

Christ Church Ainsworth - Risk Assessment for Opening the Church Building to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
15 th June 2021	4	David Thomson (Vicar)

Church:	Assessor's name:	Date completed:	Review date:
Christ Church Ainsworth	Dave Thomson	15/6/21	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for purposes of recording and/or livestreaming services (with no congregation present) Risk: contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	Consider if anyone required for recording or broadcasting is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Can someone else fulfil their role in the recording/livestreaming? Ensure that the people who need to attend the church building to enable the livestreaming or recording to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely. Make sure that only those essential for livestreaming or recording enter the church.	Advice on livestreaming and recording can be found here . N/A	DT	15/6/21 DT
	Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible.	Not possible. Main entrance available only.	DT	15/6/20 DT
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .	DT	19/6/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<p>Not applicable (but see below): only live services, with congregation present, are recorded.</p> <p>Livestreaming from the building is not feasible due to the absence of fibre broadband and the poor mobile signal.</p>		Checked. Lone workers to lock the main door and always carry a mobile phone. Organist notified.		
	Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building.	So far, this has not proved necessary.	DT	15/6/21 DT
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	N/A	DT	15/6/20
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Services are recorded using iPad or iPhone. These are not plugged in and there are no trailing cables.	DT	15/6/21 DT
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Done. Stations at the font, by the balcony door, credence table (for clergy) and near the lectern.	DT	19/6/20 DT Updated 9/9/20 DT
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . Done	DT	15/6/20 DT Updated 15/6/21
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce or download signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law and requiring these for all except those exempt.	Advice on face coverings can be found here . Done	DT	7/7/20 DT
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.	Done	DT	22/6/20

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	Consult advice on complying with Track and Trace . T&T QR Code displayed, with sign in forms as backup.	DT	DT 1/7/20
Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities	Consider how the national lockdown applies to the particular circumstances of the church and the worship or other activities envisaged. For gathered congregations or other activities drawing people from a wide area, consider the implications of where people travel from and the distance involved.	At the current stage in the Spring roadmap (including the Greater Manchester guidance) it is legal for congregation members to travel for worship.	DT	11/6/21 DT
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	N/A	DT	1/7/20 DT
	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.	N/A	DT	11/6/21 DT
	Consider whether to discourage clinically extremely vulnerable members of the congregation or visitors from attending services altogether or setting aside a time for them to attend for individual devotions.	All clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have now been offered two shots of an anti-COVID vaccine and are best placed to decide for themselves whether to attend worship or other activities within the building.	DT	11/6/21 DT
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	So far, this has proved unnecessary as attendance	DT	12/6/21 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		has always been below the COVID-secure building capacity. However, the situation is monitored and, should it become necessary, a booking system will be introduced.		
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	Not relevant	DT	14/6/21 DT
Deciding whether to have a choir or music group singing/performing	Check current guidance on singing to establish what is permitted. This can be found in the Church of England guidance on conducting public worship and on in the Government guidance for places of worship .	Currently congregational singing is not allowed, and we do not have a choir / music group.	DT	14/6/21 DT
Risk: Aerosol spread of coronavirus may be increased by singing and playing of wind instruments	Ensure that singers from different households can be socially distanced from one another, and from anyone else present (including a conductor, camera or microphone operator or, if present, a congregation).	N/A	DT	14/6/21 DT
	Put in place measures to create a physical barrier between singers and any congregation.	N/A	DT	14/6/21 DT
	Remind any members of congregation present that at present they are not allowed to sing indoors.	Since July 2020 this has featured in the COVID instructions looped on screen.	DT	14/06/21 DT
#Preparation of the Church for access by members of	Confirm that all steps (above) for access for livestreaming/broadcast have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Yes	DT	22/6/20 DT Updated 15/6/21 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<p>the public for any permitted purposes</p> <p>Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.</p>	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering. Clearly state the limits on attendance for weddings, funerals, commemorative events and any other permitted activities where upper limits apply (or provide a link to this document).	Done via link to risk assessment backed with details on newsletter, which posted to website, ACNY and social media. Details are kept under review.	DT	9/7/20 DT Updated 15/6/21 DT
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . Done	DT	15/7/20 DT Updated 15/6/20 DT
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance with the law requiring these for all except those exempt.	Advice on face coverings can be found here . Done	DT	7/7/20 DT
	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 and exit via main door. External door to Clergy (was choir) vestry to be unlocked but bolted when the building is in use as per PCC's fire evacuation policy.	DT	7/7/20 DT
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	This has proved unnecessary. Smooth entry achieved so far, and people know to queue 2m apart.	DT	1/7/20 DT updated 15/6/21 DT
	Make any temporary arrangements for managing the approaches to the entry points and any parking areas to ensure social distancing can be observed	Unnecessary. Parking is on street and the church path is sufficiently long to ensure	DT	15/6/21 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	(taking into account any consequential risks arising from changes to circulation).	social distancing can be maintained.		
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	The building is well ventilated anyway, but the door is left open during worship.	DT	1/7/20 DT Updated 15/6/21 DT
	If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in.	Guidance on church heating can be found here . Boiler serviced annually.	DT	15/6/21 DT
	Remove items such as Bibles, prayer and hymn books that are used by multiple people.	You could consider a long-term loan system for Bibles and other books to ensure people have access to these. Done. Replaced with PowerPoint.	DT	22/6/20 DT
	If providing single-use service sheets or prayer cards, either place these on sheets or ask people to sanitise hands before picking one up, and request that people take these home with them.	PowerPoint projected on a screen instead.	DT	1/7/20 DT
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	N/A	DT	15/6/20 DT
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces.	Not necessary. See CofE's cleaning guidance.	DT	16/6/20 DT
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas.	Done. Moved upstairs.	DT	22/6/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	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>Safer churches guidance, including ideas on floor plans, is available here.</p> <p>Done</p>	DT	1/7/20 DT
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Done	DT	1/7/20
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Limited space so alternative necessary. Therefore, fill from the front pews first and leave from the rear pews first.	DT	1/7/20 DT
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon is needed.	Done.	DT	1/7/20 DT
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	<p>Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.</p> <p>Done. Stations at the font, by the balcony door, credence table (for clergy) and near the lectern.</p>	DT	<p>19/6/20 DT</p> <p>Updated 9/9/20 DT</p>
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	<p>Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions.</p> <p>No physical changes requiring Faculty or List B needed.</p>	DT	15/6/20 DT
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Done.	DT	1/7/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	<p>Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.</p> <p>Worship: No volunteers. Therefore, building will be left 48 hours minimum between use.</p> <p>NB We cannot open for private prayer until we have cleaning volunteers.</p> <p>Weddings/Funerals/Baptisms: This will be done by clergy before or after depending upon whether there has been or will be 48 hours since or before an act of worship.</p>	DT	15/7/20 DT Updated 15/6/21 DT
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	<p>Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.</p> <p>Paper towels unnecessary. Government guidance allows hand dryers. However, water flow is poor, so advise using gel too.</p>	DT	29/6/20 DT
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.	DT	29/6/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		As above.		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Standard practice.	Pew polishers etc	19/6/20 DT
Use of the church for baptisms, weddings, funerals, commemorative services and ordinations	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place.	<p>Advice on baptisms can be found here.</p> <p>Advice on weddings can be found here (scroll down to Can weddings go ahead?).</p> <p>Advice on funerals can be found here.</p> <p>The government’s advice on commemorative events can be found here.</p> <p>Prior to each event, the latest guidance is checked to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Under step 3 of the Government Road Map, weddings are limited to a maximum attendance of 30 (excluding clergy and vergers), with baptisms and</p>	DT	15/6/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>funerals limited to the building capacity.</p> <p>[NB The PM's announced on 14/6/21 that the limit of 30 for weddings will be lifted, which means attendance will be limited by the building's COVID-secure capacity from 21/6/21.]</p>		
<p>Use of the church for permitted activities other than private prayer or worship</p> <p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place. Check that any external group using the church has COVID-secure working practices in place, including their own risk assessment where necessary, and will comply with what is required by the church.</p>	<p>The government's guidance on the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities for permitted activities (including formal childcare and support groups) can be found here.</p> <p>Advice on use of churches as vaccination centres can be found here.</p> <p>The government's guidance on the use of hospitality spaces can be found here.</p>		
<p>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no</p>	<p>If the church building has been closed for 48 hours between periods of being open then there is no</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>DT</p>	<p>15/6/20 DT</p>

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
<p>known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</p> <p>Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.</p> <p>Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.</p>	need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.			
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Policy is to a) remain closed for 48 hours between services where possible and b) for clergy to clean before / after life events.	DT	19/6/20 DT Updated 15/6/21 DT
	Identify surfaces that are frequently touched and by many people (often common areas), e.g. handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets, and specify the frequency and level of cleaning and by whom.	Weekly clean by ‘pew polishers’ of frequently touched surfaces, with 48 hours left between services. Clergy clean before / after life events if less than 48 hours. The toilet is for emergencies only and anyone using it is expected to disinfect all areas touched immediately.	DT	15/6/21 DT
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.	Not possible, but frequently touched surfaces cleaned as above.	DT	15/6/21 DT
	Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets deemed essential for services should be quarantined for 48 hours after use.	Not applicable. Newsletters are emailed and orders of service are prepared using PowerPoint.	DT	15/6/21
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Disposable gloves available	DT	1/7/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	<p>Register with Parish Buying for procurement options.</p> <p>Leave for 48 hours, with a normal clean on Saturdays, otherwise:</p> <p>Pews (if touched) spray with dilute Ecover range detergent & water. Wipe dry with kitchen roll.</p> <p>Other hard surfaces (e.g. door handles): as for pews but use disinfectant spray.</p> <p>Pew cushions: vacuum. If soiled, wipe area with dilute disinfectant.</p> <p>Toilet: Spray all surfaces with disinfectant and wipe down with kitchen roll.</p>	DT	<p>1/7/20 DT</p> <p>Updated 15/6/21 DT</p>
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Last cleaner.	Last cleaner	15/6/20 DT
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Cleaners asked to remove following each clean	Last cleaner	15/6/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Default position	DT	15/6/20 DT
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<p> Public Health England guidance available here. </p> <p> Wipe pews etc with the usual detergent mixture, but with added disinfectant. Wipe other areas with disinfectant. Disinfect the toilet. </p> <p> Cleaners should wear gloves and aprons. </p> <p> All clothes, wipes, gloves aprons etc to be double bagged and disposed of. </p> <p> See PHE guidance if any surface is contaminated with bodily fluids. </p> <p> If the above is not possible (e.g., if no volunteer cleaners), the building will be closed, and any services cancelled. </p>	DT	16/6/20 DT

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here . Default position	DT	16/6/20 DT

Decisions (updated 15/6/21)

Overview

1. This risk assessment applies whenever Government regulations allow Christ Church to open for worship.
2. We shall comply with the latest COVID-19 guidance issued by the CofE, the CofE website being checked daily of updates.

Clergy Prayer / Livestreaming

1. Clergy prayer continues at home, as before lockdown.
2. There is no broadband in church and the 4G signal is poor. Livestreaming utilising OBS from church would be impossible.

Decision: continue livestreaming from the Vicarage, with recording only within church.

Private Prayer (General Public)

This is not feasible without sufficient volunteers to sit in the building. Also, in view of the restricted cleaning options, we must preserve the integrity of the building for at least 48 hours prior to worship on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Decision: do not open for private prayer.

Funerals

1. Vergers will direct mourners to their seats.
2. Pews, surfaces etc will be disinfected before or after each funeral if within 48 hours of a scheduled service.
3. Test & Trace compliance. Next of Kin will be asked to supply a list of those invited to attend.
4. It is evident that some families ignore the attendance restrictions. Others, those with large families, find the limits distressing, so struggle to comply. Both situations increase the risk that the attendance limit will be breached. This is manageable for graveside funerals, and not our problem at crematoria. Also, given the relatively small size of our church building, attendance of excessive numbers of mourners will jeopardise the health of the presiding minister. **MITIGATION:** Attendance limits will be stressed to next of kin and funeral directors.
5. Should anyone with COVID-19 attend, the church would need deep cleaning (who?) or closed for 48 hours. This would jeopardise continuity of Sunday worship. **MITIGATION:** Disinfect. Follow Government guidelines

Decision: Christ Church is open for funerals.

Weddings

- With large numbers of guests attending (80 was normal pre-COVID), there is a risk that the COVID compliant seating capacity will be exceeded.
- How will we ensure Track & Trace compliance?
- With most weddings taking place on Saturdays, we will need to clean afterwards.

Decisions:

1. Couples will be informed of the restrictions and capacity limit.
2. Guests' attention will be drawn to the Test & Trace arrangements.
3. Clergy and vergers will clean after each wedding.

Baptisms:

- With large numbers of guests attending (60 was normal pre-COVID), there is a risk that the COVID compliant seating capacity will be exceeded.
- How will we ensure Track & Trace compliance?
- Unless we can clean following the 10.30am service, the only area of the building available will be that part of the chancel unused earlier.

Decisions:

1. Baptisms will be scheduled for 1.15pm to allow time for livestreaming at 12 noon.
2. Baptisms will take place in that part of the chancel unused at 10.30am, using the portable font.
3. Clergy will clean prior the service.
4. Guests' attention will be drawn to the Test & Trace arrangements.

Public Worship (inside the church building):

1. Unless enough volunteers can be found to clean between services, worship must be limited to one service only on Sundays (10.30am) and one service on Wednesday evenings (6.30pm).
2. If a COVID-19 infected person enters the building, unless there are volunteers willing to deep clean, the building will be closed for 48 hours and any services during that period cancelled.
3. Continue livestreaming.
4. All services will be basic and short.
5. A PowerPoint version of the order of service will be projected in church. There will be no paper copies.
6. There will be a collection plate on the font, but this will not be passed around.

7. The toilet is for emergencies only, and anyone using it is expected to spray disinfectant on all surfaces they have touched.
8. Worshippers will be asked to comply with the following:
 - a. Unless legally exempt, to wear a facemask.
 - b. Gel their hands as they enter the building.
 - c. Remain 2m socially distant from each other, unless from the same household / bubble / group of 6. This means sitting down promptly (where the paper is on the pew) and no gathering in the aisle or immediately outside the main door for a chat.
 - d. When entering, sitting in the next available pew, filling from the front and from the wall, taking care not to touch any part of the pew as they move along.
 - e. Everyone (except the presiding priest) will remain seated throughout each service unless directed. Any children attending must also remain seated throughout the service.
 - f. There will be no singing.
 - g. A Test & Trace QR Code is displayed at the entrance for those worshippers who have downloaded the NHS T&T app. Others are asked to complete a registration form each week. The forms will be destroyed after three weeks. A GDPR compliant privacy notice is posted inside church.
 - h. Leave from the rear pew first.

Public Worship in the Churchyard

1. From Step 3 worshippers can stand in maximum groups of 30.
2. Overall capacity around the flagpole is 250.
3. For Test & Trace, attendees will be asked to book in advance or scan the T&T QR code.

Building Capacity for the COVID Regulations

1. From Step 3, groups of 6, or larger groups where everyone present is from the same two households (or linked support bubble), can sit together. Everyone else must always observe 2m physical distancing. Therefore, the capacity at Christ Church is in the range of 46-83 (downstairs 30-55 (including choir pews), 3 clergy (Sanctuary area), 12-24 balcony, 1 Organist).
2. The attendance capacity applicable for weddings, funerals, baptisms, and public worship will be building capacity or the Government set limit, whichever is the lower.