**Version Control SMMW – St Mary Magdalene Westoning MK45 5JW JANUARY 2021**

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| 2nd December 2020  ***SMMW updated January 2021 as below*** | 7 | The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group |

***NOTE UPDATED RA [on separate page] following decision to close Church. Updated to include adherence to January 2021 UK Government legal measure to ‘Stay at Home’. Travel to Church for Worship permitted BUT ONLY TO LOCAL CHURCH WITHIN VILLAGE OR WITHIN IMMEDIATELY LOCALITY IN TOWN/CITY.***

*This update has been reviewed in the light of new guidance from the* [*Health and Safety Executive*](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/assets/docs/risk-assessment.pdf) *and is intended for use from 3rd December onwards. Risk assessments carried out using an earlier template may still be valid but should be reviewed regularly.*

From 3rd December, regardless of tier, churches are permitted to open for all purposes that can be carried out in a Covid-safe way. There may be specific local regulations, especially in tier 3 areas, that place additional restrictions on certain activities. There are varying limits on mixing of households that apply in different tiers. Before completing this risk assessment you can see what is permitted in your tier by checking [this document](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/22028).

The [government guidance for the safe use of places of worship during the pandemic](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-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, the template 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. Specific guidance linking to advice on the lockdown period is available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches).

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.

Separate risk assessments for outdoor worship and for access by contractors and construction workers are available on the [Church of England Coronavirus pages](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches).

**Carrying out a risk assessment**

1. Agree what activities you are planning for:
   * Private prayer
   * Public worship
   * Livestreaming or recording services
   * Funerals, weddings, baptisms
   * Formal childcare or where part of a school
   * Essential voluntary and public services
   * Other exempted activities such as support groups
   * Opening for visitors/tourists, including opening shops and cafes
2. Consider the hazards:
   * Transmission of COVID-19
   * Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual

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).

1. 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.
2. 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.