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

**Version Control Kirkby Malham v4 13/6/20**

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| Issue Date  | Version Number  | Issued by  |
| 22nd May 2020 | 1 | The House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group |
| 8th June 2020 | 2 | The House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group |

***THIS IS A PLANNING DOCUMENT ONLY. IT WILL BE UPDATED AND CONTENT MAY CHANGE ONCE GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON REOPENING PLACES OF WORSHIP HAS BEEN PUBLISHED. We are awaiting clarification from government on the extent and nature of what ‘supervised individual prayer’ means and what exactly will be required. We will update this document as further information becomes available.***

On 7th June the government announced that places of worship may open for individual prayer in line with social distancing guidelines from 15th June. The government requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building and site open to the public. This document provides a template risk assessment, with links to the relevant advice notes. It relates to opening up church and cathedral buildings to clergy and members of the public entering for individual private prayer. As well as offering guidance on best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for individual private prayer or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context.

Future versions of this document will be produced when small services such as weddings and funerals with limited numbers are allowed and then for different forms of public worship.

A risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers forms part of an updated document giving advice on access for these groups. This can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches).

**Risk assessment template**

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| **Church: St Michael the Archangel, Kirkby Malham** | **Date completed: 13/6/20** | **Review date:**  |

| **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. | Entry by Main Door. Signs needed. These to include reminders about social distancing and use of hand sanitiser. | EE | 18/6/20EE |
| A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. | An example can be [found here](https://www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/lone-working.pdf). Lone working policy is in Safeguarding handbook. |  | Completed by CR when Safeguarding folder prepared. |
| Buildings have been aired before use. | Completed as for use by Incumbent. |  | 30/6/20MD |
| Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.  | Completed as for use by Incumbent. | MD/EE/SBSB will clean. | 18/6/20SB |
| Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.  | See [Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-organisations-on-supplying-safe-water-supplies?utm_source=a85cd421-5f76-4767-95f7-da69aa76fe3d&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)  | Sink in West End to be flushed | Water run for 5 minutes and toilets flushed. 4/6/20 EEWest end sink flushed 18/6/20 EE |
| Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. | Heating not be needed until September at earliest. Electricity never switched off. |  | No immediate action needed |
| Holy water stoups and the font are empty. | EE/MD |  | MD before 10/6/20 |
| **Preparation of the Church for individual prayer** | Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building. |  | EE/MD | EE/MD before 10/6/20 |
| 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**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.**Plan for church to be closed for >72 hrs between use as indicated below. This will enable cleaning to be minimized. | SB to clean | 18/6/20SB |
| 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 by main door, exit by Priest’s door.  | To be implemented each time the church is open for Individual prayer  |  |
| Where possible, doors and windows should be opened to improve ventilation. | Doors to be propped open during period of private prayer. | MD | 30/6/20 MD |
| Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets. | Needs to be done. | EE/ME | Cleared from Lady Chapel and south aisle 13/6/20 EE/ME |
| Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed. | None in Lady Chapel. Remove from south aisle. | EE/ME | Cushions removed EE 18/6/20 |
| 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.  | Use barrier tape to restrict access to main entrance area, south aisle and Lady Chapel. Chairs to be 2m apart in the Lady Chapel. Exit from church through Priest’s door in Lady Chapel. No access to toilets. Doors left open.7 places in Lady Chapel, 8 in the south aisle. | EE/ME | Seating and barriers arranged. 13/6/20 EE/ME |
| Determine placement of hand sanitiser available for visitors to use. | Register with [Parish Buying](https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/) for procurement options.Hand sanitiser on table by main door, and on small table by Priest’s door | EE/ME | On tables by entry and exit 13/6/20 EE/MESpare hand Sanitiser in cupboard in Vestry |
| Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing | Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions (link to be added when guidance is live). No significant changes need to be made |  | No action needed |
| Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing. | Notices required for people entering the Lady Chapel, and possible use of south aisle pews.  | EE | 18/6/20EE |
| Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. | Clear signs needed for pathway and exit with social distancing reminder when moving about the church. | EE/ME | Signs prepared 18/6/20 EE |
| Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. . No entry for people with Covid symptoms or in household where self isolating, reminders on social distancing, one way system, use of hand sanitisers, try to minimize the surfaces people touch. | Notices to be preparedWearing of face coverings is optional | EE | Signs prepared 18/6/20 EE |
| Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes | **Advice on** [**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.**Minimize touch points by having doors open. Need to get sanitiser spray. 72 hrgap between people entering church will minimize this requirement. | SB when cleaning.EE/MD when opening for private prayer |  |
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| Ensure that there is a supervisor available, who is neither vulnerable nor shielding, during the time the church is open. This is to ensure compliance with Gov. guidelines. | Provide seat for supervisor inside near main entrance. Provide appropriate PPE (surgical mask, eye shield and gloves) in case of having to attend someone who is ill. Supervisor must have a phone. In accordance with lone working policy, both doors must be open. Churchwarden to be called if numbers approach capacity of 15. More than one member of a household can sit together in the south aisle pews. After use, the Supervisor will either block off the pew or chair, or clean down with antiviral spray. | EE to provide PPE and antiviral spray SB to supervise, other people to be identified if SB not available | PPE, antiviral spray gloves and paper towels placed close to supervisor seat.18/6/20 EE |
| Action to be taken if someone falls ill. | If possible, anyone falling ill should be asked to go home.If person is too ill to go home, supervisor to call 999, and a keyholder to help manage the attendees.If the ill person shows any of the coronavirus symptoms, then all people should be asked to leave and the church closed. The church will then be isolated for 72 hours followed by appropriate cleaning. | Supervisor to take action if needed during opening times. |  |
| Provision for collections | A labelled box will be placed near the exit door for collections. After closing, the box will be removed to the Vestry and left for 72 hrs before the cash is handled and registered. There will be no gift aid envelopes. |  |  |
| Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. | Register with [Parish Buying](https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/) for procurement options.West End room will not be available. Paper towels are available in West end room. |  | Towel dispensers, paper towels and bins have been installed. Toilets will not be available for private prayer.Hand sanitisers have been sourced. |
| 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](https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/) for procurement options.No use of toilets. |  | Toilets are compliant. Antibacterial liquid soap has been obtained. EE before 10/6/20 |
| Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk of those responsible for removing them. | No waste receptacle will be in area for private prayer, people asked to take waste away. |  | No action needed. |
|  | Communication of opening arrangements. | Email/letter to be prepared and sent to all regular congregation giving information on what is available, and what is expected of individuals.Brief article to go in Parish magazine.People will be asked if possible to inform a churchwarden of their intended visit to help manage the access to limited spaces. People should bring own bibles and prayer books.This Risk assessment to be published on the church website. | Standing committee to review letters. |  |
|  | Review | After operation for 2 weeks, the arrangements will be reviewed and modified accordingly. Periodic review thereafter. |  |  |
| **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 cleaning. | Open church from on Wednesdays only alternating between 12 to 2 and 5 to 7pm. It was decided **Not** to open for private prayer on Sundays because of possible influx of sightseers from the general public. Opening on Wednesday will enable Services to be carried out on Sundays at the usual time when allowed. The church to be checked for cleanliness etc. between late on Saturday and noon on Sunday. Antiviral surface sanitiser obtained to be used with blue paper towel on rolls from the west end room. | EE/MD (keyholders) to ensure no-one enters church from noon Sunday before opening for private prayer. |  |
| If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. | 72 hr closure between use is planned | Hopefully not needed |  |
| Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements. | Minimal cleaning required with 72hr closure. | Check by keyholders |  |
| All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable). | Register with [Parish Buying](https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/) for procurement options. |  | Gloves purchased10/6/20 EE |
| Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. |  |  | Antiviral spray purchased 10/6/20 EE |
| Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. |  | Keyholders |  |
| Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. | Not needed until toilets are available |  |  |
| **Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms** | If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted. | 72 hr closures planned |  |  |
| If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. | [**Public Health England guidance** available here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings) |  |  |
| If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning. | Advice on[**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.** |  |  |