

COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Belhus Park Chapel (Worship Services)

This document is an assessment of the risks associated with re-opening Belhus Park Chapel for public worship following the Covid-19 'lockdown'. It identifies how the risks are intended to be mitigated or managed with a view to minimising greatly the possibility that a worshipper catches Covid-19 as a result of attending one of the Services. It must be understood that the risks cannot all be eliminated entirely (i.e. there **IS** a risk to re-opening).

This assessment has been reviewed by the Pastor and the Deacons and the risks are understood and felt to be appropriately mitigated. This Risk Assessment was approved by the Pastor and Deacons on 4th September 2020.

RISK AREAS

The two principle risk area requiring management are

- A. **PROXIMITY RISKS** (avoiding catching the virus through airborne transmission by getting too close to an infectious worshipper); and
- B. **TOUCHING RISKS** (avoiding catching the virus from touching an infected surface).

Additional / connected risks requiring consideration include:-

- C. **LEGAL RISK** (failure to comply with the law regarding the management of Covid-19 related risks)
- D. **WORSHIPPER DISAPPOINTMENT RISK** (either having to turn members, friends, or visitors away through lack of space, creating a feeling of 'us' and 'them' as between those that can attend and those that cannot)

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

The following are the main changes to be made with a view to mitigating the two principle risks:

i) Maximum Capacity.

A reduced seating plan limits us to a maximum of 44 worshippers. There will be five rows of four seats on the left and right side of the hall at a gap of 1.5 metres between each row. If each row is populated by a household, that is 40 seats. There will be 2 further seats for the technical desk operators of the streaming/visual/ sound equipment, 1 further seat at the back (possibly for a steward), plus the preacher/leader at the front.

If everyone was an 'individual' rather than coming as a 'household', that would cut capacity by c.50% (2 per row of 4 each seated at opposite ends of the row, i.e. with two chairs between them).

ii) Overflow

Should we run out of space in the main hall, individuals will be invited to sit in a marked-off area of the small hall and/or be encouraged to view the Service online.

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iii) Face Coverings

Worshippers will be expected to wear a face mask in line with the law regarding face coverings in places of worship.

iv) One-way system

Worshippers will enter at the main entrance and filter right into the main hall. The entrance area will be one-way, as will the central aisle in the main hall. At the platform end, worshippers can turn right to exit the building via the fire exit, or turn left into the toilet/kitchen corridor. That corridor will also be 1 way, with exit only permitted through the small hall to the foyer, where they must turn left, back into the main hall.

The one-way system will be reversed at the end of the Service.

v) Distancing

Worshippers will be expected to maintain at least a 1+ metre gap between themselves and members of another household. On arrival, this will mean worshippers taking their seats promptly to enable the arrival flow of other worshippers, and during the service, young children will be expected to remain seated and not move around.

The only individuals not expected to be able to maintain this gap between each other are the technical desk operators.

vi) Hand Sanitising

The government guidelines urge hand-washing or hand-sanitising on entering AND on leaving the building. A hand sanitising station will be located in the entrance lobby. Everyone will be expected to do this, recognising that some may wish to bring their own gel.

vii) Toilet Facilities

These will remain open for use. Only one person at a time will be allowed to enter the toilet areas. The facilities will be thoroughly cleaned between Services.

viii) Additional Cleaning

Between Services, all surfaces, including the door handles, door latches, push bars, push plates, and light switches will be thoroughly cleaned.

ix) Stewarding

A steward will be appointed for each Service to facilitate our compliance with the distancing measures while in the building.

He / she will welcome arrivals (without shaking hands), keep apart from the flow people into the building, help direct people to their seats, and keep a record of attendees (plus the contact details for any that are not already known to the Church for potential Track & Trace purposes). If he / she prefers, the single seat at the back of the hall could be allocated to them to enable them to be ready to help manage late arrivals. It is hoped that the presence of a steward will add to the sense that people's safety is being looked out for.

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RISK & CONTROL DETAILS

No.	Risk Detail	Control Measure
	<u>PROXIMITY RISKS</u>	
A1	Entering and exiting the building	<p>Worshippers will be reminded to exercise 1(+) metre household gapping and be urged to be patient if queuing is required while others converse or hand-sanitise on entering and exiting the building. We will communicate this by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) circulating this document to Members / regular attenders, ii) vocal reminders from the welcoming Deacon at the entrance or from the Steward, iii) the presence of signs reminding worshippers of the need to maintain distancing. <p>The numbers expected to attend are not considered large enough to warrant putting in place external queue management features, and any short queue to enter the building is unlikely to reach onto the public pavement.</p> <p>After a Service, worshippers will be encouraged to have their conversations outside the building where it is safer.</p>
A2	Seating	<p>The rows of chairs have been set at a 1.5 metre gap to the chairs in front of them. Should two individuals need to sit at either end of a row of 4 with 2 chairs between them, although the gap between them will be <i>less</i> than 1.5 metres it is greater than 1 metre and considered acceptable as they will not be facing each other. Worshippers will be asked to take their seats promptly on arrival.</p>
A3	Moving around the building	<p>The 1-way system is designed to avoid worshippers brushing up against each other whilst passing.</p> <p>We intend to make an announcement every service reminding worshippers of the distancing requirements and the 1-way system.</p>
A4	Toilets	<p>These will all be open for use, however due to their limited size the toilets in the back corridor will be limited to only one person in the men's / 1 person in the ladies at a time. A notice instructing this will be placed on each door.</p> <p>A notice will be put on the hand-dryer in the disabled toilet requesting individuals to use paper towels instead.</p>
A5	Ventilation	<p>It is understood that good ventilation will reduce the risk associated with virus circulation in the air. Therefore, during the Services, all of the small fan-light windows will be kept open.</p>
A6	No Singing	<p>To avoid the airborne spread of potentially infection particles worshippers will be instructed not to sing along with the songs or hymns that will be played from pre-recordings during Services.</p>

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A7	Supervision of young children	Young children must be supervised at all times, must wash/sanitise their hands on entering and exiting the building, and are to remain seated during the Services. See also B7.
A8	Loft Area	This will be closed off.
A9	Small Hall	As this will form part of the Church's one-way system, a breakout area will be marked off using chairs so that those travelling through the Small Hall can do so safely.
A10	Vulnerable / Shielders	Worshippers that would prefer to watch the Services online because of the risk of infection are encouraged to do so.
A11	Background Music	Background music will not be played before or after the Services so that worshippers do not have to raise their voices when speaking to others.
A12	Refreshments	There will be no indoor provision of refreshments after our Services until the distancing measures no longer apply.
	<u>TOUCHING RISKS</u>	
B1	Greeting	Worshippers will be reminded not to shake hands with, or kiss, members of a different household.
B2	Sanitising	Hand sanitiser will be provided in the Lobby, with worshippers expected to make use of this, both on arrival and on departure.
B3	Bibles	Worshippers will be encouraged to bring their own Bibles.
B4	Notice Sheets	Paper notice sheets will be made available by the front door.
B5	Collection / Offering	For the time being, we will not take up a collection / offering.
B6	Cleaning	Between Services, all surfaces likely to have been touched are to be cleaned, and in particular, the toilet areas, door handles, door latches, push bars, push plates, and light switches. Standard cleaning products are sufficient.
B7	Children's Toys	The Church toys (i.e. everything found in the big store off the small hall) shall be unavailable for use. There is however no problem with parents bringing their own quiet toys or colouring items with them to help occupy young children during the Services.
B8	Communion	<p>Kitchen preparation will be by someone wearing gloves and the bread and wine will be distributed as usual by the Deacons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The bread will be prepared pre-broken and spaced out on larger trays. The small wine cups will similarly be spaced out on the serving trays, and are to be retained rather than placed back on the tray; ii. There will be no praying or speaking over any uncovered bread or wine.

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C1	<p><u>LEGAL RISK</u></p> <p>Compliance with the law</p>	<p>Quoting from the Government’s guidance document, “Where the guidance states that an activity should take place this is not a legal requirement under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, however it is strongly advised that consideration is given to following the advice being given to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.”</p> <p>Our intent is to follow it in full. It should be noted that their strong advice includes:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. all parties should adhere to the government’s social distancing guidelines (From 4 July, 2 metres or 1 metre with risk mitigation (where 2 metres is not viable) between households are acceptable); ii. worshipper numbers must be limited by the capacity of the building to accommodate distanced worshippers; iii. re-opening without undertaking this risk assessment and without employing sufficient safety measures may render the Church in breach of Health & Safety legislation. Serious breaches and failure to comply with enforcement notices can constitute a criminal offence, with serious fines and even imprisonment for up to two years; iv. there are separate instructions for baptisms, funerals, and weddings that over-ride the general instructions for worship services. We would wish to follow these different instructions if we decide to hold such events; v. a separate review should be undertaken for activities like Campaigners and Noah’s Ark should we wish to re-start these during this period; vi. co-operation with the NHS Track and Trace service requires a record to be kept of attending worshippers for 21 days.
C2		<p>Although the wearing of a face mask in a place of worship is the legal responsibility of the individual (aged 11+), the Chapel will take an active approach, expecting masks to be worn by those not exempt from having to do so, for the sake of the safety of others that are attending.</p>
D1	<p><u>WORSHIPPER DISAPPOINTMENT RISK</u></p> <p>Insufficient space</p>	<p>A booking system will be used where we have more worshippers wishing to return to the Church than space. Any registering their desire to attend who have not been able to do so due to lack of capacity will be given priority the following week.</p>