

## Chesterfield Parish Church

### COVID-related Health & Safety Risk Assessment and Procedures – Lockdown commencing 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

#### General – applies in all cases

1. These procedures reflect the current advice offered by HM Government and the Church of England, and are to be observed until further notice.
2. Procedures in this section apply **in all cases**; specific procedures for services and other access to the church building may be found in their own sections.
3. Team members permitted to enter the building are those who are rotaed to do so as welcomers, those employees who need to enter to carry out their job, any contractors who are entering by prior arrangement, and the clergy team for purposes of prayer and the celebration of services. No one else is permitted to enter the building except by written permission of the Vicar save for visitors and congregation members at advertised times. **All team members and other permitted persons must sign in on entering the building, and sign out on departure; there are no exceptions to this.**
4. Team members should sign in and out using their own pen, and wiping door handles using the disinfectant spray and wipes provided. They should wash their hands in the sink in the disabled lavatory using the provided liquid soap and paper towels both on entering and on leaving the building, and frequently in the same way while in the building (in the disabled lavatory or in the Sacristy).
  - 4.1. Normally the disabled lavatory should be used exclusively for hand washing, and the other lavatory used for its usual purpose.
  - 4.2. Please note that the choir vestry is also designated welfare space for CEL and Pinnacle (the two firms carrying out the roofing work) and should only be used for other purposes when absolutely necessary.
5. Any other door handles and surfaces should be similarly cleaned, and hands washed following contact with them. Surfaces should not be touched unnecessarily.
6. Liturgical books should not be handled by more than one person, unless a period of over 48 hours has elapsed.
7. The most direct route from the Choir Vestry to the relevant place for worship or work should be taken. Books should be kept in the space where they are to be used, and not in the sacristy.
8. Vestments and linen are designated for each celebrant. Altars should not be used by more than one celebrant unless 48 clear hours have passed between celebrations (or the other side of the altar is used).
9. Items used during Mass should be washed in hot water and disinfected before being reused.
10. **A distance of at least two metres is to maintained between individuals AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL SITUATIONS.** *This requirement stands, as the space available to us does not require any permitted reduction in distancing. **Note that two metres is further than most people seem to think, and that the pews in the side aisles are not quite two metres long!***
11. Individuals should avoid socialising with each other **at all** in the church building – this is an anti-infection measure, and also applies especially when the building is open for prayer, as every effort should be made to allow visitors to pray in silence. It also ensures that there are no breaches of the government rules within the church building. **It is essential that all respect this rule; in Lockdown, it is illegal (and compromises the use of the church building altogether) for purely social interaction to take place indoors OR outdoors.**
12. HM Government requires the wearing of face coverings in places of worship.

13. Signage has been produced to communicate the above requirement to those entering the church building, and spare face masks are available for any attending services who have forgotten to bring one.
14. It is acceptable for those speaking in the course of services to remove their face covering while they are doing so.
15. Outside acts of worship (Mass; Morning & Evening Prayer; Occasional Offices) team members are subject to the relevant requirements for retail or visitor economy settings. **In Lockdown, these are not permissible reasons for being in the church building.**
16. It is **not** required of any team member to police or enforce the advice on face coverings.
17. A quarantine box is provided and labelled for each day of the week; congregation members will be asked to place Orders of Service, attendance slips, and any other paperwork, in them at the end of the service. The boxes will be kept for 48 hours before emptying. Orders of Service can then be re-used, and attendance slips filed for 21 days.
18. Congregational singing is still not permitted. However, government guidance permits a properly distanced group to sing as part of a service. Procedures for choral services appear at the end of this document.
19. Test & Trace sign-in QR codes are now provided to comply with the requirements of the NHS COVID19 App.
20. An attendance and contact list for people attending services is held; a single-use A5 pro-forma is provided to be completed by the congregants in their seated place, and these will be placed in the quarantine box as people leave following the service. If congregants have already signed in using the App, they should indicate this on the form.
21. Mass continues to be live-streamed on Sundays and Wednesdays; this system will now stay in place at least until the present health emergency is over.

#### **Provisions for Visitors**

22. Visitors are permitted to enter the building for purposes of prayer and for the lighting of candles. **For most of January, February and March, this access will be restricted to the Narthex only.**
23. Visitors are to wear face coverings on coming in to the building, with the exception of those who are exempted.
24. Team members are explicitly *not* required to enforce or police the wearing of face coverings.
25. Hand sanitiser is available at the SW Door.
26. Seating is sanitised in accordance with the Recovery Group advice.
27. At least one team member (in addition to the duty Verger) is available to supervise during visitor opening times.
28. Books and other items likely to be handled are made inaccessible to the public or removed altogether.
29. Adequate supplies of hand sanitiser and basic PPE are available on the premises.
30. If we become aware that a known COVID19 case has entered the church then we will have to close until a 'deep clean' could be carried out, or simply close to the public for 72 hours
  - 30.1. Public Health England have detailed instructions on how to carry out such a clean.
31. Opening hours for personal prayer: 10.00-14.00 Monday-Saturday.

## Sunday Mass

32. The church is glad to welcome congregations at Mass and Morning and Evening Prayer.
33. There is no legal restriction on numbers attending – the requirement is that they be accommodated safely in accordance with this Risk Assessment. *The present arrangements will accommodate 64 people in the Nave – more if some of them are from the same household or ‘bubble’ and do not require to be distanced from each other. These arrangements can be expanded by a further 15 through use of the corporation pews and choir stalls for special occasions, and a further 20 through use of the gallery.*
34. On Sundays Mass is celebrated at the All Saints Altar with a small distanced altar party consisting of the celebrant and one server, and the congregation distanced in the Nave.
  - 34.1. The area used by the congregation consists of the central Nave (not including the side aisles) and the gallery.
  - 34.2. Cushions and kneelers are removed from the back pews and placed in the pews in front in such a way as to make them inaccessible, thus making every other pew available for occupation. Pews are indicated with seating spaces at least two metres apart.
35. A sidesperson will be on duty in the porch for half an hour before the service to manage queuing and access so that the two metre distance can be maintained. Another sidesperson will be on duty in the narthex to direct people to suitable seating. Someone will remain on duty at the door throughout the service.
36. As above, those attending the service will be asked to use hand sanitiser on arrival and departure, and to wear a face covering in line with current legislation.
37. Using disposable gloves, the vergers or welcoming team will set out in individual places any necessary books, booklets or service sheets, on the basis that these will not have been used since the previous Sunday, i.e. more than 48 hours before. While books and booklets should be handed back by placing in a quarantine box, any other printed literature should be taken away by the individual using it. Literature should not be shared except by member of a single household or ‘bubble’.
38. The Old Testament reading will be read from the eagle lectern by a congregation member who will sit at a suitable vantage point and return directly there following the reading. The lectern should as far as possible not be touched.
39. The Gospel will be proclaimed from the chancel step; the sermon will be given from a lectern within the sanctuary, or from the pulpit.
40. The collection plate will be available in the Nave for people to place their collection *before the service*. Plates will not be passed around at the offertory.
41. No contact is to be made during the Sign of Peace, nor distancing to be reduced.
42. Only those elements to be received by the celebrant shall be placed in front of the celebrant; the elements to be consecrated for the rest of the congregation should be placed to one side of the altar **away from the line of sight of the celebrant**, and covered with a cloth. Only the celebrant will prepare the altar, and hand sanitiser is to be used before doing this.
43. Those wishing to receive communion will be invited to do so by joining a single file forward in the central aisle, observing a 2 metre distance at all times. Communion will be in one kind (the sacred Host) and in the hand only.
44. Communicants will be asked to remove face coverings before presenting themselves.
45. The person(s) distributing communion will wear a face covering, and will stand as far back from the chancel step as is practicable; the persons receiving will stop at the chancel step and receive standing with their hands held forward. The person(s) distributing communion will use hand sanitiser before and after, and also in the case of accidentally making any contact with another person’s hand.

46. Communicants will return to their places using the side aisles, and will be directed to do so by the stewards.

### **Evensong**

47. During the Lockdown period, Choral Evensong is suspended.

### **Weekday Masses**

48. Weekday Masses will take place in the Lady Chapel, or on a portable altar set up facing the Baptistry (south transept).

49. Access for weekday Masses is solely through the South-East door.

50. From 11<sup>th</sup> January, Mass will be at 12.15 Mondays through to Fridays, and 09.30 on Saturdays.

51. All chairs are sanitised after Mass before further use.

52. Orders of Service and attendance slips are provided and left (for at least 48 hours) in the quarantine box following the service

53. Celebrants are required to observe the arrangements outlined above regarding placement and distribution of eucharistic elements.

54. Altars will be allocated according to the 48-hour rule.

### **Weddings – in addition to the above**

55. It is the law that no more than 6 people may be in attendance at a wedding. This number includes children, but not clergy, paid members of the support team (organist, vergers), musicians, photographers or videographers, or team members on duty in the Narthex.

56. Congregational singing is not permitted. A small choir may sing from the East End if required.

57. Two-metre distancing is required between all congregation members except the bride and groom, and face coverings should be worn by all except the bride and groom.

58. Care must be taken not to have physical contact between the Officiant and the bride and groom.

59. The Officiant should maintain a substantial distance from the bride, groom and congregation as far as is reasonably possible; a face covering should be worn when addressing the bride and groom at closer quarters.

60. Separate pens will be provided for the signing of the registers; distancing should also be maintained. Hands should be sanitised before and after signing.

61. Live-streaming can be arranged if requested.

62. Any photographer or videographer will be required to sign an undertaking to observe at least two metres' distancing; if the service is live-streamed, an additional small fee will be charged if (exceptionally) recorded music has been permitted, to cover the cost of the Limited Online Music Licence.

### **Funerals – in addition to the above**

63. It is the law that no more than 30 people may be in attendance at a funeral. This number includes children, but not clergy, paid members of the support team (organist, vergers), or team members on duty in the Narthex.

64. Seating arrangements for funerals are to be the same as for Sunday Mass, save that the corporation pews will be available.

64.1. All occupied pews to be cleaned following a funeral, or 48 hours to be left before the pews are permitted to be occupied again.

65. The two-metre rule will still apply in this church, face coverings will have to be worn, and Funeral Directors will need to be advised of this.
66. Congregational singing is not permitted, but it may be possible to arrange for a small choir to sing from the East End.

#### **Baptisms – in addition to the above**

67. Baptisms may take place with congregations gathered in the Baptistry. There is a reasonable limit of 15 people – apart from the church team – who may attend in a distanced manner.
68. Baptism parties will be required to enter through the South Aisle and leave through the Central Aisle.
69. The Officiant will not hold the baby, nor make physical contact at any point; oil will be applied using a cotton bud and the baptismal water will be poured using the customary shell. Paper towels – immediately discarded – will be used by the parents to dry the baby's head.

#### **Concerts and Organ Recitals**

70. These are not permitted under Lockdown.

#### **Choral Services – in addition to the above**

##### ***71. Separate choir rehearsals are not permitted in Lockdown.***

72. Signing-in, hand cleansing and other safety measures apply as in the General Section above.
73. **At all times the full two-metre distancing rule applies**, the only exceptions being those who are already in a 'bubble'.
74. At all times, except when singing, face coverings are to be worn (unless legally exempt).
75. Music, including hymn books, is to be set out before practices and services, by designated individuals wearing gloves, in named folders. In the same way it should be cleared away and either kept separate to be used by the same individual, or quarantined for at least 48 hours before being used again.
76. Music stands are to be sanitised before and after each use, and may not be shared except by individuals from the same 'bubble'. If there are insufficient stands choir members will have to manage without for the time being. It may be helpful in this case to make copies of music which is to be found in heavy books.
77. Chairs are to be sanitised immediately before and after choir practices – do not assume that the duty Verger will have done this beforehand, or have time for this the following morning.
78. The piano is also to be put back in its place and the surfaces sanitised immediately following choir practice, mindful that this area will be open to the public the following morning.
79. Surfaces touched by choir members must also be sanitised immediately after choir practice.
80. No socialising is to take place before, after, or during services. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THIS RULE BE KEPT BOTH IN THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHYARD: ANY POSSIBLE, OR APPARENT, BREACHES OF THE RULES ON SOCIALISING CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE UNDERSTANDING ON WHICH THE CHOIR CAN CONTINUE TO FUNCTION.**
81. For Choral Mass, the choir will be situated in the East End of the church, arranged in a semicircle so that no one is singing toward anyone else, and there is a very significant distance from the clergy and the congregation, who are effectively in another part of the building.
82. The maximum number that may be so accommodated is **10**. During lockdown, there will be no exceptions to this.
83. When playing or conducting in the East End, Dr Nash will wear a clear visor as protection.

84. These provisions are in addition to, and do not detract from, any further documents concerning safety in church buildings published by the Archbishops' Council Recovery Group.

**Agreed with the PCC**

**Patrick Coleman, Vicar, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021**