

## Communion Services at St John's Ainsdale – Risk assessment and control measures

Revised 7/01/21 – v.2

**Introduction:** St John's will be open for a shortened Communion Service on Sundays and Wednesdays during the lockdown period commencing 6 January 2021 until further notice. It is recognised that opening the church for Communion Services is not without risk of infection from Covid-19. The PCC recognise there are those who are at extra risk and those who are 'clinically extremely vulnerable'. The PCC understand justifiable caution in these circumstances and the decision to attend a service is the responsibility of each individual. However, the overriding principle governing all activities in the church during the pandemic is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of people.

To achieve this aim, the PCC has undertaken a suitable and sufficient assessment in accordance with the Covid Regulations, the latest guidance issued by the Government, C of E Recovery Group and the most recent advice from the Bishop

*“If a local church decides to open its doors for public worship, then I will support this decision as long as two things are in place: 1) a fully thought-through, written risk assessment that recognises the need for strict social distancing in the light of the new (and highly-transmissible) variant of the virus; and 2) the most rigorous insistence to your people that they do not mingle with one another across household groups, whether before or after the service, whether in the church building or outside”.*

The effective application of the arrangements and responsibilities identified in this assessment will ensure compliance with the guidance and the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

### **Risk assessment: Relevant control measures:**

- There is no numerical cap in the current guidance on the number who can attend a Communion Service. However, we will provide a pre-booking system to control the number of worshippers in order to ensure safe distancing is maintained.
- Chairs are arranged in the chancel and nave to ensure worshippers and leaders are separated at a safe distance from one another. Within rows, chairs are spaced 2m apart. However, provision will be made for family grouping. The booking system will identify this need and seating will be arranged prior to the service.
- A one-way system will be provided and maintained. Worshippers will be directed in accordance with the one-way system for queuing outside, entering, movement to and from seating. Sides-persons will supervise this measure to ensure safe distancing is maintained at all times.
- There will be clear signage outside and within the building about safe distancing.
- The booking system will identify the need to provide safe access, egress and seating for worshippers with disabilities or wheelchairs.

- The distance between rows has been reduced to 1m + mitigation (the PCC agree that the church warden can use discretion to increase the distance when appropriate). There is no face-to-face placement and there will be a requirement to wear face protection at all times within the building.
- If a worshipper has an age, health or disability reason for not wearing a face covering, the PCC accepts carrying an exemption card or badge is a personal choice not a legal requirement. Nevertheless, the PCC consider that it is reasonable to ask if they can show a card or badge.
- Inside the building if the worshipper without a mask is not part of a bubble, they should be placed on the back row and escorted out at the end of the service.
- The exception regarding face protection is that when seated a worshipper may lift the protection to swallow the communion wafer.
- During the service there will be no sharing of the Peace.
- Worshippers will be encouraged to exit promptly once the service has ended.
- Sides-persons will coordinate the exit of worshippers from the nave at the end of the service in order to maintain safe distancing.

#### **Hygiene control measures:**

- Doors will be open during the service to ensure ventilation.
- The kitchen will be locked during the service.
- The pre-booking system will advise worshippers to come with clean face protection.
- Hand sanitiser stations will be provided in the porch and for use outside the toilets and for exiting the building.
- Clear signage will be provided about hygiene precautions.
- Specific signage will be provided in the toilets to ensure the parts used are cleaned.
- All waste generated will be placed in designated bins, double bagged and stored for 72 hours before removing to outside storage.
- No re-usable items or equipment will be provided for worshippers. Any single use sheet or magazine will be taken away by worshippers.
- Worshippers will be advised that if they wish, they should bring their own bibles and prayer books.
- Apart from essential water, no food or drink will be permitted inside the building.

#### **Music and singing in the chancel:**

- John and up to two others all socially distanced may sing at a service.
- Paul and family plus two others socially distanced from the family bubble may sing at a service'
- No-one is allowed in the chancel while anyone is singing.
- If John or Paul are playing music but not singing, they should wear a mask or face protection at all times.

#### **First aid arrangements:**

- A fully stocked first aid box will be provided.

- Those providing first aid will wear disposable gloves, face protection and apron.

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- The defibrillator is located in the AV area. Gloves and face protection are compulsory for use.
- A supply of bottled water for emergencies will be kept in the AV area.
- A record of all first aid treatment will be made.
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**Arrangements for contact and trace:**

- All worshippers, including warden and sides-persons, will be asked the key questions on entry into the church.
- The booking details for worshippers, including warden and sides-people, will be confirmed on their entry into the porch.
- Contact details will be kept for 21 days.
- The PCC will apply the guidelines to notify worshippers who may need to quarantine.

**Training:**

- All those with duties under this risk assessment will be provided with the instructions to be followed.
- The instructions will be explained to those with duties before the service.
- The provision and use of PPE will be explained.

**Cleaning arrangements:**

- A church cleaner is employed to clean the church to the required standards between the services.
- A record of cleaning will be kept.

**Communication arrangements:**

- The revised assessment will be placed on the notice board also on the church website.

