



St Nicholas Church, Lincoln

Covid-19 Risk Management Policy

General

This document outlines the policy of St Nicholas Church for managing the risks associated with re-opening the church building while the Coronavirus pandemic continues to represent a risk to public health. It follows broad consultation within the Parish and the completion of a Risk Assessment using the national church's guidance template. That risk assessment follows as Appendix 1. All documentation will be kept under review as conditions develop and a comprehensive review will be undertaken at the beginning of September.

HM Government's guidance on re-opening places of worship for public worship¹ identifies the risk of Coronavirus transmission as being of two main kinds: *airborne transmission*; and *contacts with contaminated surfaces*. In this connection, we have identified four main principles of risk management:

- keeping people at a safe distance;
- minimising the number of objects and surfaces that more than one person touches;
- requiring those who enter the church to observe personal hygiene particularly with regard to their hands; and
- making sure that all objects and surfaces that anyone touches while in church are thoroughly cleaned.

These principles are reflected in the consideration of specific hazards below.

Airborne Transmission of Virus

What is the hazard?

Transmission of the virus via airborne droplets.

Who might be harmed and how?

Those attending church services or using the building for private, individual prayer could catch the virus by breathing in contaminated air.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>

How we are managing the risk

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Areas for seating clearly marked out into spaces separated by 2m: only every other pew open; only the nave, chancel and prayer chapel open; signage in place to indicate where people may and may not sit.

Numbers admitted limited to those who can be accommodated within these guidelines and capped at 40. Parish Administrators will keep a list, and Stewards will give priority to those who have registered. The complete list of attenders will be kept for 21 days, for contact tracing purposes should that be required. Worshippers will be notified of this policy, and this information will not be used for any other purpose.

LITURGICAL ADJUSTMENT

All risk management procedures will be announced verbally by the President at each act of worship.

President to follow national church guidelines on conduct of holy communion services². All other worship to remain online.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE PROTOCOLS

Whole building 'aired', dusted and hoovered weekly.

What further action do you need to take to control the risks?

SOCIAL DISTANCING

One way system to be set up for people receiving communion and returning to their seats via south aisle.

Stewards / churchwardens to supervise and enforce social distancing arrangements.

Who needs to carry out the action?

Vicar, stewards, churchwardens.

When is the action needed by?

For each act of public worship.

Other

We will not institute at present, but will keep under review:

- the question of whether to establish a queuing system outside the church; and
- whether to put spacer markings on the carpets and aisles within the church further to encourage social distancing;

² [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Coronavirus Advice on the Administration of Holy Communion v3.0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Coronavirus%20Advice%20on%20the%20Administration%20of%20Holy%20Communion%20v3.0.pdf)

Hazard – Contact with Contaminated Surfaces

What is the hazard?

Transmission of the virus from hand to surface to hand.

Who might be harmed and how?

Those attending church services could catch the virus by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching their faces.

What are you already doing to control the risks?

HAND WASHING AND SANITISATION

Staff and volunteers are requested to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after services. The vestry sink will be used by the President only. The servery sink can be used by other staff and volunteers.

For worshippers, hand sanitisation points have been established at the main entrance to the church, in the west end and at the entrance to the Sanctuary. Signage requests everyone sanitise their hands as they enter. 'Catch It; Bin It; Kill It' signage is widely displayed.

LITURGICAL ADJUSTMENT

No service books or hymn books to be handed out. Worshippers encouraged to download liturgy prior to service and bring with them on a tablet, phone or personal printout. A limited number of fresh printed liturgies available, to be taken away and either destroyed or re-used.

Distribution of communion to follow national church guidelines on conduct of holy communion services³.

Service to be as short as realistically possible, in accordance with HM Government and national church guidelines.

No singing or wind instruments. All music to be played through the sound system.

No refreshments to be served.

Only one toilet available, accessed via a one way system.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE PROTOCOLS

Areas where people have been cleaned down after each opening and/or service, following national church guidelines for cleaning⁴.

What further action do you need to take to control the risks?

As above.

³ [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Coronavirus Advice on the Administration of Holy Communion v3.0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Coronavirus%20Advice%20on%20the%20Administration%20of%20Holy%20Communion%20v3.0.pdf)

⁴ [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Keeping church buildings clean v.2.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Keeping%20church%20buildings%20clean%20v.2.pdf)

Who needs to carry out the action?

As above.

When is the action needed by?

For each act of public worship.

Those Who are Especially Vulnerable

Government and national church guidance does not prohibit those who are in especially vulnerable groups by virtue of their age and/or underlying health conditions from attending public worship. However, particular risk management is nonetheless indicated with regard to these groups. We are:

- advising people in these groups to continue to stay at home for the time being;
- continuing to provide online worship resources to support them spiritually;
- continuing to provide phone-based pastoral support;
- continuing to provide a small number with printed resources where internet access is not possible, taking due precautions with regard to the handling of these materials, which are one use only.

Additional Points

The church building has been sub-divided into zones, with specific permissions for entry to each zone and arrangements for airing and cleaning each zone. Appendix 2 lists these zones, with details of the arrangements for each that are in place.

Additional documents for staff and volunteers are being prepared providing detailed guidance on how to carry out their duties within the current risk management protocols.

Other documents prepared by the national church's Recovery Group are available via the Church of England website⁵.

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⁵ <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches - na>

Appendix 1

Note: This risk assessment relates **exclusively** to hazards due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It supplements the general risk assessment in place with regard to the church building that deals with other hazards.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Church: St Nicholas Church, Newport, Lincoln | Assessor's name: Rev'd Dr Hugh Jones (Vicar) | Date completed: 3 rd July 2020 | Review date: 1 st September 2020 or sooner |
|---|--|---|--|

| 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 | Centre Door only accessible by Vicar and nominated volunteers. | HWFJ | HWFJ March 2020 |
| | A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant. | An example can be found here . | HWFJ | HWFJ March 2020 |
| | Buildings aired weekly using the process described in Covid-19 Airing the Building Instructions St Nic Linc.docx | | HWFJ or nominated deputy | HWFJ from March 2020 onwards |
| | Check for animal waste and general cleanliness. | | HWFJ | HWFJ from March 2020 onwards |
| | Ensure water systems are flushed through weekly using the process described in Covid-19 Airing the Building Instructions St Nic Linc.docx | See Government Guidance for organisations on supplying safe water supplies | HWFJ or nominated deputy | HWFJ from March 2020 onwards |
| | Switch on and check electrical and heating systems if needed. Commission system checks as necessary. | | HWFJ | HWFJ from mid-June 2020 onwards |
| | Holy water stoups and the font are empty. | | HWFJ | HWFJ March 2020 |
| | Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard | | Not applicable | N/A |

| Area of Focus | Controls required | Additional information | Action by whom? | Completed – date and name |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| 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. | Not relevant | | |
| | Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media. | | HWFJ | HWFJ from March 2020 onwards |
| | Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services | Administrators | Administrators | From 6 th July onwards |
| | If opening to tourists consider applying for the Visit Britain 'Good to Go' standard mark | Apply here. | | |
| 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. | | HWFJ | HWFJ June 2020 |
| | 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. | JB | JB June 2020 onwards |
| | 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. | | HWFJ & Wardens | HWFJ from 6 th July onwards |
| | Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building (taking into account any consequential risks arising from people gathering outside). | To be implemented if necessary | HWFJ & Wardens | As necessary |
| | Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation. | Building aired weekly | HWFJ or nominated deputy | HWFJ from March 2020 onwards |
| | Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ March 2020 |
| | Cordon off or remove from public access any devotional objects or items (if they are liable to be touched or closely breathed on) | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |

| Area of Focus | Controls required | Additional information | Action by whom? | Completed – date and name |
|---------------|--|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| | Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance | Not required | | |
| | Remove or isolate children’s resources and play areas | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | 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). | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones to maintain distancing. | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building to maintain physical distancing requirements. | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | Limit access to places were the public does not need go, maybe with a temporary cordon in needed. | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building to facilitate social distancing | Consult advice on gaining temporary permissions . | N/A | N/A |
| | Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices e.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing etc. | | HWFJ & JEJ | HWFJ & JEJ June 2020 |
| | 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 . | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |

| Area of Focus | Controls required | Additional information | Action by whom? | Completed – date and name |
|---|---|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them. | | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | If possible, provide safe means for worshippers and visitors to record their name and contact details; retain each day's record for 21 days | | Administrators | From 6 th July onwards |
| | 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. | | HWFJ | HWFJ June 2020 onwards |
| 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. | 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. | | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | If 72-hour closure is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. | | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | Set up a cleaning rota to cover your opening arrangements. | | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable). | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned. | Register with Parish Buying for procurement options. | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| | Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site. | | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |

| Area of Focus | Controls required | Additional information | Action by whom? | Completed – date and name |
|--|---|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal. | | JB | JB & Team June 2020 onwards |
| Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms | If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted. | | HWFJ & nominated deputies | When necessary |
| | 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. | HWFJ & nominated deputies | When necessary |
| | 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. | HWFJ & nominated deputies | When necessary |

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Appendix 2: Zones of the Church Building

Zone 1 – Porch

Open

Sole point of entry for public

Doors opened by staff or volunteers to allow general entry without touching handles

Hand sanitiser available

Signage asking people to sanitise hands, and explaining other risk management protocols

Surfaces and handles cleaned after each opening

Whole zone was cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 2 – Tower

Closed to the public

Staff and volunteers may enter for cleaning purposes

Cleaning supplies stored here – accessible only to staff and volunteers

Toilets flushed and taps run weekly

Bins emptied and whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 3 – West End

Open

Signage indicating places set aside for private, individual prayer

Base for Stewards

Hand sanitiser available

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening, including books, leaflets, etc

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Surfaces wiped down after each opening



Zone 4 – South Aisle

Closed to the public except at Holy Communion as a ‘one-way’ system to return to seat

Staff and volunteers may enter for cleaning purposes

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening, including books, toys etc

Chairs stacked and unavailable

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 5a – Nave (south) AND Zone 5b – Nave (north)

Open

Two out of every three pews blocked off with signs

Spaces for seating marked clearly (two or three per pew)

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening, including gift aid envelopes etc

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Surfaces wiped down after each opening

North side only open for private prayer – south side opened for public worship, occasional offices etc

Zone 6 – North Aisle, Servery Area

Closed to the public

Staff and volunteers may enter for handwashing and cleaning purposes

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening, including food, coffee pots etc

Tables stacked and unavailable

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 7 – North Aisle, Seating Area

Closed to the public except as a ‘one-way’ system for exiting pews or returning from toilet

Staff and volunteers may enter for cleaning purposes

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening

Chairs stacked and unavailable

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening



Zone 8 – Prayer Chapel Area

Open to the public for private individual prayer only

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening, including printed prayer cards and votive candles

Signage including suggested prayers

Chairs arranged for social distancing

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 9 – Chancel

Closed to the public except as a route of access to the Sanctuary or Centre only

Staff and volunteers may enter for cleaning purposes

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 10 – Sanctuary

Open for Morning Prayer and to the public for private individual prayer only

Priest may enter for eucharist (with household member)

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening including hymn books, service leaflets etc

Hand sanitiser available

Signage including suggested prayers

Chairs layed out for social distancing

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 11 – Corridor from Sanctuary to Centre

Closed to the public except as a walk through area

Staff and volunteers may enter for cleaning purposes

Cleared of all unnecessary items prior to re-opening

Chairs stacked and unavailable

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 12 – Disabled Toilet in Centre

Open during public worship and occasional offices – access via ‘one way’ system

Staff and volunteers may enter for cleaning purposes

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening



Zone 13 – Sacristy and Vestry

Closed to the public

Eucharistic president may enter (with member of household)

Whole zone cleaned prior to re-opening

Zone 14 – St Nicholas Centre

Closed to the public except for access to toilet during public worship