

This document is Hope Church Gravesend COVID-19 Risk Assessment, review number 6.

Purpose of this review: To take account of government guidance applicable under Step 4 on the roadmap to recovery from 19/07/2021, (updated 16/07/2021). ([click here to read the guidance](#))

At Step 4 all legal rules affecting places of worship in relation to covid-19 ceased to apply. Instead there is a greater emphasis on using personal judgement to manage our own risks.

The trustees of the church have an on-going legal duty to manage risks to those affected by their business or organisation, by carrying out a health and safety risk assessment, including the risk of infection by COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate the risks identified.

On 21/07/2021 the leaders met and resolved the following:

DECISION: The leaders will continue to take the following ongoing measures, for the following reasons:

1. There is a high degree of uncertainty about the impact of the current increase in covid-19, (especially delta variant), along with uncertainty about the effects of the relaxation of restrictions after 19 July, and the situation is likely to be clearer in 6 weeks or so;
2. Not all adults will have had the opportunity to be double vaccinated, and again the ongoing impact of the pandemic on different groups should be clearer in some weeks time.

PROPOSAL:

- To retain 2 metre distancing facilitated by pre-booking.
- To allow face coverings to be dispensed with while seated, but to wear them when moving from seating at start and end of service or mingling. i.e. if interaction is at a distance of less than 2m. (This is not entirely a new idea, and has been used in other contexts, such as restaurants etc.)
- To recommence congregational singing as part of our worship
- To encourage fellowship/mingling outside the building

OUTCOME:

- Implement the above
- Update the covid-19 Risk Assessment
- Regularly review and implement further changes as required and as the situation develops.

HOPE REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH: COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT – REVIEW PROFORMA				RISK ASSESSMENT NUMBER		6
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
GENERAL Infection by COVID-19	All attendees	PRIOR COMMUNICATION: Clear instructions on church website. Especially not to attend church if displaying symptoms or after being told to isolate by NHS track and trace; COVID-19 Risk Assessment on website; Clear verbal instructions given in church whenever changes introduced, as well as occasional reminders.	These measures will continue	Trustees (leaders)	Ongoing	
Infection by airborne virus; (main confirmed source of transmission of the coronavirus infection)	All attendees	SOCIAL DISTANCING: Seating arranged in blocks of seats at 2 metre distance from one another.	Legal requirements for social distancing will no longer apply. The trustees have decided to retain this measure, however, wherever possible. Where not possible, (due to numbers attending), additional mitigation will be adopted.	Trustees, Stewards.	Ongoing, with regular review	
Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	VENTILATION: Adequate ventilation reduces risk of the build up of viral particles; ensures that fresh air is brought into the building, and stale air removed.	Windows will continue to be opened before and during the service, and electric fans will direct high level movement of air towards the windows. Additional heating to be provided in colder weather to compensate.	Stewards	Weekly	

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Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	FACE COVERINGS: Worn to reduce the risk of infection by persons infected with the virus but with no symptoms.	Face coverings are no longer required by law. The Government expects/ recommends that people wear face coverings in “crowded” areas. Continuing with social distancing ensures our services are not ‘crowded’, and even with the entire regular congregation present we are some way from the building capacity. The trustees have decided to advise wearing face coverings when moving past other people, en route to their seat. When seated the face covering may be removed. This includes when standing for congregational singing. When circumstances involve closer physical proximity, e.g. seating arranged at less than 2 metres for special services, or gathering around in one area of the room such as for baptisms, the trustees decision is that face coverings should then be worn. It is recognised that not everyone will wish to remove their face covering, or be seated near to those who have done so. Where possible we will make separate seating arrangements for any who express their preference for this.	Trustees, Stewards.	Ongoing, with regular review	

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Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING: There has been government guidance against singing during the pandemic.	There are no longer any limits on the number of people who can sing. The trustees have decided this should recommence immediately, without face coverings, with risk mitigated by distancing.	Trustees		
Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	MINGLING: Both before and after the service attendees may wish to speak with one another.	Where possible this should take place outside the building. If talking within the chapel, it is advised to wear a face covering and/or maintain 2 metre distance.	All attendees	Ongoing	
Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	STEWARDING: Stewards assist people to understand the arrangements and guide them to their seat.	Stewards will continue to wear face coverings when guiding people into the building and to their seat. They will offer advice as required. They control doorways and other potential ‘pinch points’, including the narrow corridor where the toilets are situated. They will also provide hand sanitiser, and if required spare face coverings. They will keep an informal note of people attending in case of the need to contact them after the service.	Stewards	Ongoing	
Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	SERVICE TIMES: Reduced time spent in the building reduces risk of infection.	By not regularly serving refreshments after the service we are reducing the time spent in the building.	Pastor/ other preachers/ admin/ all	Weekly	

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Infection by airborne virus	All attendees	PRE-BOOKING SYSTEM: This enables efficient planning ahead to ensure everyone is accommodated in the building.	Pre-booking will continue to be a requirement given that we are continuing to practice social distancing in the seating arrangements.	Admin Deacon and all attendees	Weekly	
Infection from hand contact	All attendees	HAND SANITISER: Reduces risk of infection onto or from hard surfaces.	We will continue to provide alcohol based hand sanitiser at all entrances, and in toilets etc. We will continue to display official posters reminding people of the need for good hygiene at all times, such as hand washing/use of sanitiser, avoiding touching the eyes, nose and mouth, and covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.	Stewards and all attendees	Ongoing	
Infection from hand contact	All attendees	LORD’S SUPPER: This was temporarily discontinued due to the perceived risk of onward transmission of the virus.	The trustees have decided to recommence regular celebration of the Lord’s Supper with immediate effect. The bread will be pre-cut in hygienic conditions and offered alongside the wine in individual communion cups. The person distributing the bread and wine will wear a face covering and gloves.	All celebrants and anyone involved in the administration of the Lord’s Supper	Monthly or as decided by the trustees	

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Infection from hand contact and by airborne virus	Candidates or officiates at baptisms	BAPTISMS: Carrying out adult baptism by immersion has been temporarily discontinued during the pandemic, following government guidance	There are no longer any legal restrictions or guidance preventing baptisms. The trustees have decided to reintroduce this important expression of Christian faith with immediate effect. Risk of any transmission in act of baptism is minimal due to the very brief contact time and large volume of water.	Baptismal officiant and baptismal candidate	As required	
GENERAL Infection by COVID-19	All attendees	AFTER THE SERVICE: We have formally recorded names and contact details under NHS Test and Trace Procedures, as required by law. This data has been processed at all times in accordance with GDPR and our Data Protection Policy.	We are no longer required by law to collect customer contact details, or keep a record of your staff and visitors. Pastorally, however, the leaders believe that it would be helpful to know with certainty who was in attendance at a service in the event that an attendee subsequently tests positive, so that individuals may be contacted. We will keep an informal note of the names of attendees, which will be held securely and then destroyed after 21 days in accordance with our data protection policy. Anyone not wishing to have their name recorded may opt out at any time.	Stewards and designated trustees.	Weekly	

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Infection from hand contact and by airborne virus	All attendees	REFRESHMENTS AND FELLOWSHIP MEALS: Throughout the pandemic the kitchen has been taken out of use and no food or drink has been served.	There are no longer any restrictions or guidance on serving food and drink. Instead we must follow the guidance for restaurants, pubs, bars nightclubs and takeaway services. The trustees feel that the time is not yet appropriate to reintroduce the serving of food and drink on the premises. This also serves another objective of not encouraging people to stay for lengthy periods of time spent together, thereby increasing risk of transmission. For special events, weather allowing, the leaders consider it may be possible to serve light refreshments outside the chapel premises.	Trustees	Decision subject to review	
Infection from hand contact	All attendees	CLEANING: Reduces the risk of transmission by removing traces of the virus from infected surfaces. Pay special attention to handrails, door handles and toilet apparatus and other hard surfaces likely to have been touched by infected persons Use of paper towels to be safely disposed of into bins provided;	We will continue to practice thorough cleaning of the building. We will seek to recruit additional people to cleaning team	Cleaners	Weekly and ongoing as required	

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		Use of antiviral spray as needed; Removal of unnecessary items of furniture to reduce likelihood of contamination by contact and ease cleaning.				
Infection from hand contact and by airborne virus	Clinically extremely vulnerable people	CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE PEOPLE: Certain individuals may be at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill if you were to catch COVID-19	Such people are advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else. However, those at a higher risk should think particularly carefully about precautions they can continue to take. These precautions are included in the government guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable.	All people treated as belonging to this group	Ongoing	
Infection from hand contact and by airborne virus by children, who may be asymptomatic carriers and also less aware of the need to be distanced	All attendees	SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN: Parents to be asked to supervise their children at all times. Children to be seated with parents and not allowed to run around. Children without parents or adult carers not allowed to attend. No children’s toys provided by the church.	Existing arrangements to be continued for the time being, in particular due to the social distancing arrangements, which mean that Junior Church cannot yet be restarted.	Parents. Trustees.	Subject to periodical review by trustees	
Infection from hand contact	All attendees	GENERAL: Hand shaking or elbow bumping not encouraged;	We will continue to practise these measures	Trustees	Ongoing subject to review	

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		Hymnbooks, Bibles, and notice sheets not to be distributed; Printed text (hymns/Bible) to be displayed on AV system; Encourage congregation to bring their own Bible or Phone/Tablet Bible app etc, keep hold of it and take it home. Cash giving encouraged via open offering box, counted after 72 hour quarantine period.				
Infection from hand contact and by airborne virus - Suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 on site. Staff volunteers, or visitors may display symptoms of COVID-19 whilst on site	All attendees	SUSPECTED/CONFIRMED INFECTION: If a person becomes unwell with a recognised COVID-19 symptom, they must be sent home and advised to follow the current guidance including contacting NHS 111. Check that we have the person’s name and contact details recorded correctly. If subsequently a positive COVID-19 test is reported follow current guidance.	We will continue to follow this guidance	Stewards, First Aiders	As required	

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Infection from hand contact and by airborne virus - infection during the administering of First Aid or emergency evacuation of the building	All attendees, an injured person or First Aider	<p>ACTIONS IN EMERGENCIES: In an emergency, e.g. accident, provision of first aid, fire etc. people do not have to remain socially distant if it would be unsafe, but actions taken during an incident or emergency should follow social distancing and face covering/ hand protection principles as far as possible. People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands etc. Follow emergency evacuation procedures at all times – fire safety takes precedent over risk of covid-19 infection. All first aid to be recorded in the Accident Book in line with policy</p>	We will continue to follow this guidance	Anyone involved	As required	
COVID-19 positive test after attendance at service	All attendees	<p>POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 If someone who attended the service later tests positive, follow current guidance.</p>	We will communicate with anyone affected by this occurrence, and ensure they know what they should do, if anything.	Trustees and anyone affected	As required	