



St Mary's Church, Thorpe - Risk Assessment 19 July 2021

This update has been reviewed in the light of new guidance from the [Health and Safety Executive](#) and is intended for use from 19 July onwards. This Risk assessment has been prepared by:

Father Damian Stewart Harrison Miles – Incumbent. Consulted leadership: Churchwardens Barry Huxley & Pete Gruncell PCC via Workplace.

Date Completed: Saturday 17th July 2021. For immediate implementation and circulated to all PCC members via Workplace.

This is a review and update of the assessment carried out in May 2021.

Next review date: Monday 6th September 2021.

Notes:

From Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown sees a move away from government legislation towards individual responsibility with the legal limits on the number of people allowed to meet indoors and outdoors are removed, including all capacity limits in churches and other venues, as well as removal of the 1 meter+ social distancing rules. It will no longer be a legal requirement to wear a face covering, though the government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed settings to protect themselves and others. Whether a church encourages the use of face coverings will depend on consideration of a number of factors, including the size of the building and the numbers of those present at events/activities.

There will no longer be limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events (including receptions and celebrations).

There will also be no restrictions on choirs and music groups, whether amateur or professional, or on congregational singing.

There will no longer be restrictions on group sizes for attending communal worship. Although social distancing measures and face coverings are no longer required by law, the Incumbent may still make decisions to retain some or all of these measures if they believe doing so is important for safety in their building, or if they judge that it will help people to feel more secure in returning to worship and other uses of the building.

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 decide 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](#).

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](#).

SEATING INSIDE ST MARY'S CHURCH AT 19 JULY 2021 – 140 chairs in the nave returned to original position. Most floor tape markings removed. Cantor station retained / or chairs for a choir as appropriate – font area in front of the Benedict Chapel.

St Mary's Church Covid-secure Protocols – Updated 19 July 2021.

1. Arrival at Church

All advised to arrive in plenty of time - welcome team at least 30 minutes before a service is due to start. The maximum number permitted in Church at this time is 128 (including 120 congregation and 8 staff). NB: This is 1/3 less than our full capacity so people who choose can remain at least 1 chair apart from others, according to our risk assessment, following Church of England guidance. (Staff include: Clergy, Organist, Cantor, Welcome Team and Warden on duty)

2. Entry

The entrance to church remains via the Rutherwyke Room kitchen door. The welcomer keeps a record of the number of people who enter using the clicker.

3. Face Coverings

From 19 July the law on face coverings in England has been relaxed. However, in the interests of ongoing safety, all are encouraged to wear a face covering at worship inside St Mary's Church unless there is a health reason for not doing so. Face coverings are not required when meeting in the Rutherwyke Room with **both external doors open and latched back for ventilation**, or when working alone in the building. Additional PPE available for all including face visors in the kitchen and spare masks by the entrance door.

4. Hygiene

Upon entry (Rutherwyke Room Kitchen door) all are asked to go straight to the kitchen to wash hands with hot water and soap for 20 seconds and use the paper towels provided to dry hands (not kitchen roll). Hand gel is available as an alternative, particularly for larger occasions such as weddings, funerals and baptisms.

5. Test & Trace

All then enter the main hall (Rutherwyke Room) and sign-in on the sheet provided/clipboards or use the NHS Test & Trace app on a phone/other device. Posters are on display at all entry points and noticeboards throughout the site. This remains mandatory.

6. Service Sheets, Newsletter and Hymns

People collect a service booklet / newsletter with readings and hymn sheet / order of service (prepared before the service by the welcome on duty). The congregation are then directed up the Link into Church via the Chancel. The Link should be kept clear of all obstructions and the Link door remains locked until the next review.

7. Social distancing

The requirement to keep socially distant ends on 19 July. However, in the interests of safety in Church, the congregation are encouraged to use their initiative and sit apart. Those who wish to remain socially distanced can collect laminated “please don’t sit here” A4 labels to place on the chairs either side and directly behind them. If necessary, the Warden on Duty has the authority to ask someone to change seats. There is no longer a requirement to clean seats after use.

8. Singing in Church & Choirs

Singing is now permitted, although it is suggested that those singing wear a visor or face covering to help reduce the spray of particles. In addition, airflow will be maintained throughout the buildings with the Rutherwyke Room door onto the patio being left open and latched back throughout worship. Government guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions>

9. The Peace

The physical exchange of the peace may resume, but it is recommended people still don’t shake hands. All are asked to nod or bow to one another instead. The offertory procession (organised by the warden on duty) and collection (involving the welcome team) resume in the customary way – during the offertory hymn.

10. Communion – *in both kinds with the bread dipped into wine.*

The congregation are directed by a warden down the central aisle, where hand gel will be administered to each person before they receive. All should keep a face covering on. The consecrated elements (bread dipped in wine) will be placed into their hand – hands must not touch. All return to their chairs via the side aisles, where they can then remove their masks and consume. Due to the present rise in infections, congregational use of the Common Cup remains suspended until 06/09/21 review.

11. The Children's Corner

To be re-instated with quiet toys and books. Family Packs will continue to be produced, one per Family, usually 6 per week in place of shared resources until 6th September at the earliest.

12. Sunday 10am Café Church/Coffee & Chat

This resumes in the Rutherwyke Room and out on the new Patio. A clear pathway free of furniture must be left from the Kitchen Door to the Link / sign-in tables. Therefore, at this time it is suggested that no more than 3 tables with 4 chairs be set-up inside, the rest used for outdoors when the weather permits. The outdoor gazebo may still be used.

13. Live Streaming & Worship Times / changes

We are concerned that everyone remains safe and well. Some may still wish not to attend church when there are a good number of people present. Changes to services reflect our need to remain open but also safe, and to accommodate sudden changes in staff availability due to social isolation rules. Therefore:

There is no change to Sunday 8am.

Those who wish to participate in the 10am service from home, can do so via Facebook Live and our website:

<https://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/videos>

The fortnightly 11:30am Family Service will be live streamed to Facebook only.

During August, there will be no Sunday 7pm Compline in Church of Online.

The daily service by 10am is cancelled. Instead, all are encouraged to use the excellent resources provided centrally by the Church of England:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

All Festivals will be held at 10am or 7:30pm and Live Streamed to Facebook and uploaded to our website.

The Wednesday 10am Said Eucharist will no longer be filmed and will be conducted from the Lady Chapel.

14. Lettings & staff entry procedure

Lettings have now resumed. All entering the buildings are strongly encouraged to sign-in for Test & Trace purposes. Each group or organisation must sign the new lettings agreement and arrange payment direct to Thorpe PCC Bank Account, as well as provide details of their own insurance and risk assessment covering their activity. All letting forms must be returned via Mrs Mary Morris, St Mary's Church Administrator. If entering via the Church main door, use hand gel (dispenser is located beside door inside porch attached to white electrical cupboard) before signing in for Test & Trace. Remember to sign out again when leaving and locking up the church. At exit, or when in the building on your own,

ensure the main porch door is locked behind you – unless preparing for a service, when the free-standing sign should be placed outside, and the door left open as part of the necessary ventilation of the building.

15. Runnymede Foodbank

Support is needed more than ever. You may like to bring with your items for Runnymede Foodbank which can be left before services in the Rutherwyke Room. There is also a green open-top crate at the patio area (under the canopy/overhang) for donations which is checked regularly.

16. Car Parking

Members of St Mary's Thorpe Electoral Roll are encouraged to apply to The Administrator, Mrs Mary Morris for a Car Park permit to be used for the 10am or 11:30am Sunday Services (and other occasions when permitted and pre-arranged via the Churchwardens). Ideally, space in Church Approach and at the Vicarage should be made available for visitors and guests, and those who have special accessibility requirements, such as disabled badge holders. Those attending funerals, weddings and baptisms are asked to park away from the church and walk-in unless they have a specific need or are the immediate family involved, such as the principal mourners or baptism candidates/parents. A warden may need to be stationed in Church Approach / Vicarage Car Park to assist and, if necessary, send people away when the parking is full. High Vis jackets are available for this person. Red cones may be used to reserve a space of two for funeral cars.

17. Protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Not everyone is able to have the Covid-19 vaccinations on offer, and for others the vaccines can't boost their immune response. Therefore, some may need to take additional measures at this time to stay safe. It is therefore essential that we continue to live-stream the main Sunday 10am and festivals so that those who are still at home can be a part of the worshipping life of Thorpe community. Additional guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/19-july-guidance-on-protecting-people-who-are-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-from-covid-19>

18. Opening St Mary's for tourism - Heritage Visitor Attraction

We plan to be open over the weekend of August 28-30. We will need to follow government guidance on Events and Attractions. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/events-and-attractions>

Carrying out a risk assessment – Summary of what is considered at this time

1. This Risk Assessment covers use of St Mary's Church for the following activities as long as St Mary's Covid-secure protocols are followed:
 - Private prayer
 - Public Communal Worship (Eucharist / Mass / Holy Communion)
 - Livestreaming or recording services including School Collective Worship.
 - Funerals, weddings & baptisms
 - Voluntary and public services, such as Runnymede Foodbank, RELATE, Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum and TWRA
 - Other activities and groups must provide their own Risk Assessment.
2. Considered the hazards:
 - Transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses
 - Hazards arising from using the church in a different way to usual
 - General safety, trip and other hazards
 - Safe application of a one-way walking route around and through the buildings
 - Cleaning including weekly deep clean which continues.
 - Access to other areas including the toilet(s).
 - General Fire safety
3. We have considered who might be harmed and how and read the guidance and thought about how activities planned could affect different groups of people along with the risk of someone with COVID-19 coming into contact with others – by keeping our numbers below full capacity we have helped to reduce this risk.
4. 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.

Church: St Mary's, Thorpe (Post Covid Legal Restrictions)	Assessor's name: Vicar: Fr Damian Harrison-Miles - Incumbent (cc: Pete Gruncell & Barry Huxley)	Date completed: Monday 19-07-21	Review date: Monday 06-09-21
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If a green tick – action completed at re-opening of Church and still in place. ✓

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Access to church buildings for purposes of recording and/or livestreaming services (with no congregation present)	Consider if anyone attending in person or required for recording or broadcasting is clinically extremely vulnerable or has household members who are. Ensure that the people who need to attend the church building to enable the livestreaming or recording to take place are willing to do so and can do so safely.	Equipment regularly checked, cables taped down or secured and no trip hazards. Electrical inspection completed December 2020.	✓	✓
Risk: contracting or spreading the virus by not social distancing or by touching contaminated services	Identify one point of entry to the church building, and a separate exit if possible.	Staff enter via Church Porch door (necessary to unlock link) Main entrance Rutherwyke room kitchen door.	✓	✓
	A suitable lone working policy has been consulted if relevant.	Lone working policy is in place.	✓	✓
	Consider staggered arrival times	N/A	✓	✓
	Holy water stoups and the font	Holy Water stoup returned to Link and Main Porch. New signage required.	DHM	19/07/21
	Ensure safe use of equipment needed for livestreaming: avoid exceeding safe load on sockets, cables/tripod causing trip hazard	Completed and checked regularly.	✓	✓

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Provide adequate hand cleansing stations. Provide hand sanitiser for the occasions when people can't wash their hands.	Installed in March 2020 and checked every week & refilled.	✓	✓
	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	3 hours deep clean every Wednesday from 9am – 12noon including church and all surfaces.	Cleaner: Claire Loveridge. DHM	From: 06/01/21 Extended to: 06/09/21.
	Face Coverings - signage or other relevant materials to indicate compliance	Already on display	✓	✓
	Identify where you can reduce the contact of people with surfaces, e.g. by leaving open doors that are not fire doors, using electronic documents rather than paperwork.	Already in place and to continue until 06/09/21	✓	✓
	Ensure you have an NHS Track and Trace QR code available, with an alternative option for those who cannot use that system.	All completed forms after services are stored in the Sacristy behind the alarm.	✓	✓
Deciding whether to open to the public for private prayer, public worship and other permitted activities	Consider how the lockdown applies to the church and the worship or other activities envisaged. For gathered congregations or other activities drawing people from a wide area. (If returning to the tier system after September we will reconsider whether anybody attending would be likely to be travelling from a higher or lower tier).	Guidance included in this risk assessment and uploaded to workplaces for: PCC, Welcome Team & Liturgy Group. New laminated A4 sign available to be placed upon chairs to help with personal social distancing.	DHM Mary Morris to review use and print more as required.	19.07.21
	Discuss with nearby venues and businesses to ensure that the timing and practical	Ongoing consultation with Headmaster of TESIS, Bryan Nixon.	✓	✓

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	arrangements for using the church are compatible.	Also, Helen Southgate, Headteacher at Thorpe Primary School, and Runnymede BC.		
	Check if any clergy, staff or volunteers required for opening to the public fall into clinically extremely vulnerable categories or have members of their household who do, and ensure there are enough people safely able and willing to facilitate opening and cleaning the building.	All in this category advised to remain at home. Additional PPE available for all supporting or attending church. There may be new issues around self-isolation and individual services may need to be moved online should there be a lack of welcome staff or clergy available. 1 set of basic service materials stored at Vicarage so services can be relayed from there.	Barry Huxley, Pete Gruncell and DHM to review weekly	19/07/21
	Consider if a booking system is needed, whether for general access or for specific events/services	N/A. Wedding couples advised of new 120 limit. Appropriate mitigations in place.	DHM	19/07/21
	Reduce number of services for August 2021	No Sunday 7pm Compline	DHM	19/07/21
Preparation of the Church for access by members of the public for any permitted purposes Risk: Getting or spreading Coronavirus in common use high traffic areas such as corridors, toilet	Confirm that all steps (above) for access for livestreaming/broadcast have been carried out before anyone else accesses the building.	Potential for reduced availability of clergy staff team and service support – end to daily service uploaded by 10am.	DHM	19/07/21
	Update your website, A Church Near You, and any relevant social media with information for visitors. Communicate details on requirements such as bringing a face covering. Clearly state the limits on attendance for the tier in which the church is located (or provide a link to https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know).	Retain one-way walking route, entry via Rutherwyke Room kitchen door. Work needed to update: A Church Near You. Everything else up to date including: www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchThorpe	✓	✓

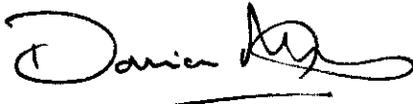
Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
facilities, entry/exit points and other communal areas.	Review CofE guide on cleaning church buildings. Complete the 'cleaning' section of this risk assessment (below).	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here .	✓	✓
	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.	Advice on face coverings can be found here . Continued request for use inside St Mary's Buildings.	DHM	19/07/21
	Choose one point of entry into the church. Where possible use a different exit.	Introduced one-way system in March 2020. Works well. Flow route to continue for summer 2021	DHM	19/07/21
	Make any temporary arrangements for people to wait or queue outside the building.	Path widened from Rutherwyke Room kitchen door to the boiler house footpath junction.	✓	✓
	Where possible, doors and windows should be opened temporarily to improve ventilation.	Yes for services ventilation increased- until 09/09 Wardens on duty to check each service	✓	✓
	If heating is required check your system is safe to use and test it before people are allowed in.	Inspection completed in November 2020 and all certified and working. Quote requested to replace boiler in Kitchen.	DHM & Wardens	19/07/21
	Remove Bibles/literature/hymn books/leaflets.	Bibles etc stored in Wallace Room. Hymns books stored in Church.	✓	✓
	Cordon off or remove from public access to items we don't want touched	Font area near sound system - tape around equipment for recording. Camera mounted on temporary beam from pillar.	DHM	19/07/21
	Consider if pew cushions/kneelers need to be removed as per government guidance on soft surfaces.	Re-instated	DHM	19/07/21
Remove or isolate children's resources and play areas.	Reinstated Children's corner	DHM	19/07/21	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Re-introduction of full seating	Small team to clean seats, remove sticky tape from floors and additional signage and re-introduce chairs to their previous configuration. The Church Porch (North) door remains the EXIT.	Barry Huxley, Pete Gruncell	19/07/21
	Clearly mark out seating areas including exclusion zones.	Only exclusion zone around recording equipment near to font/sound system area.	✓	✓
	Clearly mark out flow of movement for people entering and leaving the building.	Only signage between Rutherwyke Room and Church, and at Lych Gate maintained.	DHM	19/07/21
	Limit access to places where the public does not need go	No longer necessary.	✓	✓
	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for visitors to use.	8 are not fixed. 2 fixed locations in Link and Church Porch.	✓	✓
	Determine if temporary changes are needed to the building	No, furniture returned to normal configuration. Reinstatement of table for offertory items.	✓	✓
	Put up notices to remind visitors about important safe practices : Hands, Face, Space.	New posters laminated for display, example version attached at the end of this assessment.	DHM	19/07/21
	All church inspections up to date: Boilers, electrical, fire & safety, alarm etc	All complete or scheduled. Additional electrical work considered as part of new faculty.	DHM	19/07/21
	Check that handwashing facilities have adequate soap provision and paper towels, and a bin for the paper towels.	Every week by cleaner and before every service by welcome team.	✓	✓
	Where there are toilet facilities, ensure an adequate supply of soap and disposable hand towels, and a bin for towels, are available.	Use of slider (occupied/vacant) and sticky note placed on door when toilet used to identify for cleaning after service by welcome team.	✓	✓

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
	Ensure all waste receptacles have disposable liners (e.g. polythene bin bags) to reduce the risk to those responsible for removing them.	Yes – changed weekly (Wednesday) by cleaner and Sunday by Warden on Duty.	✓	✓
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 . Risk: Getting or spreading Coronavirus by not cleaning surfaces, equipment and shared facilities.	Service sheets etc	All services sheets placed after use in recycling bin which is not emptied between Sunday and Wednesday.	✓	✓
	Hymn books remain out of action.			
	Cleaning between Wednesday after large services.	Detol anti-viral spray for use throughout buildings after large services.	✓	✓
	Identify surfaces that are frequently touched handrails, door handles, shared equipment, toilets etc.	Claire completes 3 hours of deep cleaning every Wednesday from 9am – 12noon.	✓	✓
	Keep surfaces clear to make it easier to clean and reduce the likelihood of contaminating objects.	Most surfaces now kept clear. One table in Rutherwyke Room for notices. These must not be placed on welcome desk in church or welcome tables in Rutherwyke Room.	✓	✓
	All cleaners provided with gloves (ideally disposable).	Additional PPE available in the Kitchen – Red Box.	✓	✓
	Suitable cleaning materials provided, depending on materials and if historic surfaces are to be cleaned.	Checked weekly by the Administrator.	✓	✓
	Confirm person responsible for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site.	Vicar, Warden on duty or Cleaner –PPE provided.	✓	✓
Confirm the frequency for removing potentially contaminated waste (e.g. hand towels) from the site – suggested daily removal.	Regularly removed and checked every Sunday and Wednesday.	✓	✓	

Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms	If possible close the church building for 48 hours with no access permitted.	Not possible or advisable or necessary. Building is naturally ventilated under the eaves.	✓	✓
	If 48-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	Public Health England guidance available here.	✓	✓
	If the building has been quarantined for 48 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on cleaning church buildings can be found here.	✓	✓
Rota for August – Review date in September	Arrange appropriate numbers of staff to help keep the protocols working	New rota for the Service Support team to cover up to Sunday 5 th September 2021	DHM & Barry Huxley	19/07/21
	Issues relating to self-isolation	As above, possible closure of services to a congregation or live-streaming from the Vicarage or clergy homes. Decision by incumbent and Churchwardens on safety grounds.	Vicar & Wardens	From 19/07/21 – 06/09/21

Signed:



Vicar

Warden 1

Warden 2

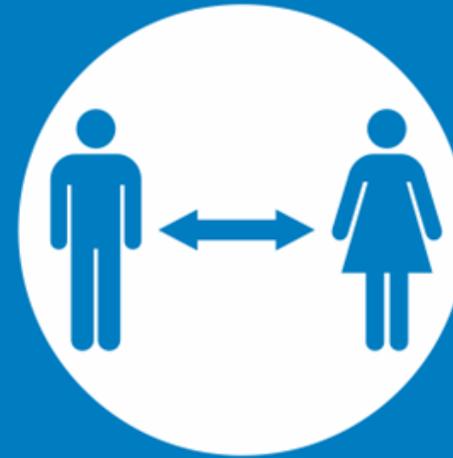
This risk assessment compliments existing fire safety, health and safety and individual service risk assessments already completed.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE



www.jpsonline.co.uk – Reorder Code JPS-VL-COV148