

Last updated: March 2021 jb

St Andrews

- CULLOMPTON -

Reopening St Andrew's

Risk assessment for reopening of church for Wednesday and Sunday services

Please note this document should be read in conjunction with previous risk assessment written for opening the church for private prayer

[Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public](#)

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
13 th January 2021	8	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

This update has been reviewed in the light of new guidance from the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and is intended for use from 13th January onwards. Risk assessments carried out using an earlier template may still be valid but should be reviewed regularly and checked against this latest version of the risk assessment.

England entered a third national lockdown from 5th January 2021. This replaced the three-tier system introduced in late 2020 and later augmented with a fourth tier. During the lockdown, churches are permitted to open for communal worship, private prayer and a number of essential purposes where they can be carried out in a Covid-safe way. There may be specific local regulations recommended by local authorities, that place additional restrictions on certain activities. Before completing this risk assessment you can see what is permitted by checking [this document](#). Guidance on opening cathedral and church buildings to the public during COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

The [government guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](#) requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building and site open to the public. This document provides 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 any permitted purposes. As well as offering guidance on best practice, the template is also intended to help parishes make a decision on whether to open for any or all of these purposes or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. Specific guidance linking to advice on the lockdown period is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

The government acknowledges that places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership for many individuals, and in bringing communities and generations together. However, their communal nature also makes them places that are particularly vulnerable to the spread of the virus. In drawing up a risk assessment for your church, or revising it in the light of the current situation, you will need to think carefully whether the public benefits you achieve by opening are justified by the risks involved, however much you can mitigate them. This judgement will vary depending on the location and nature of your church building and the make up of your congregation and visitor profile. You will need to discuss the factors with your governing body, whether the PCC or chapter. Remember that this is your collective choice whether to open: while our churches are permitted by government to open, they are not obliged to do so. If you decide not to open, you can continue to have a valuable role serving the community in a number of ways. Guidance on this can be found on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Future versions of this document will be produced when there is any substantive change to the guidance on the safe use of places of worship.

Separate risk assessments for outdoor worship and for access by contractors and construction workers are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](#).

Carrying out a risk assessment

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:

- ~~Private prayer~~
- Public worship
- Livestreaming or recording services
- Funerals, weddings, baptisms
- ~~Formal childcare or where part of a school~~
- ~~Essential voluntary and public services~~
- ~~Use as a vaccination centre~~
- ~~Other exempted activities such as support groups~~
- ~~Opening for visitors/tourists, including opening shops and cafes~~

2. Consider the hazards:

- Transmission of COVID-19
- Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual

Read the guidance and think about how it relates specifically to your church. What constraints are there? Consider how people will arrive at the church, including if they will need to wait or queue outside; how people will enter and leave the church; circulation inside: from the entrance to the worship space and out again; circulation within the worship space; also access to other areas including the toilet(s).

3. Consider who might be harmed and how. Read the guidance and think about how the activities you are planning will affect different groups of people. The risks are not different for larger churches as long as they are properly managed, but having any significant numbers of people coming through your building makes the possible impact – in particular someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – higher than in smaller venues with fewer people. Consider your particular circumstances and adapt the checklist below as appropriate. Gathered congregations and major services may attract people from far afield, which is likely to add to the risk profile and go against the general guidance that people should stay local for any activities outside the home. Consider whether you need to consult your wider membership and users.

4. Using the risk assessment checklist below as a template:

- add in mitigations for any risks that are particular to your circumstances that may not be on the list;
- record what you need to do for each activity to go ahead safely;
- consider any equipment you need and any temporary changes you might need to make to the church;
- check back against your list of activities to confirm which ones can go ahead and when.

Risk assessment template

Church: St Andrew's Church
Assessor's name: Jo Bailey & Amelia Jerreat
Date completed: January - March 2021
Review date: Ongoing as circumstances change

JB – Jo Bailey Church Warden
 AJ – Amelia Jerreat Church Warden
 EH – Ed Hobbs – Vicar
 BC – Beth Collier – Ops director

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 .	Small team only for live streaming. No one is clinically extremely vulnerable and all happy to do it. Teams offered option of opting out Jan 2021. EH/BC	JB Jan 2021
	Identify one point of entry to the church building,	Entrance & exit main door –	Team	JB Jan 2021

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	and a separate exit if possible.	so few people that pinch point is avoided		
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	An example can be found here .	No one working alone	JB Jan 2021
	Consider staggered arrival times if multiple people from different households are coming into the building.	Team queue outside 2 m apart as needed and check in.		JB Jan 2021
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Have been empty since March 2020		JB Jan 2021
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Equipment installed by professional team API	API	JB Sept 2020
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands	Hand sanitiser at entrances exits, band area, PA desk	JB	JB Sept 2020
	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 . Building cleaned by a professional cleaner weekly. Church not open for private prayer so 72 hours between services. Team members clean high risk/high usage areas	Teams Cleaner	JB Sept 2020
	Read the CofE guide on face coverings and produce or download signage or other relevant materials to	Advice on face coverings can be found here .	Teams	JB Sept 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	indicate compliance with the law and requiring these for all except those exempt.	All team wear face coverings apart from when singing/speaking		
	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	Band use iPads. Each person has own mic to avoid sharing	Band PA team	JB Sept 2020
	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 .	Signage at two places on entry. All team sign in with church suite as well	JB Jan 2021
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.	PCC decision not to open for public or private worship in Jan 2021. In March 2021 with numbers of cases dropping & vaccine roll out going well in area, decision to reopen on Wednesdays & Sundays later in months but not for private prayer as this increases risk (cleaning, unknown people in church)	PCC	JB March 2021
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements	Website and social media all up to date with church	Office team/EH	JB March 2021

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	for using the church are compatible.	decisions.		
	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.	All considered	PCC	JB March 2021
	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.	Live streaming gives those who are vulnerable option to be part of church but stay at home. Announced at Sunday services	EH	EH March 2021
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Booking system in place. Wednesdays: Church suite via website & paper/phone booking Sundays: Church suite via website & Phone booking	Office team	BC March 2021
	Communicate with nearby churches to ensure offered provisions are complementary.	EH on the local COVID group who look at community as a whole	EH	EH Ongoing
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes	Confirm that all steps (above) for access for livestreaming/broadcast have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Confirmed		JB 2021
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as	Information clearly displayed on church door, through live stream services, website &	Production team, JB ongoing	Production team, JB ongoing

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Risk: Getting or spreading coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.	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).	social media		
	Update your website to remind people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 to stay at home as much as possible and observe social distancing guidance, and either strongly discourage them from attending church in person during this time or indicate a time for them to attend for individual devotions.			
	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 . JB read guidance. Professional weekly cleaner. Team clean high risk areas/high usage as needed	Cleaner Teams	JB March 2021
	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 . All team and congregation must wear a face covering unless exempt by law or leading service. Signage at entrance of church	Individuals Steward Team Service leader	Ongoing JB 2021
	Choose one point of entry into the church to	Entrance – all worshippers	Service leader,	JB Sept 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	manage flow of people and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit.	enter via main door (bar those who use disabled access). Exit – worshippers will exit via disabled access. EH/ leader will direct worshippers to leave a row at a time, keeping a 2m distance at all time. Stewards to manage this.	steward teams	Reviewed March 2021
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	One way system from car park. Stewards in car park directing people and managing flow of people. Markers show 2m distance on path. Steward outside ensuring people queue 2m apart. Door opener allows one bubble into foyer, no others allowed in until they have checked in and moved on to seating seating stewards	Steward team	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	Make any temporary arrangements for managing the approaches to the entry points and any parking areas to ensure social distancing can be observed (taking into account any consequential risks arising from changes to circulation).			
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Main doors opens, disabled exit open. Building is large with high ceiling	Steward team	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	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 .	Gas engineer	BC Oct 2020

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets unless they are absolutely essential and participants cannot bring their own. Hardcopy literature should be quarantined for at least 48 hours between use.	Heating services autumn 2020 No books used on Sundays. Hymn books and Bibles removed. Wednesdays: Gloves used to place red liturgy book in the pews in advance, not used for 72 hours before or after the service	Wed steward team	JB Sept 2020, reviewed March 2021
	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	All removed before reopening in Sept 2020	JB and teams	JB Sept 2020, reviewed March 2021
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces.	Pew cushions placed on seats to allow more comfort. (govt guidance that soft furnishings are less likely to pass on virus). If worshippers are concerned, bring own cushion.	JB	JB Sept 2020, reviewed March 2021
	Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas.	Children’s area taped off with no entry sign	JB	JB Sept 2020 reviewed March 2021
	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).	No worshippers to leave seats or be in aisles other than when being seated and leaving.	JB/AJ	JB Sept 2020 Review March 2021

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>Clergy/designated team will distribute bread only for communion. Clergy/dt to walk down centre of each aisle, wearing a visor. Clergy /dt (wearing gloves) will release wafers into the worshipper’s hand only, in such a way to avoid any contact between them and those receiving it. If accidental contact does occur, both people should cleanse their hands immediately.</p> <p>Peace can be said but no worshippers to touch each other.</p>		
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Two pews closed off for every one pew open.	Office team Steward team	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	One way system in church. White tape and stickers placed on floor to mark out flow of people. Entrance & exit managed by stewards and clergy announce that people leave church pew by pew to main distancing.	Steward team	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	Limit access to places were the public does not need	Altar area, coffee area and		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	go, maybe with a temporary cordon is needed.	space behind rood screen taped off to limit public access during services		
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Hand sanitiser placed at front door, ramp entrance and at top of steps along with wipes and tissues. Gloves also available	JB/AJ Office team	JB Sept Review Mar 2021. All hygiene items in place
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions . Temporary faculty in place for accessible ramp March 2021 No other permissions required, areas taped off, temp tape on floor, chairs moved to block of areas.	AJ	AJ March 2021
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Signs in place on outside of door, inner doors and on tables with hygiene items.	Office team	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Church cleaned weekly. High risk surfaces cleaned when locking and unlocking & after	Cleaner & service teams	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Check that hand washing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	the Wednesday service. Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. Hygiene materials checked at each unlocking/locking and topped up as necessary.	Service teams	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	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. One isolated toilet available for congregation, one in , one out, users must follow one way system to reach it. Toilet cleaned before and after Sundays services, hand sanitiser and wipes available. Hand towels, soap etc. provided by centre staff, checked daily. Bin in toilet	Centre staff	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Pedal bin (no need to touch with hand) provided at each hygiene station. Emptied at end of each session.	Steward team Cleaner	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021
Use of the church for baptisms, weddings, funerals and commemorative services	Consider the specific guidance in place for those activities and assess the additional controls and limits on attendance in place.	Advice on baptisms can be found here . Advice on weddings can be found here (scroll down to Can weddings go ahead?).	EH Funerals, weddings and baptism will only go ahead	JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
		<p>Advice on funerals can be found here.</p> <p>The government’s advice on commemorative events can be found here.</p>	<p>in line with govt guidance.</p> <p>After a wedding/funeral verger will clean high risk areas. Verger will seat congregation 2m apart.</p>	
<p>Use of the church for permitted activities other than private prayer or worship</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>Church not open for private prayer or community activities. Centre used for these – contact JB for separate risk assessments.</p>	<p>JB Jan - March 2021</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 need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from</p>	<p>Please read previous risk assessment written for opening the church for</p>	<p>Cleaner Steward teams</p>	<p>JB Sept 2020 Reviewed March 2021</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>	surfaces.	private prayer - June 2020		
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Cleaning ongoing by professional cleaner during lockdown.		
	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.	High risk/high usage cleaning undertaken as needed after live streaming/services by steward team. Services over 48 hours apart and on Sundays pews staggered so that no one sits on a pew already used.		
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.	Surfaces kept clear		
	Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets deemed essential for services should be quarantined for 48 hours after use.	Red liturgy books placed in pews, removed afterwards and not used for over 48 hours		
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Gloves available at entrance		
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Cleaning materials provided by cleaner or office team/JB. Stored under drawers and in cleaning area.		
Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Steward team/cleaner empties bin using gloves after	Steward team/cleaner		

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	each service	empties bin using gloves after each service	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.		If occurrence happens SLT to make timely decisions about opening/closure of church, cleaning and how to contact and protect those potentially impacted.	JB/AJ and Senior leadership team
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Public Health England guidance available here.		
	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.		