

COVID-19 Risk Assessment for the Re-opening of Etherley Methodist Church

South Road , High Etherley, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 0HZ

Date 1st of August 2020

Assessment carried out by David Cadman

We closed our Church in the middle of March 2020 as the lockdown was imposed by the Government. We decided that we would operate a limited amount of heating, which would be controlled automatically, in order to keep the Church interior and all contents, well ventilated and warm, and prevent any damp issues. The gas boiler and associated equipment would also benefit from regular use. We also inspected the Church on a regular basis as a security matter, and opened the cold water taps, and flushed the toilets.

Our lawns were also maintained and the grass mown regularly.

We are now looking forward to the re-opening of the Church, and addressing the restrictions that have been imposed, so that anybody visiting our Church can be assured that risks have been identified, and actions taken to ensure that everyone will be safe, and we are absolutely in line with all the safety requirements.

A risk assessment normally identifies a range of risks against a series of criteria. However, as the most serious risks, rated 9, can be linked to individuals aged 70 years and over, regardless of any medical conditions, and most of our personnel and congregation fall within that definition, we have decided to rate all risks at that level, and provide the solutions and requirements accordingly, so everyone can be assured, we are operating against the strictest criteria, regardless of their own personal criteria.

We will analyse each area of the Church and clearly state what actions we are putting in place.

Normally, we would review these assessments annually, but in today's constantly changing restrictions and requirements, we will keep pace with the government and Methodist Church's requirements. We will also seek feedback from all visitors to our Church, and look to improve any shortcomings that visitors may indicate.

We are a small/medium sized Church, and we manage the Church via a Leadership Team, and a treasurer and secretary, all of which are volunteers, and everyone wears many different hats, depending on their skills. We also have a number of additional volunteers who help in many areas, such as door stewards, funeral stewards, communion stewards, cleaners, kitchen staff, gardeners etc,

Action Assess whether all these volunteers are willing to carry out their normal contributions

Response Indications at this point are that they will, providing the safety actions are carried out as indicated.

We have an experienced and dedicated cleaning team that will manage our initial, and hopefully regular Sunday services requirements. We will endeavour to leave doors open, but all contact points, such as door handles, light switches etc. will be regularly cleaned before and after use whenever possible. Dettol bacteria wipes will be positioned in the toilets, so individuals can wipe all surfaces and handles as required.

Action Ensure PPE, wipes, and all other cleaning materials, should always be available, together with suitable disposal bins.

Response All Stock already in position, but will be reviewed constantly.

We also have the facility of an additional modern car park at the rear of the Bell's factory should our numbers increase.

As part of this Risk Assessment, we will analyse each room, but linked into an overall safety plan. We are fortunate that our Church has

individual seats and two entrance doors to the Church. We intend to use floor markings in all area`s and operate a one way system.

The FOYER

The Foyer is the main entrance to all area`s. As individuals enter they will be registered on a attendance register ,cleanse their hands with an appropriate hand cleaner and have their temperature taken by a non evasive temperaure moniter.Personnel carrying out these tasks will wear suitable PPE,and the reception desk will have a suitable clear barrier and everyone will be welcomed in a friendly efficient manner, as usual. Anybody who records a high temperature will not be allowed into the building.

Action Ensure that we have the requisite equipment and floor markings

Response We already have suitable distance and direction markers in stock.

We have both face masks and visors for ALL personnel , and visitors if required.

We have a suitable desk safety screen to protect both the visitor and our personnel

We will have a different system to record any new visitors that will allow traceability but not impact on their data protection rights.

The Church

The Church has two doors , one of which will be the entrance door , and the other the exit door. Both doors will be marked, and direction information clearly indicated. We have 100 single comfortable chairs, and we have evaluated how many chairs will be needed, when we apply the 2 metre distancing rule.

We can comply with these distance rules,and safely sit, up to the maximum permitted 30 people limit. All chairs not to be used, will be removed from the Church area. We are fortunate that we have a state of the art audio/visual system which was installed and comissioned in March 2020, before the shutdown, and therefore we should have no need to use any books, the use of which are currently being discouraged.

We will not pass a giving plate around the congregation as normal, but instead position the plate near the exit. All non cash collections will be encouraged.

Action Ensure that we have the requisite equipment and floor markings.

Preachers are aware of our audio and visual systems.

Ensure collections are quaranteed for 48 hours before counting and banking.

Response. We already have the requisite equipment and marking systems onsite.

We have a suitable safe storage area for all chairs not being used.

Stewards and Treasurer are aware of the quaranteen arrangements.

The Toilets

The toilets will be within the one way system, and all 3 toilets will be fitted with the new paper dispensers, and suitable disposal bins. All 3 will be deep cleaned and will contain Dettol wipes, antibacterial hand wash and saniticer.

Only the disabled toilet will be in use , through the one way system, in order for social distancing to be operated.

The Vestry

The Vestry will be deep cleaned, with sanitiser, paper towels and suitable bin, **and for the sole use of the visiting Minister.**

Exiting from the Toilets and the Vestry will be directed through the School Room.

Action Ensure Direction Arrows and distance marking are clear.

Response All required markings already in stock

The Kitchen

Although not in use until Government guidelines are relaxed/removed, it will be deep cleaned , and have a new paper towel dispenser fitted. We have also purchase a suitable clear screen that will be in position between the kitchen and the school room, to protect the kitchen personnel and the people in the school room, but will allow the safe passage of food and drinks etc.,when allowed.

The opening of the kitchen will be constantly reviewed depending on ongoing government restrictions.

The Schoolroom

Like the Kitchen , the use of the schoolroom will be determined by the ongoing government restrictions.