



# Shildon Methodist Church



## COVID-19 Risk Assessment for reopening Shildon Methodist Church for Worship

<b>Address</b>	<b>Main Street, Shildon, Co Durham, DL4</b>
<b>Area of Building Assesses</b>	<b>Main Church Building</b>
<b>Assessment undertaken by</b>	<b>John Hodgson</b>
<b>Date to be reviewed</b>	
<b>Version</b>	<b>1 [7 July 2020]</b>

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

**SECTION 1: RISKS/ISSUES TO REOPENING CHURCH BUILDING - Individuals aged 70 years and over - Government guidance states. "Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and ,if they go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household."**

Almost all, our Church Stewards are aged 70 or over.	Church Stewards Door Stewards Preacher Congregation	3	3	9	Some of the Church Stewards may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?  We cannot open without Church Stewards.	Church Stewards to confirm if there are sufficient available for reopening the church  If sufficient Church Stewards are available Working Group to consider whether we should ask them to take the risk.
All our Property Stewards are aged 70 or over	Property Stewards	3	3	7	Our Property Stewards may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?  Property Stewards are needed to take the lead in preparatory work for reopening	Property Sec to confirm if Property Stewards are available for preparatory work.  Working Group to consider whether we should ask them to take the risk and/or seek alternatives.
Almost all our Door Stewards are aged 70 or over.	Church Stewards Door Stewards Preacher	3	3	7	Some of the Door Stewards may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?	Church Stewards to confirm if there are sufficient Door Stewards available for reopening the church  If sufficient Door Stewards are available Working Group to consider whether we should ask them to take

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

	Congregation					the risk, or if there are other alternatives.
Almost all our volunteer cleaners are aged 70 or over.	Volunteers	3	3	9	Some of our volunteers may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?	Volunteers on cleaning rota to be asked if they are willing to continue cleaning  Working Group to consider whether we should ask volunteers to take the risk and/or what alternatives might be possible.
All our Communion Stewards are aged 70 or over	Stewards  Preacher  Congregation	3	3	7	Some of the Communion Stewards may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?	Church Stewards to confirm if there are sufficient Communion Stewards available for reopening the church  If sufficient Communion Stewards are available Working Group to consider whether we should ask them to take the risk.  Working Group to consider whether there are alternative ways to hold Communion, or if Communion should be held at all.
All our Wedding Stewards are aged 70 or over.	Stewards  Minister  Wedding Guests	3	3	7	Some of the Wedding Stewards may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?	Church Stewards to confirm if there are sufficient Wedding Stewards available for reopening the church  If sufficient Wedding Stewards are available Working Group to consider

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

						whether we should ask them to take the risk, or not open for Weddings
All our Funeral Stewards are aged 70 or over.	People wanting Funerals	3	3	7	Some of the Funeral Stewards may feel they are willing to help with reopening and Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?	Church Stewards to confirm if there are sufficient Funeral Stewards available for reopening the church  If sufficient Funeral Stewards are available Working Group to consider whether we should ask them to take the risk, or not open for Funerals
Almost all our congregation is aged 70 or over.	Whole Church				Some of the congregation may wish to attend Worship but should we as a Church be asking them to take that risk?	Pastoral Visitors to contact as many members as possible to gather their views on attending Church if it reopens. Working Group to provide Pastoral Visitors with a script to use in conversation with members.  Working Group to consider we should ask them to take the risk, and/or if reopening should be delayed to a later date.

**SECTION 2: RISKS/ISSUES IN PREPARING TO REOPENING CHURCH BUILDING FOR FIRST TIME**

Cleaning of Church before reopening	Whole Church	2	2	6	Cleaning Churches states, "When reopening the building for the first time, a deep clean for Covid-19 is not necessary but a normal clean is recommended."	Confirm volunteers are available to clean prior to reopening. If not, consider what alternatives might be possible.
-------------------------------------	--------------	---	---	---	---	---

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

On-going cleaning after reopening	Whole Church	2	2	6	Cleaning Churches states, "...if there are 72 hours between groups using the building, then cleaning for Covid-19 is not required." This indicates if we are only opening for Sunday Worship our normal cleaning rota (weekly for toilets and monthly for general Church clean) would be sufficient, except where a Funeral or Wedding may have taken place.	Confirm volunteers are available for regular cleaning. If not, consider what alternatives might be possible.
Church made Covid-19 secure					<p>Determine maximum numbers that would be allowed given social distancing requirements of 2 metres.</p> <p>Establish a one-way system including arrangements for wheelchair users. (Portable ramp may have to be used to ensure wheel chair users can enter through the front door or alternatively allow only wheelchair users and helpers to enter through the rear doors)</p> <p>Decide where anti-bacterial wipes/liquid and sanitising stations should be, the amounts required, purchase supplies and set up</p> <p>Ensure processes are in place for reordering supplies, e.g. who reorders etc</p> <p>Decide where signage/floor markings are required and set up</p>	<p>Working Group/Property Stewards</p> <p>Working Group/Property Stewards</p> <p>Working Group/Property Stewards</p> <p>Working group/Property Stewards</p> <p>Working group/Property Stewards Working Group/Church Stewards/Pastoral Visitors</p>

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

					<p>Ensure arrangements are communicated to Church Stewards, Door Stewards and Church members along with any restrictions/requirements</p> <p>Set up track and trace process, forms etc for Church visitors (including review and disposal of forma after 21 days)</p>	Working Group
--	--	--	--	--	---	---------------

Use of audio/visual equipment	Whole Church	3	2	2	<p>The use books etc by the congregation is discouraged. We could provide one use sheets but these would have to be prepared every week. The use of audio/visual equipment is encouraged, for playing recorded music, displaying service information etc. However, this would require the preparing of slides and people willing to set up and operate the equipment during Worship. Also, there is no modern computer in the Church.</p> <p>Discussion required to decide how we tackle this issue</p>	Working Group
-------------------------------	--------------	---	---	---	---	---------------

**SECTION 3: RISKS/ISSUES FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP**

Entrance to, and exit from Church building	Door Stewards	2	2	6	Ensure front door is kept open to reduce need to touch door handle	Church/ Door Stewards
	Church Stewards				Ensure rear door is kept open after service to reduce need to touch door handle	

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

	Congregation  Preacher				<p>Ensure door handles are wiped with anti-bacterial wipes before service commences and after service concludes</p> <p>Ensure anti-bacterial wipes/spray and paper towel/roll are available in front and rear entrances for use as required during services times</p> <p>Ensure hand sanitiser is available at front and rear doors for people to use as they enter/leave the premises</p> <p>Ensure visitors complete track and trace forms</p>	
Entrance and exit to main body of Church	Door Stewards  Church Stewards Congregation  Preacher	2	2	6	<p>Ensure all doors to main body of the Church are kept open to reduce the need to touch door handles</p> <p>Ensure rear partition doors are kept open to improve air circulation throughout the body of the Church</p> <p>Allocate person to clean door handles before and after service</p> <p>Ensure door handles (both sides of door) are wiped with anti-bacterial wipes before service commences and after service concludes</p> <p>Ensure anti-bacterial wipes/spray and paper towel/roll are available in the body of the Church and in the Vestry for use as required during services times</p>	Church Stewards  Church /Door Steward

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

Main body of Church before, during and after Worship	Preacher  Congregation	2	2	6	<p>Ensure social distance requirements are adhered to</p> <p>Ensure maximum capacity is not exceeded (maximum 30 but maybe less when Church marked out for social distancing)</p> <p>Ensure audio/visual equipment is sanitised before and after use, e.g. by wiping controls/remote/ mics with anti-bacterial wipes</p> <p>Ensure an orderly exit after the service – one row at a time, discourage groups/individuals from chatting in the building and possibly blocking exit path.</p>	Church/Door Stewards
Vestry	Preacher Church  Stewards	2	2	6	<p>Ensure vestry doors, light switches are sanitised before and after use</p> <p>Ensure hand sanitiser is available in vestry for use by Stewards and Preacher</p> <p>Ensure access to vestry is limited to only those who need to use it</p> <p>Ensure Church safe is sanitised before and after use</p> <p>Ensure social distance between stewards/preacher is maintained</p>	

<b>Hazards/Risks</b> <i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<b>Persons Affected</b> <i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	<b>Likelihood</b> 1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	<b>Severity</b> 1-Low 2-Med 3-High	<b>Risk Rating</b> 1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b> <i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>
--	---	--	---	--	---	---

Toilets	Congregation  Door Stewards  Church Stewards  Preacher	2	2	6	<p>Ensure paper towel dispenser is adequately stocked and material towels are removed</p> <p>Ensure adequate supply of anti-bacterial handwash is available</p> <p>Ensure adequate supply of anti-bacterial wipes are available for toilet user to wipe seat, cistern handle and door handle</p> <p>Ensure waste bin available in toilet for disposal of anti-bacterial wipes</p> <p>Ensure social distancing is maintained if there are queues for the toilet</p>	Church Stewards
Collection	Congregation  Church Stewards				<p>Encourage giving through standing orders/other electronic money transfer schemes wherever possible</p> <p>Giving plate cannot be passed around it must be taken to each individual for them to place their offertory in</p> <p>The offertory plate can be left on the communion table and then should be stored in the safe for at least 72 hours before the collection is counted</p> <p>No individual should be asked to handle money unless they are willing to do so.</p>	<p>Church Treasurer/Gift Aid Secretary</p> <p>Door Steward (or whoever takes collection)</p> <p>Church Steward (after wiping the collection plate)</p> <p>Church Stewards/Church Treasurer to discuss</p>

<b>Hazards/Risks</b>	<b>Persons Affected</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Notes/Additional Covid-19 Controls or actions to reduce Risk</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
<i>Think about the areas where contact takes place</i>	<i>Anyone who comes in contact</i>	1-Seldom 2-Freq 3- Almost Certain	1-Low 2-Med 3-High	1-2=Low 3-4=Med 6-9=High		<i>What needs to be done and by whom?</i>

**SECTION 4: SPECIAL SERVICES – The Methodist Church has produced on guidance on special considerations for Communion, Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms. This is attached at the end of this document. I suggest these will need to be discussed with the Minister and relevant parties, i.e. Church Stewards, Wedding Stewards, Funeral Stewards and Baptismal Secretary, as to how they should operate.**

## Specific Considerations for Communion

- The elements essential to the celebration of communion are allowed, namely bread and grape juice.
- Careful thought needs to be given to the form of the elements and to how they will be distributed. Wafers are preferable, and can easily be sourced online.
- It is important, also, to remember that communion received in 'one kind '(i.e. bread only) is perfectly valid in our tradition and that of our ecumenical partners. This may be considered as an option if there are concerns over safely distributing of grape juice as outlined in more detail below.
- Those handling any specific items related to the celebration of communion should wash their hands thoroughly before and after, or alternatively wear gloves. It is advisable to keep hand sanitiser available during the service to allow for frequent cleansing of hands, for instance just before, and if necessary, during, distribution.
- Care should be taken in the preparation of the sacraments to ensure that individuals do not come into contact with the elements. It is recommended that shared receptacles are not used (i.e. no common cup and a common plate only if great care is taken, as described below), and if possible, items which involve minimal preparation should be used.
- If there is to be an act of passing the peace, it should occur only verbally and at a proper distance.
- Speaking over the sacrament is not allowed unless it is securely covered. The prayer of thanksgiving should therefore happen over covered elements, or be offered at an appropriate distance from them when uncovered. The breaking of the bread and lifting of the cup should happen in silence.
- The distribution of the sacrament should be undertaken with a view to maintaining current social distancing measures. Any persons distributing and receiving communion should ensure that they can do this in such a way as to avoid contact between each other, or alternatively to wear gloves. If contact is made then both parties should immediately wash their hands.
- It is preferable to use wafers, and either distribute them at arm's length, ensuring that there is no physical contact between minister and communicant, or to allow communicants to take their own wafer from a common plate, on which the wafers have been spaced apart. If a larger loaf is used in the consecration, it should not be distributed, except for the minister's consumption, unless there is absolute scrupulousness about hand-cleansing, keeping an arm's length away from communicants, and ensuring that hands do not touch when placing the bread in their palms.
- Similarly, if wine is to be distributed, individual cups should be used and offered to communicants to take from the tray themselves.
- If individuals are distributing the elements, they should do so in silence, so as to avoid increasing the possibility of infection.
- All items used in the celebration of communion should be disposed of safely or thoroughly washed after use, ensuring that those handling them wear gloves to avoid transfer of the virus.
- Clear guidance should be given to the congregation before the service begins about how it will proceed and the arrangements for receiving the elements.

### **Specific Considerations for Weddings**

- The Government has produced additional supporting COVID-19 Guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships.
- Marriage ceremonies should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and social distancing should be strictly adhered to following a risk assessment.
- Note that 30 is a maximum number as a guide and that Managing Trustees have an obligation to assess if this is a safe number to accommodate. If after risk assessment it is found that a chapel can only accommodate a lower number safely, then this would be the maximum for this particular chapel.
- If possible, ceremonies should be concluded in the shortest reasonable time, and limited as far as reasonable to the parts of the marriage ceremony required in order to be legally binding under the law of England and Wales.
- In terms of social distancing it should also be noted that this will also apply to those administering the service, the marriage couple or those taking a lead role in the marriage service. Unless of course any are members of the same household or social bubble.
- Where rings are exchanged, those involved should wash their hands before and after and the rings should be handled by as few as people as possible.
- All spoken voices should use a PA system where possible or practical. Specifically projecting or raising voices should be avoided.
- It should be considered how those who fall within a vulnerable group are able to attend safely as it is important that those who wish to attend are able to safely.
- It is important to lease and communicate with the parties involved in advance. This will ensure that controls and expectations on the day are managed sensitively:
  - o Communication of agreed arrangements in the chapel.
  - o Basic arrangement for cleaning and hygiene.
  - o Knowledge of numbers attending and potential seating plan.

## Specific Considerations for Funerals

- The Government has produced additional supporting COVID-19: Guidance for managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Funeral ceremonies should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and social distancing should be strictly adhered to following a risk assessment.
- Note that 30 is a maximum number as a guide and that Managing Trustees have an obligation to assess if this is a safe number to accommodate. If after risk assessment it is found that a chapel can only accommodate a lower number safely, then this would be the maximum for this particular chapel.
- The guidance suggests the following can attend, in addition to the Funeral Director and staff, church steward and minister:
  - o Members of the person's household;
  - o close family members;
  - o or close friends if family members are unable to attend;
- It should be considered how those who fall within a vulnerable group are able to attend safely as it is important that those who wish to attend are able to safely.
- All spoken voices should use a PA system where possible or practical. Specifically projecting or raising voices should be avoided.
- It is important to liaise and communicate with the parties involved in advance. This will ensure that controls and expectations on the day are managed sensitively. The Funeral Director may be able to facilitate many of these communications and arrangements so that they minimise the additional responsibility for organisation on the bereaved. Such arrangements and communications could include:
  - o Communication of agreed arrangements in the chapel.
  - o Basic arrangement for cleaning and hygiene.
  - o Knowledge of numbers attending and potential seating plan.
  - o Ability to assess if there are parties who are clinically vulnerable and therefore being able to make additional arrangements and advise others to be aware and sympathetic to this.

## Specific Considerations for Baptisms

- The Government makes reference to baptisms within the context of what it defines as Other Life Cycle ceremonies, which is part of the overall reopening churches guidance.
- Although this is not normally part of Methodist tradition, if baptisms are carried out separately to a normal service, they should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and social distancing should be strictly adhered to following a risk assessment.
- Note that 30 is a maximum number as a guide and that Managing Trustees have an obligation to assess if this is a safe number to accommodate. If after risk assessment it is found that a chapel can only accommodate a lower number safely, then this would be the maximum for this particular chapel.
- When the baptism takes place during a normal service then the number could be greater than 30 as long as it remains within the maximum number of people who can be seated in the chapel safely, as calculated in the risk assessment.
- If possible, ceremonies should be concluded in the shortest reasonable time.
- Water is required for the ceremony, and that is acceptable, but attention should be given to hygiene guidance including handwashing prior to and after the ceremony, and only small amounts of water are to use to avoid splashing. A shell or other small receptacle can be used for the imposition of the water.
- Only a minimum number of people should gather immediately around the child or adult being baptised to avoid being splashed by water and in order to maintain social distancing.
- If the person being baptised is a baby or infant, then they should be held by their parent or guardian or other member of the child's regular household only.
- It should be considered how those who fall within a vulnerable group are able to attend safely as it is important that those who wish to attend are able to safely.
- All spoken voices should use a PA system where possible or practical. Specifically projecting or raising voices should be avoided.
- It is important to liaise and communicate with the parties involved in advance. This will ensure that controls and expectations on the day are managed sensitively:
  - o Communication of agreed arrangements in the chapel.
  - o Basic arrangement for cleaning and hygiene.
  - o Knowledge of numbers attending and potential seating plan.
  - o Ability to assess if there are parties who are clinically vulnerable and therefore being able to make additional arrangements and advise others to be aware and sympathetic to this.