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| N.B. This document will be updated and contents may change as government guidance regarding places of worship has been published reflecting latest position |

On the 23 June 2020 government announced that places of worship may open for public services as well as private prayer at of 4 July, with social distancing and all the necessary risk mitigations. The government 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 church and cathedral buildings to members of the public entering for services and private prayer. As well as indicating best-practice, it is also intended to help parishes decide on whether to open for individual private prayer and services or not, based on their local circumstances, resources and context. This risk assessment is to be adapted to the circumstances of the parish,

Guidance and recommended risk control measures will be sourced directly from the GOV.UK website wherever possible. Control measures to be revised and updated when the latest government guidance is reviewed and published. **Diocesan guidelines** have also been issued for ease of reference reflecting the government directives and liturgical guidance.

**Face Coverings:** Government has advised that cloth face coverings (and not surgical masks) could be worn for reassurance by people in enclosed areas Churches do not need to supply face coverings for visitors. Clergy to wear face mask for distribution of communion.

**Children:** While children are unlikely to become very ill, they are capable of both being infected by the virus and of spreading it. Parents or guardians bringing children into a church should not be discouraged from doing so, but it will be important for parents to manage their children appropriately, particularly ensuring they touch as few surfaces as possible for their own safety.

**Vulnerable People:** It remains a person’s own choice to come to church to pray. Churches may wish to consider setting aside a section only for people who are more vulnerable to serious disease if infected, and clearly signposted as such, or otherwise having a designated time only for people who are more vulnerable and wish to pray privately.

**Completion of the risk assessment**

Places of worship are also workplaces and should therefore be aware of their responsibilities as employers under existing health and safety law. Places of worship have a duty of care to volunteers, to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

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| **Version Control** | | | | |
| Version 1 | 11/06/2019 | Checked by Director Estates | Checked by H&S Manager | Reviewed by COO |
| Version 2 | 02/07/2020 |  |  | Reviewed by COO |
|  | **27/07/2020** | **Fr D Adams** | **LGu** |  |

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| **Coronavirus Risk Assessment** | | | | | | | | |
| **Parish:** | | | **Date Assessed:** | | | | **Assessed by:** | |
| **Our Lady of Mercy & St Joseph, Lymington**  **St Francis, Milford on Sea**  **St Anne’s Brockenhurst** | | | **03/07/2020** | | | | **Fr David Adams/Linda Guilding** | |
| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Access to church buildings for clergy for the purposes of private prayer services and/or livestreaming** | | | **Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Lone Working | Clergy and staff | Lone Working Policy **NOTED** | | 5 | 2 | 10 | | Lone Working Policy |
| Legionella | All | Ensure that all taps, toilets and other water storage devices are run well to flush the systems before anyone uses them, especially if the church has not been in use for some time. **DONE**  **Toilets not in use yet.**  Holy water stoups and the font are empty. **DONE** | |  |
| Lapse of compliance certificates |  | Review Parish certificates for Gas safe, Electrical Inspections etc and instruct specialists where necessary **DONE** | | The checklist for reopening of buildings and cleaning provided by Ellis Whittham should be used |
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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Preparation of the church for individual prayer** | | | **Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Harm due to Legionella/  Gas/ electrical non-compliance | Clergy Parishioners  Visitors | Where church has not been reopened for some time Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building. **DONE**  Health and Safety walk-round to identify hazards, e.g. blocked exits etc **DONE**  Check emergency lighting and fire extinguishers. **DONE** | | 5 | 1 | 5 | | Weekly/monthly checks & annual service. |

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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services** | | | **Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Contact with  Coronavirus  leading to infection causing illness – by not maintaining social distancing | Clergy Parishioners  Visitors | Church plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, at the altar steps, including safe flow of visitors. Ideally 2m in all directions from each person.  **DONE**  Flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building and during services considered to maintain physical distancing requirements.  **DONE**  One point of entry into the church to manage flow of people and indicate this with notices, keeping emergency exits available at all times.  **DONE**  8th August Masks mandatory.  Maintain as much ventilation within the church space as possible; keep doors open to decrease transmission risk through touching and allow a flow of fresh air into the church. **DONE**  Diocesan guidance for services reviewed and implemented.  **ONGOING**  Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing **DONE**  Further mitigating actions include:  • Closing off intermediate pews  • Numbers within the buildings sufficiently reduced to assist in maintaining required social distances at all times. **DONE**  Each church is different. Basically 2 people to a pew - seated either end- x number of pews. Can’t give exact number as depends if there is a family from same household in a pew. Plan available for booking system. **ONGOING**  A minimum of 2 Stewards on duty at every Mass, Funeral, Wedding, Baptism, Confirmation, 1st Holy Communion & individual prayer.  Names & contact details taken and put on plan of church for every pew available for Test n Trace. People informed why their contact details are taken when booking & give agreement. Told details are retained securely for 21 days in case they are required, and then destroyed. Only with their agreement are details kept.  **ONGOING** | | 5 | 2 | 10 | | Temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing- moving of pews and kneelers. **DONE**  Because of above-limited number of seats. Booking system in place. Ring office to book place. Contact Tel. No taken for Track n Trace. GDPR rules apply **DONE**  Queueing system in operation to maintain 2m distance..  Maintained by Stewards**DONE**  Signage installed within the building to remind occupants to maintain two metre distance at all times. **DONE**  Weather permitting windows and main door open **DONE**  **Weddings and funerals limit 30 including clergy if social distancing will allow.**  Plan of each church available to view showing pews available. |

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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services** | | | **Ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by touching contaminated surfaces | Cleaners | **Church building closed for 72 hours between periods of being open, so there is no need for thorough cleaning.** ~~If opening more frequently cleaning to be scheduled in between services or occasions of private prayer~~  Cleaning rota established to cover opening arrangements. **DONE**  All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable and masks for toilet cleaning). **DONE**  Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. **DONE**  Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.  **FR DAVID ADAMS**  Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. **AFTER MASS** | | 5 | 2 | 10 | |  |

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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Responding to visitor falling ill potential coronavirus exposure** | | | **Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by touching contaminated surfaces | Clergy  Parishioner  Visitors  Cleaners | If a visitor presents with temperature and/or persistent cough, NHS 111 should be called for advice and the church should be vacated. **UNDERSTOOD**  The church building must then be closed for 72 hours with no access permitted. **UNDERSTOOD**  If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.  **UNDERSTOOD** | | 5 | 2 | 10 | | Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.  **UNDERSTOOD**  Names & Contact telephone numbers taken when booking**. DONE FOR EACH MASS TELEPHONE BOOKING. KEPT FOR 21 DAYS.**  All people present in the church must be instructed to self-isolate for [14 days](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/nhs-test-and-trace-if-youve-been-in-contact-with-a-person-who-has-coronavirus/).  **UNDERSTOOD** |

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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Preparation of the church for individual prayer and services** | | | **Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Exposure to Coronavirus leading to infection causing illness – by individual non-compliance with procedures | Stewards | At least three stewards present in the church throughout the time it is open for services and private prayer. **DONE**  Stewards to ensure that hand sanitisation occurs at entry and exit points, social distancing is maintained by people in the church and if a pre-determined capacity is reached people turned away. (Booking system in place) Families living in same household to be treated as one unit.  People with cold or flu-like symptoms should be asked not to enter.  **UNDERSTOOD & IN PRACTICE**  Stewards not from vulnerable or shielding group **DONE**  Stewards practice good hand hygiene through either regular hand washing and following guidance refraining from eating or drinking. **IN PRACTICE**  Restricted number of seats. Bookings made by telephone to ensure don’t go over set number of seats. Contact numbers for Test n Trace kept for 21 days**. DONE FOR EVERY MASS,**  **OLMSJ & ST FRANCIS**  Steward1 monitor queue & collect/check contact details.  Steward 2/3 ensures parishioners sanitize hands on entering and leaving church.  Steward 4 keeps parishioners at 2m apart when parishioners enter.  Steward 5 sees person to seat, starting from the front to back.  Stewards 4/5 let parishioners go pew by pew from back to front of church to ensure social distancing. This is also part of our fire drill.  **ST ANNE’S**  Steward 1- monitor queue & collect/check contact details.  Steward 2/3 ensures parishioners sanitize hands on entering and leaving church.  Steward 3- escorts parishioners to seat as per the booking plan.  **DONE FOR EVERY MASS**  **Communion:** St Francis, St Anne’s & OLMSJ- priest takes communion to the pews.  **ONGOING** | | 5 | 2 | 10 | | Training for stewards provided and documented. **DONE**  Register of stewards retained **DONE** |

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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Use of Candles** | | | **Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Fire |  | Votive candles not in use in either of the 3 churches. Candles on altar only.  **DONE** | | **1** | **1** | **GREEN** | |  |
| Burns as a result of lighting votive candles |
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| **Task/Activity:** | | | **Review Frequency:** | | | | **Reference:** | |
| **Communication** | | | **Daily to ensure assessment reflects latest government guidance** | | | | **COVID- 19 Risk Assessment** | |
| **Hazard/Risk** | **Persons at Risk** | **Controls in Place** | | **Severity**  **(1-5)** | **Likelihood**  **(1-5)** | **Risk/**  **Priority** | | **Additional Controls Required** |
| Lack of understanding/ compliance | Clergy  Stewards volunteers  Visitors | Risk assessment published on parish website **DONE**  Announcement in parish newsletters **DONE**  Announcements reflecting local situation the start of services IN **NEWSLETTER AND ON WEBSITE**  Training for volunteers and stewards  **DONE**  Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. **DONE- STEWARDS & ANNOUNCEMENT** | | 5 | 2 | 10 | | Briefing to participants for lifecycle events (e.g. baptisms, weddings and funerals) so that it is clear what to **expect AS AND WHEN**  Keeping up to date with changes to guidance **ONGOING** |

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| **Risk/Priority Indicator Key** |

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| **Severity/Consequence** | |
| **1.** | **Negligible** (delay only) |
| **2.** | **Slight** (minor injury / damage / interruption) |
| **3.** | **Moderate** (lost time injury, illness, damage, lost Parish) |
| **4.** | **High** (major injury / damage, lost time Parish interruption, disablement) |
| **5.** | **Very High** (fatality / Parish closure) |

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| **Likelihood** | |
| **1.** | **Improbable / very unlikely** |
| **2.** | **Unlikely** |
| **3.** | **Even chance / may happen** |
| **4.** | **Likely** |
| **5.** | **Almost certain / imminent** |

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| **Risk/Priority Indicator Matrix** | | | | | | |
| Likelihood | 5 | **5** | **10** | **15** | **20** | **25** |
| 4 | **4** | **8** | **12** | **16** | **20** |
| 3 | **3** | **6** | **9** | **12** | **15** |
| 2 | **2** | **4** | **6** | **8** | **10** |
| 1 | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|  | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Severity | | | | |

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| **Summary** | | **Suggested Timeframe** |
| **12-25** | **High** | **As soon as possible** |
| **6-11** | **Medium** | **Within the next three working days** |
| **1-10** | **Low** | **Whenever it is viable to do so** |

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| **Weekly Review Checklist** | | | |
| Action |  | Confirmed by | Comments |
| Parish have reviewed the updated guidance from the government and the Diocese |  | LGU |  |
| Reviewed and update the risk assessment to incorporate any changes to the guidance |  | LGU |  |
| Ensured sufficient stocks of cleaning material soap, hand sanitiser and disinfectant are available |  | LGU |  |
| Identified and implemented any new recommended control measures |  | LGU 04/07/2020 10/11/20 |  |
| As numbers increase within the offices as workplaces review the risk assessment and social distancing procedures |  | 10/1120 |  |
| Signage recommended has been in installed where necessary |  | LGU |  |
| Procedures arising from the reviewed risk assessment to be communicated to all employees |  | 1/11/20 |  |

**Useful Links:**

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/posters/COVID19-PPE-Safe-Mask-Wear-Poster.pdf>