# Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public

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| **Church:**  Tynemouth, St Paul’s Cullercoats | **Assessor’s name:**  The Revd John Vilaseca, Vicar | **Date completed:**  07/01/21 | **Review date:**  14/01/21 |

| **Area of Focus** | **Controls required** | **Additional information** | **Action by whom?** | **Completed – date and name** |
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| **Access to church buildings for clergy for purposes of private prayer and/or livestreaming**  [General advice on accessing church buildings can be found here.](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches) | One point of entry to the church building clearly identified and separate from public entry if possible | Church main entrance (north door) | The Vicar | 01/07/20  JV |
| A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. | St Pauls’ PCC lone policy has been consulted. | The Vicar | 01/05/20  JV |
| Buildings have been aired before use. |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20  Ongoing  JV |
| Check for animal waste and general cleanliness. |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20  JV |
| Ensure water systems are flushed through before use. |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20  JV |
| Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary. |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20  JV |
| Holy water stoups and the font are empty. |  | The Vicar | March 2020  JV |
| Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20  JV |
| **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. |  | N/A | N/A |
| Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media. |  | Parish Social Media Group | 02/07/20 |
| Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services | Overflow services when we cannot accommodate everyone will be held at the Parish Centre as and when required. | Standing Committee | 02/07/20  SC |
| If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain ‘Good to Go’ standard mark. [Apply here](https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/). | For now, we are not opening the church building to tourists. | N/A | N/A |
|  | Include details on requirements such as bringing a face covering in communications. | It will be added to the Parish notices and our newsletter. | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 08/08/20  JV/AL/SG |
| **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. |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20  JV |
| Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the ‘cleaning’ section of this risk assessment (below). | Advice on[**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.** | Standing Committee | 02/07/20  SC |
| 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. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 08/08/20  JV/AL/SG |
| Choose one point of entry into the church to manage flow of people and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times. Where possible use a different exit. | **Entry:** Church main entrance (North door).  **Exit:** South door through the Parish Hall entrance. | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 02/07/20  JV/AL/SG |
| **Track & Trace**: Following Government guidance we keep details of everyone who enters our premises for 21 days for Track and Trace. At the church entrance QR codes are displayed for people to check in with the app ‘Test & Trace’. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 26/09/20  JV/AL/SG |
| Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside). | Traffic cons will be placed outside to mark 2 meters apart for queuing on the pathway from the Lych Gate. | Churchwardens | 02/07/20  AL/SG |
| Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation. |  | The Vicar | 01/07/20 Ongoing  JV |
| Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets |  | The Vicar | 28/05/20  JV |
| Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on) |  | The Vicar | 11/06/20  JV |
| Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance | All kneelers have been stored. | The Vicar | 11/06/20  JV |
| Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas | Children’s resources have been stored. | The Vicar | 11/06/20  JV |
| 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). |  | The Vicar | 11/06/20  JV |
| Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing. |  | The Vicar | 11/06/20  JV |
| Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. |  | The Vicar | 13/06/20  JV |
| Floor markings every 2 meters to ensure social distancing in entry, exit and aisles. |  | The Vicar | 07/01/21  JV |
| Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed. |  | The Vicar | 11/06/20  JV |
| Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. |  | The Vicar | 13/06/20  JV |
| Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing | Consult [advice on gaining temporary permissions](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/20647). | Standing Committee | 02/07/20  SC |
| Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 13/06/20  JV/AL/SG |
| Ensure high-risk surfaces and touch points have been wiped with appropriate sanitiser spray or disposable wipes | Advice on[**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.** | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 01/07/20  Ongoing  JV/AL/SG |
| Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 01/07/20  Ongoing  JV/AL/SG |
| Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 01/07/20  Ongoing  JV/AL/SG |
| Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 01/07/20  Ongoing  JV/AL/SG |
| If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day’s record for 21 days |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 02/07/20  JV/AL/SG |
| 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. |  | Standing Committee | 07/01/21  SC |
| **Groups using the church building for meetings** | Every group using the church building:  - will follow the Government guidelines and the indications of our Risk Assessment and will produce their own COVID-19 risk assessment.  - will be responsible for thoroughly clean the frequently touched surfaces after their activity.  - will be responsible for keeping contact details for Track & Trace.  - will be responsible for controlling the flow of people and social distancing.  - will make sure everyone who enters the premises wears face covering. | **Support groups** formally organised can meet with a maximum of **15 participants.**  Groups will bring their own cleaning products and hand sanitiser. | The Vicar &  Group Leaders | 24/09/20 Ongoing |
| **Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)**  Advice on[**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.** | If the church building has been closed for 72 hours between periods of being open, then there is no need for extra cleaning to remove the virus from surfaces. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | Ongoing |
| If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | Ongoing |
| Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements. |  | Churchwardens | 02/07/20  AL/SG |
| All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable). |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 13/06/20  JV/AL/SG |
| Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. |  | Standing Committee | 08/06/20  Ongoing |
| Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. | Ann Laing  Sandra Graham | Churchwardens | 13/06/20  AL/SG |
| Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. | Every time the church is opened for worship and/or private prayer. | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 13/06/20  JV/AL/SG |
| **Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms** | If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted. |  | The Vicar & Churchwardens | Ongoing |
| If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. | [**Public Health England guidance** available here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings) | The Vicar & Churchwardens | Ongoing |
| If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning. | Advice on[**cleaning church buildings can be found here**](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v1.pdf)**.** | The Vicar & Churchwardens | Ongoing |
| **Managing Social distancing and the use of face covering** | Remind people that they must comply with social distancing and use the one-way system in place. Control flow of people coming in and out of our building.  The use of face covering in our premises is mandatory. | Signs displayed in church with relevant safety guidelines. | The Vicar & Churchwardens | 24/09/20  Ongoing  JV/AL/SG |
| **Restrictions on Capacity** | Limits for communal worship should be decided based on church building capacity, observing social distancing.  Pre-booking system in place for every Sunday service. | Maximum capacity: 2**5 people**  All services are live streamed and recorded online. | The Vicar | 07/01/21  JV |
| **National Lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19** (in place from 5th January 2021) | People can attend places of worship for a service. However, people must not mingle with anyone outside of their household or support bubble. You should maintain strict social distancing at all times. People must not meet with friends and family in church, unless they are part of their household or support bubble. | During the National Lockdown: extra safety measures in place below to be reviewed weekly by Standing Committee. | Standing Committee | 07/01/21  Ongoing |
| **Coronavirus cases are rising rapidly across the country due to the new variant of the virus** | * There will be no other ​opening times​, whether for public worship or private prayer. The 8am Sunday service, and opening for private prayer are cancelled. Only the 10am Sunday Eucharist will take place in a physical form. The service will be a shorter service than usual. * Reduced attendance: max. 25 people by booking only. * Measured distance tapes are installed in church to ​help to maintain at least 2m distance. * People are asked to stay in their seat and do not go up to others to chat. * People will be asked to leave quickly and to maintain the 2m distance whilst doing so and not to chat to each other in near proximity around the church. * ​An external door will be open during the service to improve air flow. * Weekly Morning Prayer, ​Wednesday 10am Eucharist, and Morning Prayer on Saturday will be online. | The decision of having public worship on Sunday at 10 am. will be continually reviewed in line with the evidence and information coming from health departments and the government. | Standing Committee | 07/01/21  Ongoing |
| **Behaviours before and after service:** to prevent people frommingling with anyone outside of their household and maintain strict social distancing | * **Before the service**: two sides persons will be welcoming the worshipers, who have booked to attend worship on Sunday at 10 am. One will sign people in, the other will show the assigned seat. They will remind people not to move from their seat for the duration of the service. * **At the end of the service**: Once the service is ended, the celebrant will invite people to leave the church pew by pew. People will be asked to leave in an orderly manner, keeping 2 m apart and not stopping to chat to anyone on the way out. | This will be continually reviewed.  If these safety measures are not observed, Standing Committee might decide to move all worship online and cancel the service on Sunday at 10 am. | Standing Committee | 07/01/21  Ongoing |