



Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Review of risks, policies, actions and measures to be taken to allow the partial re-opening of the church building for small scale activities

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Oakham Baptist Church Trustees

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COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT

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COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As lockdown restrictions begin to be lifted in England, the Trustees have considered the use of the church building, and the way that risks related to Covid-19 are to be managed in respect of anyone who enters the church building for any purpose.

The Trustees have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 to those who use the building. As a result, anyone who wishes to use the building for purposes that are currently permitted, and which the Trustees have agreed to in advance, will be expected to abide by this Risk Assessment without exception. If they feel that they cannot meet the requirements of this Risk Assessment, then they should not seek to use the building. Where the Trustees are not satisfied that someone will abide by the requirements of this Risk Assessment then they reserve to not permit them to use the building, as to do so would be an unacceptable RISK to others.

This Risk Assessment has been updated to reflect changes to Government guidance published on 31st July 2020, and the changes to the previous version are highlighted in *RED and italicised* to emphasise the changes.

1.1 OPENING FOR PRIVATE PRAYER & SERVICES

Churches in England were permitted to open for private prayer from 15th June provided that social distancing and other safety measures are in place, and for services and weddings (for not more than 30 guests) from 4th July.

1.1.1 Government guidance and HSE requirements

This Risk Assessment has been carried out in the context of the advice from HM Government – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government advice for places of worship. The advice was published *on various dates*:

- *on the 12th June relating mainly to opening of churches for private prayer;*
- *on the 29th June relating to the possibility of restarting forms of worship from 4th July;*
- *on the 31st July in respect of wearing face coverings in Places of Worship.*

This Risk Assessment, and the protocols, processes and guidance within it accords with the guidance provided by Government.

The Trustees note that failure to undertake a Covid-19 risk assessment could constitute a breach of existing Health & Safety legislation. Therefore, the Trustees will ensure that this Risk Assessment is made available to any potential users of the church building by the following means:

- Published on the church website (so that it is available to the public, as recommended by the Government guidance)
- Sent to church members via the Church Suite email system
- Printed copies to be available in the church



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- Provided to any activity organisers so that they can ensure anyone attending with them is appropriately briefed and aware of the risk assessment and its contents

The Trustees will also provide a copy of this Risk Assessment to all church keyholders, and ask them to confirm that they have read and understand the Risk Assessment and that they understand their obligation to comply with it to minimise the risks of Covid-19 to themselves and others. The list of current keyholders is included at Appendix A of this RA.

1.1.2 Decision regarding general re-opening of the church

The Trustees at Oakham Baptist have decided that the church WILL NOT be open for private prayers and will not open for services whilst complex social distancing requirements remain in place. This decision is based on the following reasons:

- the church does not have the resources to support events (services or prayers) that are open to anyone to attend;
- we do not have trained people on site to supervise such activity, and so the risks associated with unplanned visits to the church cannot be managed by the Trustees;
- the need to “deep clean” the church a very short time after a service, and certainly before anyone else used the building, would be problematic to procure and manage;
- the layout of our church building, with limited entrances, relatively narrow doorways, limited circulation spaces and poor visibility around the building means that it would be impossible to maintain social distancing for larger numbers of people to access the building.

Therefore, the Trustees have concluded that as this risk cannot be managed on site, it can only be managed by avoidance, and so the church will remain closed to unplanned and unannounced visits and services for the time being.

For clarity, the church may be able to be used for small meetings, for example, leadership meetings, but only with the prior approval of the Trustees and for a pre-allocated date and time.



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Availability of Church for limited activities

2.0 AVAILABILITY OF CHURCH FOR LIMITED ACTIVITIES

The Trustees have decided that the church can be used for specific, pre-authorised activities, so long as the requirements of this Risk Assessment are complied with in full by those authorised to use the building.

The use of the building will be limited such that there are never more than ten people in the building at the same time. It is suggested that people should minimise being together in confined rooms at all, and if meeting for discussion should do so in the largest available space, whilst maintaining social distancing as a minimum, and greater distances if possible.

Government guidance suggests that people should avoid being seated in a way that they are facing each other, and the Trustees consider that this will seriously curtail the type and nature of activities that could be safely undertaken in the church. Nevertheless, some small groups may decide that they can meet in such a way that they can avoid face to face configurations, or that, by using the whole of the church sanctuary for only ten people, they can do so at low risk with greater than the required level of social distancing.

The Trustees consider that it would be better, for the time being, for such groups to interact remotely, via digital communication, but note that it would be possible for small numbers to meet in the church whilst meeting social distancing requirements. However, users should then note that the Government guidance is clear that singing, shouting and raised voices constitute a greater risk in confined spaces, and so these activities are not allowed anywhere in the church.

Activity organisers should arrive ahead of time and arrange the room in advance of others arriving. They should make clear to attendees when they should arrive, and also provide instructions regarding the location of the activity within the building, and the means of access.

This is to ensure that the risk associated with maintaining social distancing can be complied with, especially in spaces such as toilets, doorways and passageways. The Trustees view is that limiting the number of people to a maximum of ten will allow people to give way to each other where necessary and so maintain social distancing.

The activities might include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Using office equipment in the church – the photocopier or computers for church purposes
- Using AV equipment for recording readings or sermons for use in recorded services – BUT SINGING and the use of Musical Instruments that need to be blown (flute, clarinet etc.) is not permitted by the guidelines
- Maintenance of the building and grounds

Use of the building will only be permitted by the Trustees authorised to have responsibility for the building – *Val George (Church Secretary)* or Tim Allen (Buildings Trustee), and they should be contacted in the first instance by phone or email to seek permission. Those wanting to use the building should provide the following information:

- The reason for use of the building
- The date and time when they expect to be on the premises



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- The names of those expected to use the building

Only the rear door, from the John Street car park, is to be used to access the church, and all other external doors must be kept locked at all times. Visitors should take extra care when approaching the church, or leaving, that other people may be seeking to use the doorway at that time. The Trustees have taken the view that limiting access and seeking pre-authorisation to enter the church should be sufficient to ensure that the chances of people meeting at the doorway are managed to a very small likelihood.

Although the Government guidance suggests that churches should consider adopting a one-way system, using separate entrances and exits, this seems better suited to larger places of worship. Without having the two doors staffed by trained personal when they are unlocked, it would not be feasible to operate this approach at OBC due to the fact that none of the doorways are inter-visible. This would make ensuring the capacity of building was not exceeded difficult, and would mean that common areas and passageways (such as to toilets) could become over-crowded and unmanageable in terms of social distancing.

Therefore, the Trustees have decided that it would be more feasible to ensure social distancing by limiting the capacity of the building. This is in line with the Government guidance, which suggests that churches should assess the realistic capacity of their buildings in terms of the entry and exit and circulation of people as well as simply the capacity of the sanctuary space.

2.1.1 Contractors and deliveries

It is not intended to allow church activities and work on the building to be undertaken at the same time. Therefore, if any work is commissioned the church will not be available to church family members for activities at all during that period. The Trustees will post information about periods when the church may not be available via ChurchSuite notifications.

Contractors will be told to keep the door locked when they are inside to ensure that they can work undisturbed, and place a notice on the outside of the door confirming that the church is closed and not accessible.

As there will not be a permanent presence at the church, during office hours or otherwise, no deliveries will be accepted at the church. Members of the church family should not direct deliveries to be undertaken to the church.

If post or small parcels have been delivered by the Royal Mail, they should be left on the table in the lobby near to the kitchen to allow the recipient to find and collect them. Periodically the building Trustees (*Val George* and Tim Allen) will clear these items and either distribute or otherwise deal with them.

The church “pigeon holes” for Trustees and others should NOT be used for any purpose, as these will not be monitored.

2.1.2 Inspections, Repairs and Maintenance

The Trustees may decide that there is a need to undertake property inspections, including quinquennial surveys, during the period of relative closure, and will therefore choose to close the



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building to wider church activities at that time. They will give notice in the same way that is proposed for Contractors work.

Those undertaking survey or inspection and routine maintenance work on the church will be expected to maintain appropriate social distancing and any other coronavirus mitigation measures that are necessary.

2.1.3 Informal Hirings

The BU have provided guidance that it might be possible in certain circumstances for hirings to take place, for activities that are now permitted at this stage of the Government's plan and in accordance with their social distancing and other guidance.

However, the Trustees have decided that, for the time being, no hiring of the building to third parties will be permitted.

This is because we cannot establish the competence of third parties in respect of their ability to abide by this risk assessment. It also limits the number of people that are likely to enter the church, which itself reduces the risk of infection.



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Protocols for use of the church building

3.0 PROTOCOLS FOR USE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

The following sections set out the way that those who use the church building will be expected to behave in order to minimise the risks of infection to themselves and those around them – including those who may use the building after them. *These behaviours must be followed by all attending the church to ensure that the building can be safely made available in accordance with the Government guidelines.*

If the Trustees become aware that users are not abiding by the requirements of the Risk Assessment, then particular users may be refused the opportunity to make use of the building. In extremis, the church would have to be closed again, but we hope that members of the church family will be responsible in maintaining its availability for everyone.

Each section sets out the potential risks associated with that topic, and then a narrative and instructions for use of the building. The risks are numbered sequentially.

3.1 WHO CAN USE THE BUILDING?

In line with the Government guidance, people who fall into any of the following categories are currently unable to enter buildings such as places of worship.

- Anyone who is symptomatic (as described in the Government guidance)
- Anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 in the preceding **TEN** days
- Anyone who is in a household with someone who fits into the above two categories, as they should be self-isolating at home for at least 14 days
- Anyone who is extremely clinically vulnerable or who is shielding

The Trustees would also encourage anyone over the age of seventy not to use the church building, as Government advice for those aged 70 and over continues to be that they should take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household. In the light of advice on 31st July that face coverings will be mandatory in church buildings from 8th August, the Trustees would advise particular caution by event organisers if anyone over seventy plans to attend a meeting of any kind in the church, as there does appear to be a correlation between people meeting in enclosed spaces and transmission of the virus.

The Trustees expect members of the church family to abide by this guidance, however compelling the case that might be made in respect of a particular individual, for the safety of them and others. The Trustees will not authorise the use of the building, or attendance, by any individual who falls into the categories outlined above. The risks of such people potentially becoming infected is greater in a confined space like the church, and so the Trustees view is that it would be unwise to allow them access to the church at this time.

The Government guidance suggests that children may attend places of worship, but special care should be taken. They should be closely supervised to ensure that they abide by social distancing requirements at all times. They should also be encouraged to wash their hands, in line with the



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guidance, on arrival, and before departure and at regular intervals if they are in the church for any length of time.

3.2 RECORDING WHO ENTERS PROPERTY

RISKS:

1. *Having too many people in the building to maintain social distancing*
2. *Not knowing who has used the building in case contact tracing is necessary*
3. *Exposing unknown people to risks – especially vulnerable people*

The church will be keeping a record of everyone who enters the building, along with dates and times. This will help reduce the risk of infection, for example, by letting a person accessing the premises know if anyone else is in the building, and how many people may be present. The records will be retained for a minimum of 21 days in line with Government guidance, but most likely for a longer period.

There will be a pro forma signing in form on the table in the lobby near to the kitchen. Everyone who enters and leaves must complete this form, including the time of arrival and departure, and their contact details for the purposes of Track and Trace, should this prove necessary. The form must be completed neatly and legibly so that the information is readily available for use if required. Sadly, entry to the building will not be permitted for anyone who declines to provide the requested contact information in case they need to be traced subsequently.

On arrival, if a new visitor finds that there are already ten people signed into the building, then the new visitor MUST NOT enter the building, irrespective of whether they have been authorised by the Trustees. They should immediately return to wait outside, at a suitable social distance from the doorway, until another person leaves, or re-arrange their visit for another occasion.

People authorised to visit may not in any circumstances permit unauthorised visitors into the church.

The record of visitors will be used if a person recorded to have had recent access to the church contracts COVID-19, so that prompt and appropriate measures can be taken. Where a person contracts symptoms or tests positive for Covid-19, whether they have symptoms or not, within FOURTEEN days of visiting the church they must inform one of the Trustees as soon as possible. In order to manage the risks of infection and cross-contamination, the Trustees will then take action as follows:

- Closing the church to all visitors, whether authorised or not, with immediate effect;
- Organising a “deep clean” of the church, in accordance with the cleaning guidelines set out in Appendix A below for a location where a suspected Covid-19 case has been detected.
- The church will be re-opened for limited purposes once *Val George* or Tim Allen have confirmed that the church had been deep cleaned.

3.3 SOCIAL DISTANCING

RISKS:

4. *Creating an environment where close contact with others cannot be avoided*
5. *Exposing people to potential infection without adequate protection*



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6. *Potential uncertainty about how people are expected to behave within the building*

Maintaining social distancing within Oakham Baptist Church will be especially challenging in the doorways and circulation spaces, and on the staircase. The church sanctuary itself, and the room at the back of the building and the large room at the back of the building upstairs are all capable of accommodating the ten people permitted in the building whilst maintaining social distancing.

The Trustees have noted that the Government has now announced that the 2m social distance can be reduced to 1m, but this is only in the case that the 2m distance cannot be maintained, *and other preventative measures* are in place (for example screens in restaurants and hairdressers). The Trustees are content that the cap on attendance at the church means that social distancing can be maintained at 2m distances throughout. Even in the circulation spaces, where people will be able to give way to each other, the greater distance is capable of being maintained.

Therefore, visitors should note *that the 2m social distancing* requirement applies to the entirety of the spaces inside the building.

Noting that maintaining social distancing in the doorways, circulation spaces and on the stairs will be impossible unless people are alert to stand back to let each other pass, the Trustees have capped the number of attenders in the building at any one time to TEN to seek to reduce the risk of these instances to a minimum.

Notwithstanding this, people will be expected to be alert to where they are in the building, be ready to give way to each other and step back to maintain social distancing as they move around the building. *The Trustees have decided to mark the 2m spacing on the floor at the entry point to the building (the rear door from the garden) and on the entry points to the main church building, in the vicinity of the disabled toilet (which remains open) and into the ground floor room at the back of the church as a reminder of the spacing that should be applied by anyone using the building.* The cap on people in the church is considered to provide enough leeway for people to maintain social distancing.

When using doorways and the staircase, where it may not be possible to see someone else approaching from the other direction, it may be appropriate for people to call out (without shouting) to ensure that they can maintain social distancing and give room to each other even when they cannot see each other.

The cap on the number of people who are able to be in the building will allow some internal doors, and perhaps the external door depending on circumstances (when people are arriving in a relatively defined period to meet together) to be propped open. This would reduce the risks associated with people touching door handles, and for people to meet each other unexpectedly at a doorway.

Although some of the internal doors are fire doors, keeping them open is considered acceptable in the context of a capped number of people being in the building. However, where fire doors are propped open, the upstairs of the building should not be used to mitigate the risk of the building being open downstairs.

3.4 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

RISKS:



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7. *Encouraging close interaction, in a confined space, without proper protection and equipment*
8. *Allowing people to enter the building without the equipment and materials to allow them to feel comfortable*
9. *Not being clear about the expectations on how people will interact, and hence risking inconsistent approaches to the way people interact*

There will be a supply of gloves and face masks available on the table in the lobby area outside the kitchen for the use of visitors who wish to use them. There will also be a foot-operated bin with a plastic bag inside that can be used to dispose of masks and gloves. A supply of hand sanitizer will be provided on the table for the use of visitors on arrival and departure.

As of the 8th August 2020 it will be a requirement of law that everyone inside a Place of Worship must wear a face covering. The Trustees recommend that anyone entering the building should wear a face covering with immediate effect in any case, to minimise any risks of transmission. Although some masks will be available inside the church, for use in emergencies (for example, if a face covering someone has becomes damaged), visitors to the church should not rely on these, for two reasons:

1. *Visitors to the church should already be wearing a face covering when they enter the building, and hence are not strictly able to safely enter to procure a mask that may be inside, and;*
2. *As the church is not staffed, there is a possibility that the supply of masks may run out before it can be replenished, and would not be sufficient to accommodate the requirements of all attendees.*

Therefore, activity organisers should ensure that all attendees are aware of the requirement to wear a face covering, and that each attendee brings their own to use whilst in the building.

It is not a requirement of the rules that gloves are worn in the church. Activity organisers should bear the following in mind when deciding if their activity should require attendees to wear gloves in addition to face coverings:

- The views and preferences of attendees
- Nature of activity

Face *coverings* and gloves are NOT a replacement for social distancing or regular handwashing, which remain the most important actions to prevent the spread of the virus.

3.5 INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

RISKS:

10. *People are uncertain what the rules for behavior are within the building, and so do not follow the correct procedures*
11. *People forget what processes they are supposed to follow*
12. *People wander around the church unnecessarily, increasing contact points beyond what is strictly necessary*

The Trustees consider that the best way to ensure that everyone who uses the building is informed about the guidance and complies with this risk assessment is to limit the use of the building to



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selected people and groups, who will be required to have read and confirmed their agreement to this assessment.

Activity organisers will be required to ensure that anyone attending the building is fully briefed on the way that the building is to be used and ensure compliance during their activity.

Copies of this Risk Assessment will be available within the church.

Social distancing guidance marks have been placed on the floor of the church, near to the available toilet and in the entrance ways to the church and back room. Visitors should respect these marks, and take note of the distances between people that they indicate when using other parts of the building that have not been marked.

Some small signs have also been put up around the lobby, church and back room giving general advice with regard to Covid-19 safety and expected behaviours. Activity organisers should familiarise themselves with these, and refer attendees to them as appropriate.

If the guidelines change, then the Trustees will update all those who have been or who are to use the building with the revised guidance. This is another reason why the register of users and the signing in / out sheet must be maintained and completed.

Depending on the usage of the *building that occurs, then the Trustees* will consider the need to put up additional posters and signage to emphasise the guidance contained in this risk assessment.

3.6 OTHER MATTERS

Various other issues are considered below that may be relevant to certain uses of the building – especially for prayer or worship in smaller groups.

3.6.1 The use of shared items

Any personal items that someone brings to the church to assist them in their activity – such as their own bible or tablet computer, may be brought to the church, but should not be shared with anyone else (apart from someone from the same household). It must stay in the possession of the person who brought it throughout, and they should take it away again at the end of the activity.

Personal items that have been left in the church will be dealt with where possible through quarantining them for a minimum of *72 hours*, or, if necessary, by destroying them.

Activity organisers could bring specific papers for distribution to attendees during the activity – but in this case individuals should take their copies home with them at the end, and the organizer should clear up any spare copies and *either dispose of them in the recycling bins in the garden behind the church or* take them home to dispose of them there.

3.6.2 Food and drink

Although the Government guidance implies that acts of communion could be contemplated by churches, the Trustees have decided that this should not take place in the church for the time being.



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If any food or drink is to be consumed at the church it is recommended that foodstuffs should be prewrapped, and capable of distribution in a way that avoids any contact with the food other than by the person who will eat it.

The kitchen should NOT be used, as it constitutes a small space where social distancing cannot be maintained. Therefore, if people visiting the church require crockery or cutlery as part of their activity they should be instructed to bring their own from home, and to take it home again afterwards.

3.6.3 The sluice room

The sluice room, which is mainly used by the cleaner at present, remains available, as it provides a very helpful location to manage any cleaning requirements, as hot water and cleaning materials are available there.

However – great care should be taken if this space is to be used, as it is in a confined part of the church, and is near to the external door. Therefore, if groups choose to use this room for cleaning, the activity organiser must ensure that it is only used strictly one person at a time, and that subsequent users wait at a clear social distance before they use the sluice.

Activity organisers must also ensure that, if used as part of activity, this area is thoroughly cleaned after use, in order to leave it safe for the cleaner or anyone else to use afterwards.

3.6.4 Singing, chanting and the use of musical instruments

The exhaling of breath with any force is considered to constitute a considerable risk, especially in confined spaces and buildings, and so, in line with the Government guidance, the following are not permitted at any time in the church:

- Singing
- Shouting
- raising voices and/or chanting
- playing music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting
- spoken responses during an activity that requires a raised voice
- playing of instruments that are blown into

This reduces the risks related to infection in environments where breath may not be able to dissipate, which applies even if social distancing is being observed or face coverings are used.

3.6.5 Weddings and other life cycle events

Wedding solemnisations are permitted to take place in churches – but not any aspects of the celebration or reception, and only for a maximum of thirty people. The Trustees would not wish to prevent a wedding taking place if this were to occur, but would plan and discuss the arrangements necessary in advance should such a request be made.



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3.6.6 Use of water

The use of immersion in water in religious ceremonies is not permitted by the Government guidelines, and so no baptisms will be allowed in church for the foreseeable future.

3.6.7 Cash donations

Cash offerings represent a significant risk of infection, as the money circulates widely and relatively quickly. Therefore, no cash transactions or donations will be permitted within the church building.



4.0 MANAGING AN OUTBREAK

It is hoped that there will not be an outbreak in Rutland, and especially that no-one who has been in the church will fall ill. But, sadly, this cannot be ruled out, and so the church must be ready to take action if an outbreak occurs – either in Rutland generally, or if someone who has been in the church falls ill or tests positive within **TEN** days of being there.

4.1 PEOPLE WHO HAVE SYMPTOMS

RISKS:

13. *The church becomes a transmission location for the infection, because it is not known that someone with the virus has been there*
14. *People who have been in the church with someone who is ill, or who becomes ill, do not have the opportunity to self-isolate*
15. *Those leading activities inadvertently invite someone to the building without knowing they are ill – and the invitee feels compelled or encouraged to attend*

The church should not be used by anyone who has any symptoms, or believes that they may have come into close contact with someone who is symptomatic or who has tested positive for Covid-19. It will be up to activity organisers to verify with their attendees that they comply with this requirement.

It is important that people who are symptomatic, or who have been tested positive or who know that they have been in contact with someone with the virus should NOT enter the church *premises* at all.

Where people are required to self-isolate under the Government restrictions they should comply with this guidance, and not attend the church under any circumstances.

Where a person who has attended any activity at the church, or been inside the building for any reason, becomes symptomatic or tests positive for Covid-19 within FOURTEEN days of being at the church, they must contact both the activity organiser, and one of the building Trustees – either *Val George* or Tim Allen to inform them that they have the virus. The Trustees will then take action as set out in this risk assessment to close and clean the church and to inform others who may be affected. The register of attenders will be used to inform the Government's "Track and Trace" organisation regarding those who may have been in contact with an affected person, and entry in the signing in sheet is deemed to provide consent that the church may use such personal information and pass it on to the Authorities when requested to do so.

Where an activity organiser becomes aware that someone who visited the church with them has become sick or tested positive, they must immediately inform all other people who attended with them, and who may have been in close contact with the infected person. They should also tell *Val George* or Tim Allen as soon as practicable.

The register of attenders will be used to contact all those who were at the church at the time, and anyone who has been in the church subsequently, prior to it having been closed by the Trustees. The



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Managing an Outbreak

Trustees will recommend to other attenders that they should self-isolate for at least fourteen days, but would ultimately expect them to comply with the Government guidance at the time.

Where the Trustees are made aware that a member of the wider church family has become ill or tested positive for the Covid-19 virus, they will take reasonable steps to ensure that activity organisers are aware so that they can ensure that they don't invite these people to the church. The Trustees hope that all members of the church family will be responsible, and will let them know if they become infected, and that they would not seek to visit the church in these circumstances anyway.

4.2 VISITOR HYGIENE

RISKS:

16. *People do not arrive at the church prepared for the hygiene protocols that are in operation, but enter anyway*
17. *The use of toilets creates an environment where people cannot maintain social distancing*

The church will provide supplies of PPE, and hand sanitiser close to the door, in the lobby area near to the kitchen for the use of those visiting the church for any purpose. There will also be a foot-operated, lidded bin with a plastic bag inside for the disposal of masks, gloves and anything else that may have been used for cleaning or protection that people want to leave.

In addition, there will be an adequate supply of hot water in the toilet for handwashing. The toilet will have handwashing facilities that provide running water, soap and paper towels and a reminder to wash regularly for 20 seconds.

The church does not have any hot air hand dryers, so this is not a risk for us.

Boxes of tissues will be provided at various points throughout the building for the use of visitors. Anyone using a tissue should either take it home for disposal, or place it in the foot-operated bin. Tissues should not be placed in open bins or containers.

The church will feature signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique – reminding those in the building to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues and to avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. These will be updated and renewed regularly to ensure that they remain eye-catching and feature the latest guidance and advice.

4.2.1 Toilets

The male and female toilets at the church are configured in such a way that it would be difficult to maintain social distancing whilst using them. The common spaces inside are not sufficiently large to allow people to remain two metres apart when using the wash-hand basins or accessing the dryers and disposal bins.

Therefore, the male and female toilets will be *taken* out of use for the foreseeable future. *Ideally they would be physically locked to ensure that they are not used mistakenly, but for the time being, due to the limited numbers of people using the building, they will simply be signed as out of use, and the building trustees will keep the situation under review.* This will also reduce the cleaning burden as the toilets will not be accessible to anyone.



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Managing an Outbreak

The disabled toilet and changing area will remain available for use by all attendees. The limited toilet capacity at the church is a further reason to limit the number of people in the building, as this allows a manageable situation to be created.

If people seek to access the toilet when it is already in use, then they should either come back later, or step far enough away from the door to allow whoever is inside to emerge whilst maintaining the 2m social distancing.

4.3 LOCAL AREA LOCKDOWN

If an outbreak means that the Government, or local authority, impose a lockdown that includes the church building, then it will be closed with immediate effect. The re-opening of the church will be at the determination of the Trustees when they are confident that it is safe for people to use the church. This may not coincide with the lifting of the local lockdown, and may happen later.

If an outbreak occurs nearby, or in such a way that the Trustees consider that the risks associated with the use of the church building are increased, then they may well choose to close the church to users at that time. Decisions on this regard will be based on both the proximity and severity of any outbreak, but also the extent to which the church has been used to date (on the basis that greater usage would increase the interactions of people and so increase the risk of the church becoming a transmission location).

The Trustees will not expect to make any exceptions to the use of the church if they have determined that it should be closed again in accordance with this risk assessment.



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5.0 CLEANING PROTOCOLS

The church employs a cleaner, who will be trained to ensure that they are able to meet the particular requirements of the church during this period. They will follow the guidance set out below, and also will initiate the “deep clean” regime should this become necessary after an infection, or suspected infection, has been detected in the church.

However – there is also an obligation on the users of the building to clean up after themselves, and to ensure that the environment remains as safe as possible for those that come after them. Therefore, all users of the building will be expected to familiarize themselves with the cleaning protocols and to ensure that they are carried out whenever they have used the building.

Activity organisers will be especially responsible to ensure that their groups properly clean up after their activity, and that the last person to leave ensures that all the necessary cleaning has been completed.

5.1 CHURCH SET UP

The church will be cleared of clutter before it is made available for use again – this recognizes that it is easier to keep the building clean if there are fewer things that people can touch or use, or that they have to wipe or clean around. This means that books, AV equipment and the like will be taken away or locked out of use.

Users of the building should minimise contact as much as possible within church, and only touch items that are essential to their use of the building.

Users of the building should not leave anything in church that they have brought with them – whatever they bring they should remove at the end of the session.

For the time being, no-one will be based in the church to work (Minister, Systems Administrator and Children’s Worker), but instead will continue to work from home. This will mean that office equipment will be little used, and so will create less of a risk of people touching common surfaces – if these pieces of equipment are used, they should be cleaned IMMEDIATELY after use, by the person that used them. Antibacterial wipes will be provided near to larger pieces of equipment for this purpose.

5.2 “CLEAN AS YOU GO” APPROACH

The Trustees expect that everyone using the church will adopt a “clean as you go” approach, to minimise risks to everyone, and to reduce the cleaning burden that rests with the church cleaner.

If surfaces are left untidy or dirty after use, then the register of people in the building will be used to ascertain who has not followed the cleaning protocols. The Trustees reserve the right to prevent further use of the building by any individual or group who do not abide by the “clean as you go” approach and hence who have increased the risk to themselves and others.

Antibacterial wipes will be made available at a number of locations throughout the building for people to use to wipe down hard surfaces – door handles, chairs, light switches (with care) and so on. These should be wiped regularly, and always at the end of any meeting or session within the building.



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Common areas should be wiped down in the same way – toilet door handles which may have been used, external handles and switches and touch-points in common areas. If people have been upstairs then the bannisters should be wiped from top to bottom.

Those undertaking the wipe down should wear the gloves provided, and ensure that they and any wipes are disposed of correctly in the foot-operated, lidded bins provided.

On leaving the building, a pair of gloves and a wipe should be used to wipe the outside of the door handle as it is closed. These can be disposed of in the outside waste bin next to the path.

Care should be taken when opening and closing the gate, as this is more difficult to keep clean.

Kitchen items should not be used in any circumstances.

Smaller items that may have been handled (scissors, pens etc), and which are to remain in the church should be cleaned by the user immediately after use. If **water-resistant**, they should be washed in hot, soapy water and then immediately dried with paper towels and returned to the storage cupboards or drawers from which they were taken. **Water sensitive items should be thoroughly, but carefully, wiped with antibacterial wipes.** Under no circumstances should any handled item that remains in church be left either dirty, or left to dry on a surface.

Antibacterial wipes will be available in the toilets, and users should wipe down any surfaces that they have touched (including toilet seats, door handles, taps, bins and dispensers) after they have made use of the facilities. There will be a lidded, foot-operated bin in the toilet marked for the disposal of antibacterial wipes. This bin should not be used for any other material apart from wipes, gloves and tissues.

5.2.1 Bodily fluids

Where there is a spillage of bodily fluids (even including small quantities when someone has sneezed or coughed) it should be taken extremely seriously. In the normal course of events this would be cleaned up immediately by those who are there, but in the current circumstances extra care is needed.

Bodily fluids are the most likely transmission medium, and therefore, appropriate PPE should be used in cleaning them up. Gloves, mask and ideally an apron should be worn whilst cleaning these materials. Any wipes or clothes used should be separately bagged, with the PPE equipment that was worn during the clean-up, and then put in the lidded, foot-operated bins. This means that these cleaning materials will be double-bagged – once after use, and then within the bag lining the bin.

The area affected must be cleaned with soapy water and disinfectant, following the protocol set out in Appendix B below.

5.3 THE ROLE OF THE CLEANER

The cleaner will clean the church at very regular intervals, on a more rigorous and frequent basis than previously.



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The cleaner will clean the church thoroughly every week, and undertake a deep clean every month. If the church is used more frequently than the occasional use envisaged by the Trustees at present, then the Trustees may instruct the cleaner to increase the cleaning regime, and this may mean that the use of the church by groups and individuals has to become more restricted if the availability of the cleaner dictates. The Trustees will update this Risk Assessment should this be the case.

The cleaner will also undertake a deep clean in the event that there is an occurrence of a Covid-19 infection or suspected infection at the church, or after any further period of lockdown (whether this was imposed as a result of Government, local authority or the Trustees decision to close the church). The Trustees may decide to supplement the current cleaner with other professional deep clean services after an infection event if they deem that the current cleaner is unable to cope.



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Appendix A LIST OF CHURCH KEYHOLDERS

Wendy Allen

Sue Bamber

Colleen Brett

Dick Brett

Alison Brett

Lotty Brown

David Clark

John Donald

Gwen Fordham

Valerie George

Rhoda Gibson

Martin Gordon-Kerr

Neil Ingram

Suzanne Johnson

Eileen Jones

Ebenezer Kang'ombe

Jo Kirk

Julie Leefe

Esther Lester

Peter Mancey

Diana Masters

Ralph Nelson-Tucker

Neil Orgee

Michael Seccombe

David Stanbridge

Joy Steele

Catherine Steele

Kevin Thomson

Steve Want

Jacob Wells

Kerry Wilkinson

Aimee Willars



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Appendix B DEEP CLEANING PROTOCOLS TO BE APPLIED IN THE CHURCH

The following guidelines should be used when anyone is involved in cleaning in the church after an infected person, or someone who is suspected of being infected, has been into the building.

For clarity, these guidelines are to be used by the cleaner employed by the church and anyone who takes on the role of cleaning the church after an infection, or suspected infection event.

Published guidance based on experience of new coronaviruses (SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV) has been used to inform this guidance. The risk of infection depends on many factors, including:

- the type of surfaces contaminated
- the amount of virus shed from the individual
- the time the individual spent in the setting
- the time since the individual was last in the setting

The infection risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) following contamination of the environment decreases over time. It is not yet clear at what point there is no risk. However, studies of other viruses in the same family suggest that, in most circumstances, the risk is likely to be reduced significantly after 72 hours.

A.1 PRINCIPLES OF CLEANING AFTER AN INFECTION EVENT

The approach to cleaning after an event should be based around the following principles:

- Cleaning the affected area or areas with normal household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
- PPE should be used by anyone involved in cleaning in these circumstances. They should wear disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning. These should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours before being thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished.
- Prior to commencing cleaner, the cleaner should ensure that the means to securely dispose of PPE equipment used in the cleaning, and clothes and other materials, is readily to hand to prevent the risk of further contamination after cleaning has been completed.
- The first step in sanitizing the area should be using a disposable cloth, to first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water. Then the same surfaces should be disinfected with suitable cleaning products that are generally available.
- Particular attention should be paid to any and all frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as bathrooms, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells and door handles.
- If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with coronavirus (COVID-19), then the cleaner MUST use protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron.
- Cleaners should be careful to wash their hands before and after cleaning, and when replacing any areas of PPE or leaving the affected area where they are working.
- Hands should be washed regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, and always after removing gloves, aprons and other protection used while cleaning. The removal of PPE should be done with great care to ensure that the cleaner does not come into contact with potentially infected surfaces of PPE equipment.



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A.2 ASSESSING THE EXTENT OF CLEANING AFTER THE INFECTED PERSON HAS LEFT THE AREA

Anyone not required to undertake the cleaning operation who remains in the building should be asked to leave the church immediately, and told that they should follow Government guidelines regarding self-isolating if they have had any contact with the infected person whilst in the church.

PPE should be worn as soon as it is suspected that there has been an infected person or potentially infected person in the church. The minimum PPE to be worn for cleaning an area where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) may have been is disposable gloves and an apron. Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.

If a risk assessment of the setting indicates that a higher level of virus may be present (for example, where there is visible contamination with body fluids), then the need for additional PPE to protect the cleaner's eyes, mouth and nose will come into effect. Cleaning should not be undertaken without these precautions in place. The local Public Health England (PHE) Health Protection Team (HPT) should be consulted in the event that further advice or guidance is required.

Non-healthcare workers may need to be trained in the correct use of a surgical mask if there is a need to come closer to people's potentially infectious respiratory droplets (i.e. within 2 metres). This circumstance is not expected to arise in church, but cleaners should bear this guidance in mind, and seek training if they consider that this would be beneficial in cleaning within the church.

A.3 CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned thoroughly as normal.

All surfaces that a symptomatic or infected person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, including:

- objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as bathrooms, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells

Cleaners should either use disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads to clean all hard surfaces, floors, chairs, door handles and sanitary fittings. If disposable cleaning products are not available, then any clothes used should be new and unused, and they should be disposed of in the same way as disposable products immediately when cleaning is completed.

The disinfectant used to clean the area should comprise one of the following options:

- use either a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine
or
- a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants
or



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- if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses

The cleaner should avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.

When items cannot be cleaned using detergents or laundered in accordance with the guidance below, for example, upholstered furniture or curtains, then through steam cleaning should be used. Rooms where these items are located should also be quarantined and not entered or used again for a minimum of 72 hours.

Any items that are heavily contaminated with body fluids and cannot be cleaned by washing will need to be disposed of. They will need to be wrapped and sealed, and taken to a suitable disposal site. The Trustees must be informed in the event that this is necessary, as the local authority will need to be involved in the disposal of such items safely.

A.4 LAUNDRY

Where items can safely be washed, then they should be laundered in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Use the hottest water setting and thoroughly dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an unwell person can be washed with other people's items, so long as the guidance with regard to temperature and manufacturers guidelines are followed.

If possibly infected laundry items are to be taken out of the church to be washed, then they must be double-bagged and sealed before being taken outside. Whoever undertakes the laundering should be told that the materials in the bag may be infected, and should use PPE whilst unloading the laundry in accordance with this risk assessment.

Laundry should not be shaken, wrung out, or otherwise handled prior to washing, to minimise the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.

Clean and disinfect anything used for transporting laundry with your usual products, in line with the cleaning guidance above.

A.5 WASTE

Waste from possible cases and cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues) should be dealt with as follows:

1. It should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full.
2. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied.
3. It should be put in a suitable and secure place and marked for storage until the individual's test results are known.

Waste should be stored safely and kept away from children. It should not be put in any communal waste or publicly accessible areas until negative test results are known, or the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours. Thereafter:

- if the individual tests negative, the waste can be put in with the normal waste
- if the individual tests positive, then the waste must be stored in a quarantined place for at least 72 hours and can then be put in with the normal waste

