

Risk Assessment for Funerals

Scope of Risk Assessment

This risk assessment is for conducting funerals at St Anne's.

The risk assessment takes account of guidance issued by the Church of England - House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group.

Date of Risk Assessment: 22/6/20

Review Date: When government advice changes

This risk assessment has been agreed by the Coronavirus working group and the PCC standing committee.

Aspect of Control	Controls in place
Making arrangements	Clergy will carry out all planning discussions with the family via telephone or video link, and documents/papers should be shared electronically.
	Preparation discussions must include discussion about mourners who are extremely clinically vulnerable or self-isolating at the time the funeral (see below)
Limiting attendance	In line with government guidance only the following should attend: members of the person's household, close family members, or if the above are unable to attend, close friends.
Social Distancing	30 individual mourners can be accommodated on the ground floor of the church at any one time in order to maintain 2 m social distancing, however with groups from the same household seated together and socially distanced from other groups and individuals, it would be possible to accommodate more than 30.
	Once the church has reached capacity, other mourners will be required to participate from outside, in order to maintain social distancing
	To manage numbers and ensure social distancing is maintained a pre agreed seating plan will be produced in conjunction with the funeral directors and family, using a template of the church seating.
	Clergy, NCOs and funeral directors will have copies of the seating plan in advance
	The use of a seating allows specific seating arrangements to be made for those that are from self-isolating households (but have no symptoms), and the extremely clinically vulnerable (see below)
	Clergy and NCO's are also able to maintain social distancing because of the areas of the church where they will be located
	The balcony area will remain out of use for the time being, to minimise routine cleaning requirements. The area is cordoned off
	All mourners will be directed to the appropriate seating positions by the nominated church officials (NCO) on duty

Aspect of Control	Controls in place
Access/egress at the Church	A strict one-way system will be operated with mourners entering via the right-hand west door and leaving by the left-hand west door. This system would be overridden should an emergency evacuation be necessary
	Steps to the balcony are cordoned off
	Outer entry/exit doors will be permanently propped open at all times the church is in use, to minimise touch points and enhance ventilation. The NCO will open the inner doors to minimise the number of people in contact with these surfaces
	At least two NCOs will be on duty at all times, they will be located outside the church before the service and in the warden pews during the service and maintain social distance from the mourners and others. The NCO's will manage the door opening/closing, so touch points are minimised
Record of attendance	Mourners attending will be asked to provide contact details to NCOs, in case test and trace is necessary in the event of local covid-19 cases
	The church will ensure these records are kept securely and destroyed when no longer needed
Hygiene	Hand sanitiser will be available at both the entry and exit points to the church
	NCOs will encourage all mourners to use the sanitizer
	The sink in church will not be available for use and will be cordoned off for general use. The NCOs, in the event of an emergency, may use the sink
	The toilets in the church hall will not be available and mourners are informed of this
	A lidded bin with foot pedal will be available for use in church and will always be lined with a plastic liner
Church cleaning	Weekly thorough cleaning of the church is arranged by a professional cleaning company, each cleaning session lasting 3.5 hours. This cleaning can be rescheduled if required, in order to accommodate a funeral service
	All touch points and the entry areas will be the focus of the cleaning regime
	Cleaning regime includes the use of Fumite OPP that is a type of fogging and this cleaning will be used regularly and as required.
	In church there are sanitising wipes and gloves for use by NCOs, who will wipe down surfaces after the funeral service.
	All soft furnishings, kneelers, banners etc. and all other loose materials have been removed from church for the time being to assist with the cleaning processes

Aspect of Control	Controls in place
Nature of the funeral service	Church will only be opened by the Clergy or church warden 30 minutes before the appointed time, to allow sufficient time for mourners to arrive in a staggered way
	Mourners will be encouraged to stagger departure times, as directed by the funeral directors
	Recorded music may be used by prior agreement with the clergy
	St Anne's organ is maintained by the organist, so no one else has access to the instrument and a notice is posted to this effect. The organ is more than 2 m from the pew area, so it is possible to offer organ music at funeral services
	Singing is not permitted at present and will not form part of the service
	Prayer books will not be available, however funeral directors will bring to church orders of service, which mourners are requested to take with them and dispose of safely afterwards
	The single church bell may be rung for 5 minutes before the funeral. It will always be rung by one of the NCOs from the wardens pew (not upstairs) and they will wear gloves
	Candles can be lit by mourners, using a single use taper and while social distancing is maintained. A metal bin is provided for the disposal of the used tapers
Coronavirus Symptoms	Any mourners who currently have symptoms no matter how mild, MUST NOT attend
	If it is subsequently determined that a mourner who recently attended the church is confirmed as having coronavirus then the church may be closed and thoroughly cleaned by a professional cleaning company prior to any reopening. This may result in a revised schedule for individual prayer being published.
Self-isolation households without symptoms	In line with government guidance key mourners of the deceased person may include those who are self-isolating due to another member of the household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus. These self-isolating mourners should be facilitated to attend
	Attendance by self-isolating mourners with no symptoms must be made known to funeral directors, Clergy and NCO's in advance
	Mourners who are from a household that is self-isolating are advised to use their own transport to the church, where possible.
Extremely Clinical Vulnerable	Any potential mourners in this group must be made aware of the presence of any self-isolating households and encouraged not to attend
	Any mourners in this group who choose to attend, must be notified to the funeral directors and Clergy in advance and made aware of the presence of any self-isolating households. This should be taken into account in the seating plan

Aspect of Control	Controls in place
Role of NCOs	The NCOs will be issued with a copy of this risk assessment and briefed about their role
	NCO's will be requested to arrive at least 30 minutes before the funeral service to ensure they are available to perform all their roles
	As indicated above at least two NCOs will be on duty at the funeral service. They will be located outside the church before the service and in the warden pews during the service and maintain social distance from the mourners and others. The NCO's will manage the door opening/closing, so touch points are minimised.
	The NCOs outside will greet mourners, record name and contact details, while maintaining social distancing and indicate if there is sufficient space available for them to enter the church at this time
	NCOs will be able to explain the seating arrangements, the one-way system and exit point, the location of the hand sanitisers etc.
	NCOs must familiarise themselves with the seating plan before the service and if appropriate be made aware of any self-isolating mourners and those that are extremely clinically vulnerable
	It may be necessary for mourners to wait outside for a short period of time while others are directed to their seats.
	NCO's may require some mourners to participate from outside, in order to maintain social distancing
	In the event of an emergency the NCOs will give clear instruction on how to leave the building (both doors can be used for exit in this event) and how social distancing can be maintained at that time
	NCOs are recommended to use the gloves provided at all times and in particular when wiping down surfaces after the service. Following this NCOs should dispose of the gloves into the lidded bin and sanitise their hands, before leaving.