pew cushions/kneelers need as per government guidance | To be stored in the Lady Chapel | Getting the church ready team | All removed 30.6.2020 |
| Children’s area is now set up. It is still cordoned off. To add children’s sanitiser in there | The childrens area to be cordoned off. Area removed. | Alison | All removed 30.6.2020Set a date to open it  |
| Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, including safe flow of visitors. Pews are now ‘normally spaced’ and people are free to sit where they would like. | Choose the flow of ‘traffic.’Close every other pew row.Work out our **MAXIMUN** number of worshippers – 60; -  | ClergyWardensGetting the church ready team | In place, Oct 2021 |
| Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. | Lines clearly shown so that people can stand safelyPeople now leave via the back door. | ClergyWardensGetting the church ready team | From Oct 2021 |
| Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed. | NO ACCESS (TAPE) to the kitchenLIMITED access to toilets – only the DISABALED toilet open for useNO ENTRY to chancel apart from the choirLIMITED ACCESS into the Vestry (see above) | ClergyWardensGetting the church ready team | Kitchen – a NO ENTRY zoneALL toilets open |
| Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. | Sanitiser as you enter/ leave the buildingSanitiser at the toilet entranceVestry  | ClergyWardensGetting the church ready team | At entrance and exitNear toilet30.6.2020 |
| To keep a ‘register’ for our own records. | A tick on the electoral roll register **The welcomers to wear a facemask****To ‘check in’ using the QR code** | ClergyWardensWelcomers | On going |
| To have a clear sign to make people aware of COVID symptomsBe aware of people feeling ill as they enter. | On an A board to have please do not enter if you have …CoughTemperatureBeen in contact with someone with COVIDTO MAKE MORE VISIBLE – welcomer to ask | WardensWelcomers | From 29.7.2020 |
| Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancingPeople to sit 1m apart in ALL directions | The PCC have decided that spacing of pews is no longer needed. | ClergyGeoff to take people to their placesWardens | Sept 21 |
| Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.* **NO** hugging
* Sharing peace
* **ALL need to wear a mask**

**Donations/ collections to be placed in the bag provided** | Hand washing posters are in placeUse of A boardsA visor must be worn if singing (if excempt) or standing a distance away from others.To encourage contactless as much as possible or DONATE on the website.Collection plate at the entrance and at the exitIf money is collected it must NOT be touched for 72 hoursPlate to be visible. | ClergyWardensGetting the church ready teamWardensWelcomers | Sept 2021Sept 21In place |
| **During communion**, **The presider to cover all the wafer(individual) whlist saying the Eucharistic Prayer, only holding up their own wafer.****The Distribution of Communion**The Presider, Deacon, plus a Eucharistic assistant, go to the people**People to leave Church through the back door as well as the tower door** | **Presider****People respond quietly** Everyone remains seated.The Presider will bring communion to the people to avoid movement around the church. Deacon with the ciborium. One warden to allow one row at a time to leave via the tower door. Another warden to give the okay if the porch is clear for the next row. | PresiderWardens and welcomersPresiderPresiderWelcomersWardensGeoffBrianAngieAlison | From Sept 13th and ongoingSept 2021 and ongoing |
| To follow the Risk Assessment aboveTo ALL wear masks at all times indoorsSinging is allowed, behind a mask.People joining outside to stand outside, clear of the porch.A maximum of 60 (including children) people allowed in the building (Flexible in difficult situations)Clergy should remain mindful of their own personal hygiene, sanitising/washing their hands beforeand after the service and again after the committal and of the use of a face covering while indoorsfor the service Optional)The use of communal Bibles or hymn books should be avoided. Orders of service could be placed onpews before the service and then taken away by mourners or safely disposed of.While it is contrary to human instinct and normal pastoral practice, it is important to advisemourners that there should **be no physical contact** including shaking hands, hugging or kissingoutside their own households.If there is a “wake” or gathering after the funeral, clergy are advised not to attend.All items should be washed in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, using the warmestwater setting while allowing time for them to dry items completely. Vestments that cannot bewashed should be hung up and left for 72 hours before use if more than one person will be usingthem.**Burial of Ashes****To wear masks**To have the whole service OUTDOORS, weather permitting | To complete the track and trace with the funeral directorsIt is the PCC’s decision to wear a facemask at all timesA mask must be wornAway from the porch, keeping the fire exit clearRemaining in the outdoorsTo sanitise on entrySanitiser at the altar, at the doors.Clergy to wear a mask whilst entering and leavingTo try NO MASK when officatingIn socially distanced positions by the funeral directorsIn line with the risk assessment (See above)Clergy to stay away from the wakeClergy to wash and hang up for 72 hours(In line with Risk Assessment – see below)Upto 60 (INC children) to attendPaper copies to have 48 hours to self cleanSanitise before handing overNo Sprinkling of the soil | Funeral directors to share with familiesFuneral directors.To mention at the start of the serviceClergy to reinforceFuneral directorVergerVergerClergyFuneral DirectorClergyFuneral DirectorClergyClergyPCCClergy | OngoingSept 20Ongoing |
| Baptism preparation will be led the candidate/families must be done as safely as possible. The words to the service will be available in booklets which are to remain on the seat s after the service for 72 hoursUp to 60 (including children) people are allowed to attend.Face coverings need to worn at all times.Clergy need to be mindful of their own personal hygiene – please wash your handsbefore and after, face coverings are strongly advised and avoid using communal Bibles etc.If the candidate is an infant, he or she should be held by a parent or guardian for the duration ofthe service, including during the baptism itself.The minister should sanitize their hands before and after the Signing with the Cross on thecandidate. If oil is used, it should be applied with an implementwhich can be thoroughly cleaned or disposed of.Water should be poured over the candidate’s forehead using an appropriate implement to pourthe water such as a shell. Unfortunately, baptisms by immersion cannot be safely conducted atpresent. The baptized person, or their parents, may wipe the forehead with paper towels whichshould be immediately disposed of.People to stand socially distanced away from the FontNo one should sign themselves with the baptismal water or be sprinkled with the water afterthe baptism.If a lighted candle is given, the presenting person should sanitize their hands before and afterdoing so. | Arranged prior to the BaptismTo consider how to interact with the congregation when at the FontTo sanitise on entryIn line with guidanceSanitiser at all the places during the Baptism In the parents controlTo consider how to apply the oilTo pour water with the shellPaper towels to dry the forehead and then straight into the binTo show where to stand and people to socially distance from each other.To NOT offerSanitiser at the altar | ClergyClergyClergyWardensWelcomersWardensWardensClergyClergyClergyParentsClergyClergyWardensWelcomersClergyClergy | Sept 200Ongoing |
| Numbers are restricted to 60 (including children) for public healthreasons. This maximum number **includes all those at the ceremony, including the couple, witnesses.****It also includes any workers who are not employed by the church such as****photographers. It does not include staff or volunteers employed by the church such as vergers or churchwardens.**The service should be kept concise while stillconsistent with the nature of the occasion, focusing on those parts of the marriage that are requiredin order to be legally binding under the law of England and Wales.Legally, if anyone wishes to lodge an objection to the wedding, they are entitled to do so, andprovision must be made to enable them to make their point while observing physical distancing.While this is likely to be a very rare event, it emphasises the importance of having someone present to control access to the building during the service**Special provisions to make during the service**The minister does not have to touch the rings at the Giving of Rings, nor does he or shehave to touch the couple’s hands as part of a prayer or blessing.Where rings are touched by anyone other than the bride and groom alone, hands should be washedor sanitized before and after. The rings should be handled by as few people as possible.During the service, those participating should not project their voices to minimise risk of dropletspread and the use of face coverings is encouraged.If the bride is to be ‘walked down the aisle’ she should only be accompanied by a member of herhousehold, while bridesmaids should be careful to observe physical distancing unless also from thesame household.Good public health hygiene should be observed throughout with hand sanitizers available at thedoor. If the church is to be used again within 72 hours it should be cleaned after the servicefollowing the guidelines here.**Signing the Marriage Document**All those signing the document should sanitize their hands before signing, complete all the signaturesnecessary for them and then sanitize them again. Apart from the bride and groom, all those signing should maintain physical distancing if practicable and, where available, individual pens for eachsignatory can be used.**Future Weddings**It is recommended that St E write to or email couples to make clear that while we willdo all we can to make sure the day goes as planned, we are not in control of the circumstances.Couples may wish to postpone their weddings and indeed the church may have to cancel dates thathave been booked. In these circumstances the provision of extras such as music and bell ringing canonly be provisional and couples may wish to consider taking out insurance.  | Sanitise on entyrClergy to look at order of serviceVerger positioned at the back of churchRings placed on Pastoral services bookTo sanitise straight away before and afterSINGING quietly is allowed when wearing a mask To check at the rehearsal, socially distancedFollowing the Risk Aessesment (see below)Verger to set up with Sanitiser close byTo keep all informed and upto date with current changes | VergerUshersClergyVergerVergerClergyClergyClergyOrganistClergyVergerClergyVergerVergerClergyClergy | Started Sept 21Begin at 40 from 16.6.2021 |
| 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. | Before a service to wipe down the pews  | Curch wardensWelcomers’Verger | 30.6.2020 – all services cleaned ready for openingON going |
| Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap dispnser and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. | Welcomer’s to check and to let Clergy/ Wardens know if we are short. | ClergyWardensVerger | Paper towels on order Complete 13.9.21 |
| Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available. | LIMITED access to toilets – only the DISABALED toilet open for use | WardensSidespeopleVerger | 30.6.2020 set upOn going |
| Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them. | Keep bin liners upto date | WardensSidespeopleVerger | On going |
| **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**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.** | 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. | Keep a record of when the church is in useMaybe Sunday and Wednesday to open | Clergy | On going |
| If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. | Get together a small cleaning group | PCC |  |
| Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements. | Small teams to work at 2M apart to get the church ready | ClergyWardens | Still to be arranged |
| All cleaners provided with gloves and aprons (ideally disposable). | To dispse at the end into bin liner | ClergyWardens | Available 30.6.2020 |
| Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. | We need– *non ionic conservation detergent (£22)* | PCC | Oct 20 |
| Confirm people responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. | Wardens of the day | GeoffBrian |  |
| Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. | After each opening of the church | PCC |  |
| **Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms** | If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted. | Track and trace in placeWait 48 hours | PCC |  |
| If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning. | Small cleaning team orGet professional cleaning team in. | Cleaning Team |  |