

# Risk Assessment

**Company name:** St Thomas parish church, Exeter

**Reason for assessment:** Opening church for communal worship, during Covid-19 pandemic

**Assessment carried out by:** Ian Totterdell (churchwarden)

**Date assessment was carried out:** 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Supersedes assessment dated:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020

**Date of next review:**

| What are the hazards?   | Who might be harmed and how?  | What are you already doing to control the risks?   | What further actions do you need to take to control the risks? | Who needs to carry out the action?                                    | When is the action needed by? | Done            |
|---|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Contracting Covid-19, possibly leading to serious illness and death.</b> | (a) Worshippers might contract the virus from the clergy, churchwarden(s) or sidespeople.<br><br>(b) Worshippers might contract the virus from other worshippers.<br><br>(c) Worshippers might contract the virus from surfaces or items in the church. | (i) Clergy to practice social distancing: limited number of clergy, no servers; robe in Lady Chapel (away from congregation, space to do so more than 2m apart); no processing at start or at end of service; sit in choir stalls (not being used by choir) or on suitably-spaced seats; use routes to lecturn that maintain distancing; wear masks except when speaking at altar or lecturn; no greeting congregation at door before service, or at door after service (words of greeting/dismissal will be spoken from distance within the service). [a] | (i) No further actions.  | (i) Existing actions: Clergy.   | (i) During services.          | (i) [Ongoing].  |
|   |   | (ii) In communion service, clergy to maintain hygiene and limit close contact: president to regularly sanitise hands; keep communion bread covered (except for the bread only the president will eat); distribute bread only, no cup (president may drink consecrated wine);   | (ii) No further actions.                                       | (ii) Existing actions: Presiding clergy (president) and other clergy. | (ii) During services.         | (ii) [Ongoing]. |

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|  |  | distribute at arm's length, and into hands not mouth (with no hand-to-hand contact); no words to be spoken at point of distribution (to be said from afar before distribution). [a]   |  |   |                                       |                  |
|  |  | (iii) Churchwarden and sidespeople will practice distancing and hygiene: sanitise hands regularly; wear masks. [a]  | (iii) No further actions.  | (iii) Existing actions:<br>Churchwarden, sidespeople.                   | (iii) During services.                | (iii) [Ongoing]. |
|  |  | (iv) Because services will be spaced in time by more than 72 hours (usually a full week) full sanitising is not normally required. When it is, a full clean will be undertaken, organised by the churchwarden. [c]  | (iv) No further actions.   | (iv) Existing action:<br>Churchwarden                                   | (iv) Before services, when necessary. | (iv) [Ongoing].  |
|  |  | (v) Early arrival will be encouraged, with socially-distanced queueing required outside while people are directed to pews. [b]  | (v) Members of congregation will not be allowed to mingle when in church, and will be instructed not to do so outside before or after the service. | (v) Existing and new actions:<br>Churchwarden, sidespeople.             | (v) Before (and during) services.     | (v) [Ongoing].   |
|  |  | (vi) Names (and, where not previously recorded, contact details) of all attendees will be taken to assist with NHS contact tracing; details will be held securely for 21 days and then disposed of securely. [b]  | (vi) No further actions.   | (vi) Existing actions:<br>Churchwarden, sidespeople.                    | (vi) During services.                 | (vi) [Ongoing].  |
|  |  | (vii) Sanitising of hands on arrival will be required; sanitising of hands on departure encouraged. Entry will be by a single door (the north door, where the sanitiser is fixed), but exit will be by both the north door and the tower door, as directed by | (vii) Hand-sanitiser will be provided at the tower door.   | (vii) Existing actions:<br>Worshippers;<br>new action:<br>Churchwarden. | (vii) At start and end of services.   | (vii) [Ongoing]. |

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|  | Churchwarden /sidespeople and depending on which pew the Worshippers have been sitting in. [b]  |   |  |                         |                   |
|  | (viii) Wearing of face-masks is compulsory for all members of the congregation. Spare single-use masks are available for those who arrive without one.  | (viii) No further actions.  | (viii) Existing actions: Worshippers, Churchwarden, sidespeople. | (viii) During services. | (viii) [Ongoing]. |
|  | (ix) Worshippers will only be allowed to sit in the pews in marked places (which are spaced 2m apart); they will be directed there by churchwarden/sidespeople. [b]   | (ix) No further actions.  | (ix) Existing actions: Worshippers, churchwarden, sidespeople.   | (ix) During services.   | (ix) [Ongoing].   |
|  | (x) Items that may harbour the virus (or other infection), such as hymn- and service-books are not normally used in the services. Any service sheets provided are taken away by the worshippers at the end of the service and not re-used (except possibly by them themselves). [c] | (x) If service-books are used for special services they will be quarantined afterwards. | (x) New and existing actions: Churchwarden, sidespeople.         | (x) During services.    | (x) [Ongoing].    |
|  | (xi) Singing, or even loud acclamations, will be not be allowed. [b]  | (xi) No further actions.  | (xi) Existing actions: Clergy, worshippers.                      | (xi) During services.   | (xi) [Ongoing].   |
|  | (xii) Sharing of the peace during the service will observe social-distancing and will not involve movement from place or any touching. [b]  | (xii) No further actions.   | (xii) Existing actions: Clergy, worshippers.                     | (xii) During services.  | (xii) [Ongoing].  |
|  | (xiii) Worshippers will be directed to the front for communion/blessing by the Churchwarden/sidespeople, so that only a minimal, socially-distanced queue is ever present. Return from the front will be by a   | (xiii) No further actions.  | (xiii) Existing actions: Churchwarden, sidespeople, worshippers. | (xiii) During services. | (xiii) [Ongoing]. |

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|   |  | different route so that social distancing may be observed. [b]   |                           |   |                                       |                  |
|   |  | (xiv) Any surfaces that might be touched frequently (eg ends of pews, as supports for worshippers moving to receive communion) will be regularly sanitised, even during the service. Infirm worshippers who may rely on supporting themselves on pews when they move will be encouraged to remain in their pews and receive communion there. [c] | (xiv) No further actions. | (xiv) Existing actions: Churchwarden, sidespeople, worshippers. | (xiv) During services.                | (xiv) [Ongoing]. |
|   |  | (xv) At the end of the service Worshippers will remain in their seats until directed to leave by the warden/sidespeople. They will be directed to the most appropriate exit (usually the nearest) and reminded not to linger outside after leaving the building. [b]   | (xv) No further actions.  | (xv) Existing actions: Churchwarden, sidespeople, worshippers.  | (xv) During, and at end of, services. | (xv) [Ongoing].  |
|   |  | (xvi) The number of people in the Priests' Vestry will be limited, ideally to no more than 2. [a, b]   | (xvi) No further actions. | (xvi) Existing actions: Clergy, Churchwarden.                   | (xvi) Before and after services.      | (xvi) [Ongoing]. |
| <b>Injury from church fabric debris</b> | Worshippers (using pews that have not been used for a long period) being cut by stones, glass or sharp items such as drawing pins that have accumulated. | Frequent visual inspections of pews, dusting of pews.  | No further actions.       | Existing actions: Churchwarden (and delegates).                 | Before services.                      | [Ongoing].       |
|   |  | Regular visual inspections of fabric.  | No further actions.       | Existing actions: Churchwarden.                                 | Before services.                      | [Ongoing].       |
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