

## Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

### Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
March2021	1	Churchwardens of St Michael and All Angels

*This update has been reviewed in the light of new guidance from the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and is intended for use from March onwards. Risk assessments carried out using an earlier template may still be valid but should be reviewed regularly and checked against this latest version of the risk assessment.*

England entered a third national lockdown from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This replaced the three-tier system introduced in late 2020 and later augmented with a fourth tier. During the lockdown, churches are permitted to open for communal worship, private prayer and a number of essential purposes where they can be carried out in a Covid-safe way.

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 that risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. It relates to opening up church to clergy and members of the public entering for any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best practice.

The government acknowledges that places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership for many individuals, and in bringing communities and generations together. However, their communal nature also makes them places that are particularly vulnerable to the spread of the virus. In drawing up a risk assessment for church of St Michael and All Angels, we will need to think carefully whether the public benefits we achieve by opening are justified by the risks involved, however much we can mitigate them.

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.

This document was compiled following discussion with the clergy and laity bodies within St Michael and All Angels referencing:

- AA1 General service risk assessment
- Private Prayer risk assessment
- Reviewed 2021 Covid emergency planning document

### In carrying out a risk assessment

1. We have considered and planned for:
  - Private prayer
  - Public worship
  - Funerals, weddings, baptisms
2. Considered the hazards:
  - Transmission of COVID-19
3. Considered 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, entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; access to other areas including the toilets.
4. Considered who might be harmed and how. We have read the guidance and thought about how the activities we are planning will affect different groups of people.
5. We have used the C of E risk assessment template as a checklist:
  - adding in mitigations for any risks that are particular to our circumstances that may not be on the list;
  - recorded what we need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
  - considered any equipment we need and any temporary changes we might need to make to the church;
  - checked back against our list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

**Risk assessment template**

<b>Church:</b> St Michael and All Angels, Eastbourne	<b>Assessor's name:</b> Churchwardens	<b>Date completed:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	<b>Review date:</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Access to church buildings for purposes of recording services</b>  <b>Risk:</b> contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	1. Identify anyone who is required for recording or broadcasting is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Can someone else fulfil their role in the recording  2. Ensure that the people who need to attend the church building to enable the recording to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely.  3. Make sure that only those essential for recording enter the church.	.	Identify a/v operatives and identify Points 1,2,3. Ben and Office	
	Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible.	Everyone in the South West door out the South East door		
	Hand sanitiser provided for the occasions when people unable to wash their hands.	Done	Wardens	
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings.	On Line	Wardens	
	Ensure that face masks are worn by everyone, legal exclusions apart		Wardens / welcome team	
	Reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by		Wardens et al	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	leaving doors that are not fire doors open and using electronic documents rather than hard copies			
	We will ensure we record the names of all members attending a service, taking a photograph to assist in any track and trace follow up that could be needed, if necessary. Have a NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system	Currently in use	Wardens	
<b>Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities</b>	We have considered how the national lockdown applies to the particular circumstances in church and the worship or other activities envisaged. Consideration being given to the implications of where people travel from and the distance involved	Currently only Holy Week and Sunday services. To be reviewed on a case by case need for funerals and weddings	Clergy Wardens PCC	
	We will check if any clergy, staff or volunteers required for opening to the public fall into clinically extremely vulnerable categories or have members of their household who do, and ensure there are enough people safely able and willing to facilitate opening and cleaning the building	Those likely to be included are Clergy Wardens Welcomers	Clergy Wardens	
	Discourage clinically extremely vulnerable members of the congregation or visitors from attending services, encouraging them to utilise online services	As the vaccine role out grows a large proportion of the congregation will have already been vaccinated and be at the first dose optimal protection. This may lead to some laxness.		
	All services to be controlled by ticket only access from the office or online.	Using Churchsuite		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name	
<b>Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes</b>  <b>Risk:</b> Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.					
	Update our website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering and need for ticket entrance. Clearly state the limits on attendance for weddings, funerals, commemorative events and any other permitted activities where upper limits apply			Office Wardens	
	Update our website to remind people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 to stay at home as much as possible and observe social distancing guidance and discourage them from attending church in person during this time and view online.			Office	
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings.			Wardens	
	Continue to ensure compliance with legislation on the wearing of face masks			Wardens Welcomers	
	Entrance into church for services via the South West door and exit via the South East door		Information sent out and A frame in place	Wardens Office	
	Queuing outside the building. Possibly on Easter day we may need some welcomers well wrapped up to be outside acting as marshals to ensure social distancing		Liaise with Welcome team on this	Welcomers Wardens	
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation		Advise those attending to dress warmly	Office Wardens	
	Heating system checked for safe use before people			Wardens	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	allowed in.			
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets unless they are absolutely essential and participants cannot bring their own. Hardcopy literature should be quarantined for at least 48 hours between use		Wardens	
	Children’s resources and play areas isolated		Wardens	
	Walk through the church to plan for physical distancing including safe flow of visitors. 2m in all directions from each person unless in family groups		Wardens	
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing		Wardens	
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements	Already in place	Wardens	
	Placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use	Already in place	Wardens	
	Notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g.no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Already in place	Wardens	
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	.	Wardens Cleaning team	
	Toilet facilities to have an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels and a bin for towels		Wardens Cleaning team	
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.		Wardens Cleaning team	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Use of the church for baptisms, weddings, funerals and commemorative services</b>	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place	Review church and Government's advice on commemorative events	Clergy Wardens	
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>  <b>Risk:</b> Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.	If the church building has been closed for 48 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces		Wardens	
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating		Wardens	
	Pay particular attention to surfaces that are frequently touched e.g. handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets	Already in place	Wardens Cleaning team	
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects	Already in place	Wardens	
	Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets deemed essential for services should be quarantined for 48 hours after use	Already in place	Wardens	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable)	Already in place	Wardens Cleaning team	
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and surfaces to be cleaned	Already in place	Cleaning team	
	Those responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.		Wardens Cleaning team	
	The frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site	Weekly	Wardens Cleaning team	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	Close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted		Wardens	
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning		Cleaning team	