

Goodwood Evangelical Church

Risk Assessment for the use of the building for services/meetings during coronavirus pandemic

- **Date:** 10/9/20
- **Reviewed and amended:** 3/12/20 and 6/4/21
- **Scope of risk assessment:** use of the building for services/meetings
- **Review date:** next change in guidance
- **Public access:** This Risk Assessment will be placed on the Church website.

Documents referred to:

- How the virus spreads and how to minimise the spread:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-two-metre-social-distancing-guidance/review-of-two-metre-social-distancing-guidance>
- Government advice on use of places of worship:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july?utm_source=d8680c23-d5fa-4b5c-9223-3da8a54d5012&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate
- Government advice on use of giving lifts
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

This risk assessment may also cover **weddings** but a supplementary risk assessment may be needed:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

This risk assessment may also cover **funerals** but a supplementary risk assessment may be needed:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

Assumptions in assessing hazards and minimising risk

'How COVID-19 is transmitted and how to reduce risks'

COVID-19 is transmitted in three ways:

1. Direct person-to-person contact - if an infectious person breathes droplets on you or you pick them up through physical contact with an infectious person.
2. Contact with a contaminated surface - if you touch a surface contaminated with the virus and then touch your nose, eyes or mouth, you may be infected.
3. Aerosol transmission - fine droplets of liquid containing virus are breathed out, form an aerosol and are carried through the air. You may become infected if you breathe these in.

If you are further away from someone there's less risk of catching the virus from droplets or aerosol transmission. However, distance isn't the only thing that matters.

- Duration - the longer you are close to an infectious person, the higher the risk.
- Fresh air - the risk is lower if you are outdoors, or in a well ventilated area,
- Direction - the risk is lower if you are not face-on with the infectious person

The risk of transmission is small at 2m and where possible, you should maintain 2m distance.

If it is not possible to keep 2m distance, reduce the risk to yourself and others at 1m by taking suitable precautions:

- Limit the number of people or households that you come into contact with, e.g. avoid peak travel
- Sit / stand side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them
- Meet people outdoors, rather than indoors
- Keep interactions brief
- Wear a face covering on public transport, in shops or crowded indoor environments
- Increase ventilation
- Avoid loud talking or singing with others

To minimise the risk of transmission via surface contact, you should:

- Regularly wash your hands using soap and water or use hand sanitiser
- Avoid touching surfaces and do not touch your face
- Dispose of waste safely, including items such as paper face masks or gloves

In all cases, you must not go to work or attend other public spaces if you are symptomatic, or a member of your household is symptomatic.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control risks?	What further action do you need to do to control risks?	Who?	By when?	Done
Virus remains on surfaces from previous use of the building – despite measures to minimise this.	Those who use the building subsequently by coming into contact with the virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either all surfaces to be wiped down before the building is next used including doors, chairs, fixtures, instruments, etc Cleaning of the building usually occurs early Saturday morning in preparation for Sunday. OR • Building to have 48 hours before next use to allow virus to die. <p>If an individual visits within 48 hours they must wipe down any surfaces they come into contact with. An attendance/time sheet to be available for use outside of service/meeting times to help ascertain if this is necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			Done
Someone becomes ill with the virus following the meeting/service.	All who entered the building for that service/meeting may have acquired the virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record needs to be kept (for 21 days) of all those who entered the building for a meeting/service with their contact details so that Test and Trace can follow up. • Consent form to be given to all at first attendance. <p>At subsequent meetings person on the door will have a pre-printed attendance list for regular attenders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			

<p>Those with symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell)</p>	<p>Everyone who comes into contact with a person with symptoms may catch the virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and regular attenders should be informed that they should not attend if they have symptoms and that they should stay at home, etc. • Anyone whilst in the building who looks as if they have symptoms should be asked to go home immediately and follow the Government’s Stay at Home guidance, etc. <p>Other people who may have been in contact with the person who has become unwell should wash their hands thoroughly after the interaction, but they do not need to take any other specific action unless they develop symptoms themselves or are advised to do so by NHS Test and Trace. If they do develop symptoms they should follow the stay at home guidance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
<p>Those over 70 are more vulnerable</p>	<p>By attending services/meetings those over 70 are more vulnerable to serious illness should they get the virus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those we know to be over 70 to be advised of the risks of attending and the need to limit the number of times they leave their home. A letter has been sent to all regular attenders setting out the arrangements and advice before the first service. • The advice above no longer applies to those who have been vaccinated since they are less vulnerable. 	<p>None</p>			

Those who are shielding are particularly vulnerable	By attending services/meetings they are particularly vulnerable to serious illness should they get the virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are shielding should be reminded of Government advice. A letter has been sent to all regular attenders setting out the arrangements and advice before the first service. • The advice above no longer applies to those who have been vaccinated since they are less vulnerable. 	None			
Before entering the building	If more than one household enters at once they may get too close together and transmit the virus.	Organise social distancing at the entrance with a queuing system; markings on the floor and someone to regulate entry.	None			

Entering the building	Touching surfaces and transmitting virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs up to wash hands • The Government requires (by law) all to wear face coverings unless attendee exempt. Face coverings may be removed if delivering a sermon or prayer. • Ask everyone to either use hand sanitiser (>65% alcohol) or if using the toilets to wash hands (for 20 seconds) before entering the rest of the building and then to avoid touching surfaces. • Only one person at a time to enter each of the three toilets, unless with own children. One in one out. • Posters to be in toilets of good hand washing techniques e.g. https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/coronavirus-wash-your-hands-poster. • Coats or bags not to be left in the cloakroom/toilets, but to be taken to seats. • Have doors open where possible to avoid touching surfaces. <p>Have disinfectant spray and cloth available to clean surfaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
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Too many people for the capacity of the building	If more people than the capacity then increased risk of passing on the virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control the number of people who come into the building to a maximum of 44. This number has been determined on the assumption that seating between households is a little less than 2m apart (approx. 1.7m plus) and that there is room to exit safely and that mitigation is in place – masks, ventilation, relatively low local rates and vaccination uptake is high. There is a maximum capacity for 25 individuals from each household with a further 19 seats for pairing from each household. The main hall will be filled up on a first come first served basis, from the front. Any one arriving after the capacity is exceeded will be asked not to attend on this occasion. If capacity is exceeded then arrangements will be reviewed to try and ensure people do not have wasted trips in the future e.g. putting a booking system in place. <p>We will endeavour to maintain some online alternative as well as a paper delivery for those who cannot attend.</p>		Elders/CSG		Done
Issuing hymn books and bibles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People to be encouraged to bring their own Bibles and where applicable hymn books. Although this will not normally be the case, hymn books and bibles may be issued for words to be read but there will be no singing. <p>Books may not then be used for the next 48 hours (quarantine period).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 			

Issuing service sheets or similar	Transmission of virus from paper	<p>This should be avoided but if done then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper should be handled with gloves and placed on each seat or, better, left on each seat for the previous 48 hours. <p>The paper must be taken home by those to whom it is issued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 			
Air does not circulate well	Lack of air circulation may mean virus does not disperse	Windows and doors to be open as is reasonable for the weather conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 			
Sitting too close together	If too close then increased chance of transmitting virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seating to be set out 48 hours previously or if seats moved within 48 hours of a meeting gloves to be used or seat wiped down with sanitiser and cloth. Set out seating so that the chairs are approximately 2 m apart and certainly 1m plus with mitigations (see above) and all facing in the same direction. Some chairs can be paired together to anticipate household seating. If seats need moving then the chairs must be wiped down with disinfectant and cloth after moving, or by somebody wearing gloves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 			
People not observing or understanding the need for social distancing measures	Transmission of virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notices/letters have been issued to members and regular attenders before re-opening so that they know what to expect. People on the door have explained what measures are in place. <p>Leaders at the front explain what is happening and why.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 			

Singing or loud speech during the meeting/service	Transmission of virus through vapour droplets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no congregational singing in the building. • Shouting out will also not be encouraged. • The speaker should use a microphone and not shout. • However, music may be played using certain instruments or from recordings. • It is possible for a small group to sing if this is essential to the worship, but ideally behind a plexi-glass screen or facing away from others and some distance away from anybody else. <p>Further Government advice may follow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
Playing of instruments	Playing wind instruments may transmit the virus. More than one person touching an instrument may transmit the virus. Musicians being too close together may transmit the virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind instruments must not be used. • One person only can handle any instrument in every 48 hour period. • Musicians must be 2m away from each other and the rest of the congregation. • Music – books and sheets – should be used by one person only in every 48 hour period. <p>Hand sanitiser should be available for musicians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
Putting cash or cheques into the offering box and counting it after the service.	Touching the surface of the box may transmit the virus. Touching the money when counting may transmit the virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online banking to be encouraged. • Have box out but lid open so the box does not need to be touched. • Hand sanitiser to be available in this area. <p>Use gloves/hand sanitiser when counting the money then quarantine for 48 hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			

Use of the lectern, PA cupboard and microphones	More than one person using each radio mike and the lectern may transmit virus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA cupboard to be wiped after opening • Only one person to use each radio mic. • Only one person to use each lectern. • Second lectern to be used if more than one person involved in leading the service – 2 m apart <p>If two people on the platform at any one time they should be 2 m apart.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successive participants can use the stand alone mic for readings, etc. 			Done
Use of the laptop	More than one person using the laptop may transmit the virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally, one person to set up and use the laptop. • If more than one person is needed then the laptop should be wiped down with disinfectant between users. • Memory sticks should be wiped before handing over to be uploaded <p>Hand sanitiser to be available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
Length of the service	The longer the service the greater the chance of transmission.	There is no rule about the length of a service, planning of services will bear in mind the need to conclude in the shortest possible time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
Talking to people after the service	Greater risk of transmitting the virus if social distancing cannot be maintained and increase in risk with multiple contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people to leave the building and the outside vicinity promptly. • Encourage people to keep conversations brief outside and to maintain social distancing. <p>See below under 'leaving the building'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			

Leaving the building	Large groups may not be able to socially distance on leaving particularly at the pinch points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On leaving the building people should be encouraged to use hand sanitiser. • Alternatively, hand washing for 20 seconds. People will need to leave in a regulated manner to avoid queuing at the exit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction in the grounds is dependent on the current government regulations. 	Elders/CSG		
Refreshments	Handling food and drink and then consuming food and drink may transmit the virus.	<p>At this stage we will not have refreshments before or after a service to encourage prompt exiting of the building.</p> <p>If food and drink is allowed then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People preparing food and drink must wash hands frequently and wear a mask. • All utensils to be washed thoroughly. • Surfaces to be wiped down with disinfectant before and after use. • Normally only one person in the kitchen at any one time. If a second person enters then the two people should try to maintain social distancing of 2 m if not from the same household. <p>If weather is not too inclement the back door should be opened for ventilation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			

Communion	<p>Virus transmitted through preparing the bread and wine.</p> <p>Virus transmitted through sharing the bread and wine.</p>	<p>Person preparing the wine and bread must wash hands thoroughly and wear a mask.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread to be cut into small pieces and each piece placed separately e.g. on small plates – spread out on table(s) • Wine to be dispensed into small individual use cups and either placed in racks (spaced out) which is placed on the table or set out separately on the table(s). • All to be placed on accessible wiped down tables. • Each individual participant to come to the table(s) one at a time (socially distanced). They should then take the bread and the wine cup back to their seat for consumption. • Hand sanitiser to be available at the table. • Cup to be disposed of after the service in bin on exit. <p>Person removing the cups, plates and remaining wine and bread to wash hands and wear face covering, if available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
Children using books, pens, craft equipment and paper supplied by the church	Virus may be transmitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents to be encouraged to bring their own books, pens, etc. for their children. • Anyone passing such items to children must have washed their hands immediately prior to this or used hand sanitiser. <p>Used articles to be placed by child or parent in allocated place and left for 48 hours before being handled again</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			

Toilets	Virus may be transmitted through poor hygiene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running water, liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand dryers) are available. • Communal towels have been removed and replaced with single use paper towels. • Hygiene signs and posters are in place. • One in one out. • Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider the use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces. • Facilities to be kept well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate and safe to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
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Giving lifts to and from the church	Transmission of virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government regulations should be checked to see if giving lifts is recommended. • If it is possible to travel with people outside your household or support bubble then you must try to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share the transport with the same people each time • keep to small groups of people at any one time • open windows for ventilation • travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow • face away from each other • consider seating arrangements to maximise distance between people in the vehicle • clean your car between journeys using standard cleaning products - make sure you clean door handles and other areas that people may touch • ask the driver and passengers to wear a face covering <p>The church will not be organising lifts at this time.</p>	None			
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Cleaning	Virus may be transmitted if the building is not regularly cleaned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building cleaned once a week by externally employed cleaners. • Frequency of cleaning versus opening frequency is reviewed. • Cleaners to be asked to ensure all surfaces, especially those most frequently touched such as door handles and rails, should be cleaned using standard cleaning products. <p>Frequently used objects, surfaces or spaces, including for example doorways between outside and inside spaces should be given particular attention when cleaning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
Baptism by full immersion	This involves more than one person coming into close proximity and may transmit the virus.	Government advice seems to indicate that this is problematic because the baptism candidate cannot be held, but see advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			

Children's activities during the service	Transmission of virus between children and teacher/supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back hall to be used – not lounge • Children to stay with parents in the main hall unless they understand the need for social distancing and that activities will be restricted. • Person setting out any chairs, tables and equipment to wash hands (this should ideally be the teacher/supervisor) • Tables and chairs to be set out beforehand so that each participant 2 m apart. Tables and chairs should be wiped if used in last 48 hours and hands washed. • Equipment to be put out for each child and not shared. • Children to be encouraged to stay in their seat. If a child cannot socially distance then they should remain in the service with their parents. <p>Adult washes hands before and after putting equipment, tables and chairs away or this is done 48 hours later.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 			
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