



OPENING CHURCH BUILDINGS TO THE PUBLIC

Covid-19 Risk Assessment Checklist for Parish Churches

Completed by: Roy Evans Churchwarden

In consultation with PCC members Linda Fearn, Laura Gore, Christine, and Graham Harrison

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 risk assessment is based on the template issued by the House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group (Version Number 4, 1st July 2020) and relates to opening the church building to clergy and members of the public entering for any permitted purposes.

This risk assessment will be updated regularly as required, or when further access to church is allowed for.

13/07 2020 At present, access to the church building is allowed as follows:

- by the churchwarden for checking and security purposes
- by contractors, by arrangement with the churchwarden
- for individual private prayer on Sundays between 1.00pm and 2.30pm

From 09/08/2020 we are opening each Sunday for public worship. Public worship has been permitted since 4th July 2020. However, the PCC passed a resolution to delay this slightly.

Last updated: 28th July 2020

Review date: 10th August, after the first act of public worship

SECTION 1: Access by Clergy and Key Volunteers

Church: St James Church Thornham	Assessor's name: Roy Evans	Date completed: 28/07/2020	Review date: 10/08/2020 after first public worship
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & 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.	The Door to the Vestry as there is no public entry	RE	RE Ongoing
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted.	Adhere to parish lone-working policy.	RE	RE Ongoing
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Weather and lone worker policy permitting, doors to be left open before the service	RE	RE ongoing
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Inspect for animal waste and general cleanliness when opening up for services.	RE	RE continue to monitor
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.	Water supply in church is very limited anyway but water run for a while before use.	RE or deputy	RE ongoing
	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed.	Heating switched off for the summer. Electrical systems to be monitored	RE or deputy	RE ongoing
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	All empty – no holy water in church	RE	RE
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming e.g. avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	No live streaming undertaken	RE	RE 8/7/20 and ongoing

SECTION 2: Access by Construction Workers and/or Professional Contractors

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Preparation of the Church for: - construction workers and/or professional contractors Advice on access for construction workers and advice on access for contractors available here.	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by churchwarden or deputy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		RE	RE ongoing
	Confirm that each contractor has carried out their own risk assessment (for themselves and their staff and sub-contractors) and has employers and public liability insurance in place.	Ensure they have included any work equipment, emergency equipment (such as fire extinguishers), ventilation systems and access routes.	RE or deputy	As required
	Have hand sanitiser available for people to use on entry and exit of the church building.	There is sufficient available in church for use by contractors	RE or deputy	Re ongoing
	Confirm who has responsibility for locking and unlocking the building.	Re or deputy will enable access when required	RE	As required
	After use, frequently touched surfaces e.g. doors, light switches will be cleaned.	Cleaning materials and gloves are available at church. Gloves will be disposed of after use and cloths washed.	RE or deputy	As required
	A supply of soap and paper hand towels will be available.	There are additional supplies in the cleaning cupboard.	RE	RE or deputy ongoing
	All small bins (that have to be physically emptied) to have disposable liners to reduce the risk to those responsible for emptying them.	There is a supply of bin bags in the vestry	RE	RE or deputy ongoing
	Prepare a suitable form to record contact details of people entering the building.	On table by the main entrance	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	Confirm evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.	To be communicated to any contractor prior to work commencing.	RE or deputy	As required
	Direct all users to leave the building by one exit only, avoiding bottlenecks.	To be communicated to any contractor prior to work commencing.	RE or deputy	As required.

SECTION 3: Access by members of the public for any permitted purpose

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
<p>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purpose. To be read in conjunction with risk assessments for the following specific purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private Prayer - Holy Communion; - Funerals; - Baptisms; - Weddings. 	<p>Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.</p>		RE	RE ongoing
	<p>Confirm who has responsibility for locking and unlocking the building.</p>	<p>Re or nominated deputy to unlock and lock church, entering and exiting through the door by the vestry. Everyone else to enter and exit through the main doors If the weather permits, main doors shall be kept open to minimize touching of handles etc. and allow air flow through the building.</p>	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	<p>Choose one point of entry into church to manage flow of people and indicate this with notices.</p>	<p>Entry for all people, other than RE (or whoever is unlocking) to be through the main doors at the back of church. Exit to be through the side door by the organ Emergency exits are still accessible, if required.</p>	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	<p>Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.</p>	<p>Hand-sanitisers to be available at all entrance and exit doors and at the front of church where communion is to be given. Signs are displayed reminding people to use it, to maintain social distancing and not to enter if they have any symptoms of CV, however mild.</p>	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	<p>Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building.</p>	<p>The numbers we expect do not lead us to anticipate a need for waiting or queuing outside but we will continue to monitor.</p>	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	<p>Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.</p>	<p>If at all possible with the weather, the main doors at the back of church will be kept open.</p>	RE or deputy	Re 13/07/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
	Remove from use all books , leaflets etc	All items removed or put away so cannot be used.	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	All removed to storage	RE	
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas	Children’s resources moved to a safe storage place	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items	All items removed from area for public access; Baptistry has been cordoned off.	RE	Re 13/07/2020
	<p>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).</p> <p>Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.</p> <p>Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.</p> <p>Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.</p>	<p>Generally, public access to be limited to the nave pews only. The Choir can use the choir stalls</p> <p>For private prayer and public worship is allowed, it is necessary to mark out seating for 2 m social distancing – see plan Red and green ribbon to be used to indicate where people can and cannot sit. and access.</p>	<p>RE, Deputy and volunteers on duty</p> <p>RE</p> <p>RE</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p>
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing	Notices all in place	RE	13/07/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
	Advise those at greater risk and who are vulnerable / shielding to pay attention to government advice in deciding whether or not to come to church. There should be no pressure to do so and online worship will continue for the time being.	To be communicated in publicity, social media, conversation and posters displayed at church.	RE	Ongoing
	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.	Public access is limited to the nave; These two areas are separated with a cordon. In general, cleaning between public opening will not, therefore be necessary but continue to monitor	RE	Ongoing
	After use, frequently touched surfaces e.g. door handle, light switches, and pews will be cleaned – see next section for detail.	Cleaning materials and gloves are available at church. Gloves and cloths will be disposed of after use.	RE / person on duty	Ongoing
	Have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Hand washing facilities are available in the vestry and hall toilets which are available in an emergency only. A good quality hand sanitiser is also in place, instead. Paper towels and a bin are in place, if required.	RE	13/07 2020
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Toilets in Vestry and hall are available in an emergency only or if used by groups in the hall subject to proper cleaning procedures as outlined in the document.	Re or deputy	RE 13/07 2020
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	There is a bin at the back of church and a supply of bin bags. There is no other public access to bins.	RE	Re 13/07/2020
	Confirm evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency, ideally using one exit only (the main doors) but avoiding bottlenecks	Evacuation plan remains unchanged. Those on duty to be briefed.	Re	Ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
	Minimise risk of cross-contamination	<p>Any non-essential items shall be removed or access prevented (e.g. leaflets, prayer box, table covers etc.) as above</p> <p>Church shall only be open to the public once a week so there is time for the virus to die between each opening.</p>	RE	RE 13/07/2020
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days.	<p>One form for those who enter 'privately' on the table in the choir vestry area.</p> <p>An additional form, on a clipboard, by the main door to record contact details of everyone who enters church to pray. This will be completed by a person on duty, so that the clipboard and pen are not handled by multiple people.</p> <p>Details for 21 days then destroyed.</p>	RE, deputy and volunteers	Ongoing
Access to the toilet	The vestry and hall toilets are not generally be accessible but could be used in an emergency.	<p>Communication to tell people that there will not be access to the toilets.</p> <p>In an emergency, the Wardens / Stewards can arrange access and appropriate cleaning will then have to take place.</p>	RE	RE ongoing

SECTION 4: Access by members of the public for private prayer

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
<p>Specific risk and arrangements for public access for private prayer.</p> <p>To be read in conjunction with section 3, above.</p> <p>NB this is permitted from Sunday 28th June.</p> <p>We will be open for private prayer on Sunday afternoons, from 1.00 pm – 2.30pm, from 28th June</p>	<p>Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy and general public access have been carried out.</p>		RE	2/6/20 RE
	<p>Confirm that public liability insurance in place and covers us.</p>	<p>09/07/20 Statement from EIG that, provided a risk assessment has been carried out, insurance is valid even with those in vulnerable categories on duty.</p>	RE	13/07/2020
	<p>Lone working policy to be followed so two people must be 'on duty' at any time church is open.</p>	<p>Volunteers may be in the clinical vulnerable group providing they understand and accept the risks involved</p>	RE	13/07/2020
	<p>Monitor the number of people admitted at any one time.</p>	<p>Numbers to be limited to allow for social distancing, at the discretion of those on duty. If necessary, people will be asked to queue outside.</p>	RE and volunteers on duty	Ongoing
	<p>Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.</p>	<p>People will be instructed to take a laminated sign when they enter and leave it where they have been sitting when they leave, so others know not to sit there. The sign will be removed and cleaned, once that pew and area has been cleaned.</p>	Volunteers on duty	Ongoing

SECTION 4: Access by members of the public for services of Holy Communion

These specific arrangements for Holy Communion must be read in conjunction with section 3, above.

NB Public services of Holy Communion are permitted from Saturday 4th July. We are working towards beginning on Sunday 26th July.

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
General	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy and general public access have been carried out.		RE	RE 28/07/2020
	Confirm that public liability insurance is in place and covers us.	Statement from EIG that, provided a risk assessment has been carried out, insurance is valid even with those in vulnerable categories on duty.	RE	RE 28/07/2020
	There will be no congregational singing, no servers, for the time being.	<p>Organ music is allowed and, when available, will be used before and after the service, as the altar is prepared, and during the distribution of communion.</p> <p>Face masks are now compulsory and should be worn by all people entering church unless they are in an exempt category as defined by government guidelines.</p> <p>There must be no interaction between different families or social bubbles.</p>	RE	Re 28/07/2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
	Children are to remain with their parents throughout the service. There is no Sunday School, crèche or parent and toddler areas.	Those that are old enough to do so should be encouraged to join in the service as much as possible. However, it is recognized that the restrictions mean the services are not very child friendly. If toys / books etc. are brought, they are to remain in the household's pew and only be used by members of that household in that space. They must be taken away.	RE	RE 28/07/2020
Setting up for Communion	Presider to set up for Mass and tidy away / clean vessels afterwards		Presider	Ongoing
The Peace	There is to be no sharing of the peace through physical contact. Congregation to be advised to remain seated so as to minimize possibility of sharing.	Information to be on 'what to expect' document published online and posted out to those not online, in advance of first service. Clergy to remind in service.	Presider/RE or deputy	Ongoing
The Offertory	The collection plate will not be passed round during services	Large collection plate to be set up on table at the back of church.	Re or deputy	
	No offertory procession	Bread and wine to be placed on the credence table before the start of the service.	RE	Ongoing
The Eucharistic Prayer	Presider is not to speak over uncovered bread and wine other than that which they will consume.	<p>Communion to be in one kind (bread only)</p> <p>Small priest's host on paten, which shall all be consumed by the Presider. Individual hosts to be placed in the ciborium. The lid will remain on the ciborium throughout the Eucharistic Prayer and be removed only at the distribution.</p> <p>Silent distribution</p>	<p>RE</p> <p>Presider</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
The Distribution of Communion	<p>Silent distribution</p> <p>Only the President to handle the wafers during the distribution</p> <p>After communicating themselves, President to sanitise hands thoroughly.</p> <p>President to wear a mask for the distribution.</p> <p>Wafer to be dropped into the hands of communicants.</p> <p>No physical contact to be made when giving blessings.</p> <p>A prayer stool to be placed in front of the Presider to assist in the maximum distance between presider and communicant to be maintained.</p>	<p>At the distribution, the President will move to stand, in turn, at the end of each aisle. The congregation come forward one household / bubble at a time to receive at the end of their aisle. They then return to their seats before the next household / bubble comes forward.</p> <p>There will be hand sanitiser at the front of church before each member of the congregation receives communion</p> <p>Congregation will be told so they don't try to take it or expect to receive in the mouth. If physical contact is inadvertently made during the distribution, the President will re-sanitise hands before continuing with the distribution. The communicant should also re-sanitise their hands.</p>	<p>RE</p> <p>Warden / Steward</p> <p>RE</p> <p>RE</p>	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Entrance and exit - congregation	<p>Physically distanced seating in operation (Attendance is limited to 18households / bubbles.</p> <p>On arrival at church, congregation encouraged not to 'linger' at the back but to take their seats in an appropriate place (with direction from the stewards, if necessary).</p> <p>At the end of the service, congregation to remain in seats until it is their turn to leave, as directed by the stewards. They must exit straightaway.</p>		<p>Wardens / Volunteers</p> <p>Wardens / Volunteers</p>	
Entrance and exit – clergy	<p>At the start of eucharist, the clergy will ring the bell and then enter from the vestry. They will not process round the church, but go directly to reverence the altar and to their places.</p> <p>At the end of Eucharist, they will leave by the same way and go outside, through the vestry door, to greet the congregation outside as they leave the church.</p>		<p>Clergy</p> <p>Clergy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Vestments	<p>Clergy to ensure use of disinfectant fabric spray after each use</p> <p>Clergy to each wear their own vestments, which should be kept separately</p> <p>Vestments should not be used elsewhere (e.g. when covering at another church, or at the crematorium) without first being washed or having been quarantined for 72 hours.</p>	<p>There will currently be no servers or choir so their vestments are not currently used and do not need to be considered.</p>	Clergy	Ongoing
Service Sheets	<p>Reusable service sheets will not be used.</p>	<p>Disposable Service booklets, Lectionary and pew sheets will be provided and should be taken home by parishioners. Clergy and wardens to remind at the beginning of the service</p> <p>Electronic copies will be available in advance so that people can bring their own (and take it away again) or read it off their phone during the service.</p>	RE/Christine Harrison	
Refreshments	<p>There will no refreshments served after the service, for the time being.</p>			

SECTION 5: Access by members of the public for Funeral Services

To be read in conjunction with section 3, above.

If a funeral is to be a Requiem Mass, section 4 (Holy Communion) will also apply.

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Funeral Services	It is not intended that Funeral services be allowed in church at the present time.	If a funeral is to take place due to humanitarian considerations then a Risk Assessment will have to be completed.	RE	Re ongoing

SECTION 6: Access by members of the public for Weddings

To be read in conjunction with section 3, above.

If the marriage is within a celebration of Holy Communion, section 4 (Holy Communion) will also apply.

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Weddings	It is not intended that weddings take place in church at the present time.	When they are to take place a Risk Assessment for this will have to be completed.	RE	

SECTION 7: Access by members of the public for Baptism services (separate to regular acts of public worship)

To be read in conjunction with section 3, above.

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Baptisms	It is not intended that baptisms take place at present	A full risk assessment will have to be done before a baptism can take place in church.	RE	

SECTION 8: Cleaning church after use

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by who?	Completed – date & name
Cleaning the church after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	Cleaners must not be in a vulnerable group or self-isolating	No volunteers are in these categories		
	All cleaners provided to be with gloves (disposable) to protect their skin from exposure to cleaning materials. Facemasks are also available, if desired.	Supply of gloves and disposable face masks at back of church	RE/ LF	28/07/2020
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Suitable cleaning materials are available at the back of church.	RE/LF	28/07/2020
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste from the site and frequency of removal.	Bins to emptied at the end of the each public access (usually, weekly) by the Warden / volunteer on duty	Person on duty	Ongoing
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	Close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.		RE or deputy	As required
	Once the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.			As required

Roy Evans updated 28/072020