

Risk Assessment for Opening Saint Martin’s Church to the Public

Version Control

Issue Date	Version Number	Issued by
22 nd May 2020	1	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
8 th June 2020	2	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
12 th June 2020	3	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group
1st July 2020	4	The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group

Churches and cathedrals have been legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer from 13th June. House of Bishops guidance provided for churches to open for funerals from 15th June. Public worship, with measures in place for social distancing, are allowed from 4th July. Other activities, except for a few still prohibited by law, may also take place in churches, subject to the government guidance in place for the relevant sector.

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, it 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. You should read the advice on re-opening buildings and the guidance on public worship before completing this assessment. Both are available 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.

A separate risk assessment relating to contractors and construction workers is available on the Church of England Coronavirus pages.

Carrying out a risk assessment

- Agree what activities you are planning for:
 - Private prayer (clergy only)
 - Livestreaming services (clergy only)
 - Private prayer (general public)
 - Public worship
 - Rites of passage services
 - Opening for visitors and tourists
- Consider the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19
 - Hazards arising from the temporary closure of the church
 - Hazards arising from now using the church in a different way

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).

- 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 so long as they are properly managed, but having more people coming through your building makes the possible impact – for example of 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.
- 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

Saint Martin's Church	Assessment carried out by Rev'd. Father Victor Bullock & Rev'd. Father Ian Thomas	Completed on 2nd July 2020	Review will take place on Saturday 11th July & 18th July 2020
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Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.	One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible	One Entrance point only on first arrival. But handle sanitised.	Fr. V. Bullock & Fr. I. Thomas	
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Church will remain closed outside of Worship hours. Lone workers have to inform Vicar of presence in building		
	Buildings have been aired before use.	Porch and North Doors to be opened to ventilate building	Frs. Bullock & Thomas	
	Check for animal waste and general cleanliness.	Gardner to check and dispose	Rebecca Gokman	
	Ensure water systems are flushed through before use.		Frs. Bullock & Thomas	

	Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary.	Checked	Fr. Bullock	
	Holy water stoups and the font are empty.	Done	Fr. Bullock	
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Iphone used and charged at home. Placement of phone / camera in front of pillar, taped off from congregation	Fr. Bullock	
Deciding whether to open to the public	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical arrangements for using the church are compatible.	No other neighbouring businesses and venues open on Sunday morning	Fr. Bullock	
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media.	Craig Gress, Webmaster notified and info on Website	Fr. Bullock	
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	Not applicable – 2 Services and no more than 34 in church	Fr. Bullock	
	If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain ‘Good to Go’ standard mark	Not applicable		

Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes, including worship and tourism	Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.		Frs. Bullock & Thomas	
	Review CoFE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below).	Done. Cleaning will take place of areas where people have sat with Virallogical spray	Sidespersons / Greeters Supervised by clergy	
	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.	Porch Door to be used by congregation to enter. North Door for Exit (excepting less able who cannot manage steps. Greeters to supervise their exit through Porch Door)	Sidespersons / Greeters on duty	
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside).	Do not envision this a problem but will be supervised by Greeters	Sidespersons / Greeters on duty	
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Will be done	Sidespersons / Greeters on duty	
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Action Group	

	Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on)	Done		
	Consider if pew cushions/ kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance	Kneelers will be sprayed and wiped after Masses conclude	Sidespersons / Greeters on duty	
	Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Action Group	
	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).	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas	
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing.	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas	
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements.	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas	
	Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed.	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas	

	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. Placement of Face Masks.	Hand Sanitiser Station by Entrance. Greeters will see to compliance. Hand sanitisers located in Sanctuary for Clergy & Servers. In each Toilet and in Vestry Hall	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Greeters	
	The use of Face Masks	Face Masks will be worn within the Church and Vestry Hall, before, during and after Worship. Notice of this given out in advance. Spare disposable masks available for those who 'forget'	Frs. Bullock, Thomas & the PCC	
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing	Seating clearly marked out. No changes needed to layout of building	Frs. Bullock & Thomas	
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc.	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Action Group	
	Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Action Group	
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Done but weekly checks to be made by clergy and cleaner	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Action Group & Rebecca Gokmen	

	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	As immediately above		
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Done	Frs. Bullock & Thomas & Action Group & Rebecca Gokmen	
	If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days	Register Sheets prepared for each Sunday / Holy Day to be filled in at Entrance & put in File	Greeters	
	Give due notice of the resumption of use of the building to neighbours, congregation and wider community, ensuring that visitors and worshippers will know what to expect when they come.	Notice given to neighbours. Visitors and Worshippers informed of requirements via Website, What's App Group Page, Church Facebook Page and on Notice Board	Fr. Bullock and Craig Guess Web site Co-ordinator	
Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)	If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces.	Acknowledged		

	If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating.	Greeters will clean chairs and Kneelers	Greeters	
	Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements.	Done	Action Group	
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Done	Greeters	
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Done	Fr. Victor	
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	To be carried out by Cleaner, Rebecca Gokmen	Rebecca Gokmen	
	Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Weekly Removal	Rebecca Gokmen	
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.	This will be complied with and enforced	Fr. Victor & PCC	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	As above		

	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	This will be complied with and enforced	Action Group	
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