

St Andrew's Chesterton: Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Public Worship

Date revised: 23 September 2020

Each stage of opening up to the public has involved clergy, staff and churchwardens reviewing our risk assessment using the proforma (an evolving one) provided by the Church of England. You will find accompanying this the latest version.

We read and follow all relevant government and Church of England guidelines and rules. (see <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches> for details). Diocesan mailings (from the Bishop of Huntingdon) always draw our attention to changes in these and we are confident that we have always been up-to-date in our reviews and implementation.

The measures taken currently include the following:

Cleaning

- We have been using professional cleaners to prepare the church for re-use and continue to use them to clean before and/or after weddings and funerals in particular.
- Staff meeting regularly reviews the use of the church and ensures that surfaces are always cleaned after use (or before the next use), including wiping all surfaces that may have been touched by individual visitors during the week.
- The north and central aisles are roped off during the week to avoid unnecessary touching and cleaning. If pews are to be used more than once in a 72 hour period then they are cleaned.
- Daily opening and closing is done by members of staff who have been briefed in what is required.

Sanitising

- All those entering and leaving the church (via the main entrance or the vestry door) are asked (by the signage) to sanitise their hands.

Signage

- There are visual reminders to keep social distance and lines on the ground in the porch and in the aisles where people come up for Communion.
- There are also reminders about face coverings (and disposable ones are available for those who have not brought their own).

Seating & social distancing

- Every other pew is roped off, allocated seats are given (for singles, couples and family/bubble groupings). Tape has been used to mark off these areas and a strict 2m rule is in force.
- When there is an 8am service and one later in the morning we change which pews are used in the south aisle (whilst still cleaning the tops of pews that may have been touched).
- Using TicketTailor for the larger services means that people can find their seats quickly; it also gives us a record of attendance for test & trace purposes.
- Departure from church is managed by sidespeople.

Vestries

- Access to the vestries is restricted. Only clergy and technicians have access to the clergy vestry on Sundays. Other members of staff may enter for essential reasons (access to safe, registers) during the week. Nick & Kathryn have their own radio microphones that they alone handle.
- Access to the choir vestry on Sundays is restricted to the clergy and technicians (when collecting equipment or passing through) and to the Director of Music and Rosalind: other members of the choir will enter and leave the church by the main door (see the music risk assessments.)
- Access to anyone else on other days is restricted to those who need to pass through the choir vestry in order to open and shut the church.

Services

- All sidespeople have been briefed for the current situation.
- No collections are taken; a plate is left at the back of church by a member of the clergy – who collects the plate at the end of the service and puts any money into the safe for a minimum of 72 hours before it is counted.
- Where service sheets are used they are placed in the seats before the service to avoid multiple hands touching them.
- The rules/guidelines of the Church of England concerning public worship (which reflect Government guidelines) are carefully followed in all matters. At present (21/9) that means that a small socially distanced choir can sing but there is no congregational singing (see separate music risk assessment).
- With regard to choir singing, we have taken measures to reduce the potential aerosol generation by (a) limiting number of singers to an absolute limit of 8 and usually 6 singers in total; (b) limiting duration of singing to approximately 10 minutes per service; (c) limiting volume and so extent of potential aerosol spread by appropriate music choice
- We have followed exactly the guidance on receiving Holy Communion. The celebrant follows rules that mean that (s)he never touches the bread received by the people without sanitising and does not speak over it without it (or his/her face) being covered. Communion is received in one kind only (the bread). Sanitisers are available for people before and after removing their masks and we invite people to remove their mask and consume after receiving from the priest and having moved away to a safe distance. We also use a plastic barrier (specially constructed by Peter Hilken) as an extra protection.
- We are now discouraging too much social interaction after the services but, without being unfriendly, encouraging people to depart without delaying unduly around the church entrance.