

Risk assessment for opening church building for public worship

Church: St John the Baptist, Rowlands Castle

Date: 24 July 2020

Review: 1 month, or any sooner change of practice

NB: This document addresses only specific risks arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Risk	Action(s)	Comments
Safe Capacity of church building	Incumbent to assess how many can safely be seated at 2 metre distance. Chairs to be spaced at 2 metres. Household groups may sit together.	We are asking worshippers to advise us of their intention to attend worship so that we can ensure seating is spaced appropriately for the congregation present.
Clinically extremely vulnerable	Should be advised of the risks of attending public worship, a decision to do so is theirs alone.	Advice on letter to be sent before attending worship.
Transmission of virus from hands to surfaces.	Hand sanitiser provided at entrance, with signs directing use.	All who attend worship must use sanitiser on entrance. Steward to ensure compliance.
Congestion at doorway preventing social distancing.	One-way system not possible for entry and exit, church doors to be left open and signs asking people to take care on entry and exit. Posters reminding of 2 metre social distancing.	There is space to queue outside if necessary, letter to those attending explaining what to expect. Marshal to manage queue outside.
Failure of visitors to observe social distancing.	Signs at entrance. Chairs spaced at 2m distance apart. Monitoring by clergy, church wardens and other volunteers.	Instructions to be given at the beginning of the service.
Transmission of virus from surfaces.	Surfaces to be cleaned after the service. Some areas of building taped or blocked off to prevent public access, including chancel and baptistry. Doors open during public access to prevent need to use handles. Hymn books, prayer books, leaflets and kneelers to be removed.	CofE advice is that non-routine cleaning is not required once the building has been closed for 72 hours.
Virus present in atmosphere.	Two doors (North and South) open at all times during public worship to allow airflow.	High ceiling is mitigating factor.
Transmission of virus caused by non-public access by ministers for prayer.	Chancel kept as 'working' liturgical space with no public access. All ministers informed of normal opening times.	

Known exposure of building to someone with (or soon developing) Covid-19 symptoms.	Building to be completely closed to all access for 72 hours and then cleaned before re-opening to public.	Symptomatic individuals should be self-isolating and therefore not in building. Signage to ask those with symptoms not to enter.
Contamination of water system due to stagnation from previous lack of use.	There is no water in this church.	
Transmission of virus from service sheets.	Hand washing before printing, folding and stapling service sheets. Service sheets will be placed on chairs before the start of public worship and be taken away by the congregation after the service.	
Sharing the peace	No physical contact or moving from seat during the sharing of the peace.	
Holy Communion - Consecration	Bread to be consumed by the congregation to be covered during the eucharistic prayer in a ciborium. Individual communion wafers only. Hands sanitised before preparing the altar. Wine to be consumed by the president only. President to prepare altar only. No offertory procession.	
Holy Communion – Distribution Risk of transmission from altar rail and president’s hands.	Hands sanitised after applying mask and before distribution. Communicants to sanitise hands before receiving communion. Standing distribution only so that contact with the altar rail is not made. President to avoid contact with the hands of worshipper receiving communion. Worshippers to receive only the bread (suspension of the Common Cup). Communion is distributed in silence with no words. No physical contact for blessing those who do not receive communion.	Instructions will be given before distribution of communion and in the letter before attending worship. If any contact is made between president and communicant’s hands both should sanitise hands immediately.
Cleaning of communion vessels	Vessels to be cleaned by the president.	
Reserved Sacrament	The president places the consecrated bread in the vessel for reservation. It should not be consumed for 72 hours by anyone other than the president.	
Transmission of virus through airborne particles.	CofE and Government strongly advise face mask to be worn during public worship.	Email to all attending worship, posted on Social Media, and websites.
Transmission when removing face masks to receive communion.	Hands to be sanitised before and after removing face mask.	Instructions to be given at start of service.