

Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Re-opening and Use of Church Building for Communal Worship

Premises assessed: Caersalem Baptist Chapel, Ty'r Winch Road, Old St Mellons, Cardiff CF3 5US

Version: 1.3

Date approved: 7 August 2021

Approved by: Church Officers

Introduction

On 26 March 2020 the Welsh Ministers, under the provisions of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, enacted The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 which, amongst various provisions, required the closure of places of worship except in limited, defined circumstances. The regulations have been amended, revoked and placed several times with the current iteration being The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No.5) (Wales) Regulations 2020 (together with subsequent amendments the “Regulations”).

The Regulations lifted the restriction on the closure of places of worship by defining them as “Open Premises”, subject to the provisions set out therein. The Regulations also made provision for Welsh Ministers to issue guidance in addition to the Regulations to which persons responsible (in the case of Caersalem Baptist Chapel, these are the Church Officers of St Mellons Baptist Church) for Open Premises must “have regard to”. On 20 July 2020 Welsh Government issued (and have subsequently updated) “Guidance on reopening places of worship: coronavirus” (the “Guidance”) which permits the use of places of worship for “communal worship and religious ceremonies including led prayers, devotions or meditations by a Minister of Religion or a lay person”. The Guidance requires a COVID-19 risk assessment to be carried out for every building open to the public.

The church’s insurers, Congregational Insurance, have also issued guidance on reopening. It is noted that this is orientated towards churches in England and the legislative requirements there. This needs to be considered in addition to the Regulations and Guidance but, where there is a conflict, the Regulations and Guidance take precedence unless the church’s insurers require more restrictive practices.

This risk assessment will be reviewed and updated in line with any substantive change to the Regulations and /or Guidance and based on experience of operating the church building under the current requirements.

Review/Revision Record

Date of Review	Approved by	Comments
16 September 2020	Church Officers	Version 1 approved and issued.
19 April 2021	Church Officers	Sundry updates reflecting learnings from implementation
19 June 2021	Church Officers	Updated to reflect new guidance on congregational singing and other sundry changes
7 August 2021	Church Officers	Updated to reflect move to Level 0 under the Regulations

Links to relevant documents

Source	Title	Link
Welsh Government	Coronavirus legislation and guidance on the law	https://gov.wales/coronavirus-legislation-and-guidance-law
Welsh Government	Guidance on reopening places of worship: coronavirus	https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus-html
Congregational Insurance	Coronavirus – helping policyholders	https://www.congregational.co.uk/policyholders/coronavirus-information

Risk assessment matrix

Likelihood / Probability
5. Likely to occur at least once in any 12-month period
4. Likely to occur at least once in a 3-year period
3. Likely to occur at least once in a 10-year period
2. Likely to occur at least once in a 50-year period
1. Unlikely in a 50-year period

Severity / Significance / Consequence
5. Expected to result in church closure or significant harm to multiple individuals, death of an individual
4. Material threat to continued existence of church, or significant harm to single individual
3. Substantial adaptation required to ongoing operations
2. Minor adaptation required to ongoing operations
1. Inconvenience to ongoing operations

RISK / PRIORITY INDICATOR MATRIX						
LIKELIHOOD / PROBABILITY	5	7	14	21	28	35
	4	6	12	18	24	30
	3	5	10	15	20	25
	2	4	8	12	16	20
	1	3	6	9	12	15
		1	2	3	4	5
SEVERITY / SIGNIFICANCE / CONSEQUENCE						

Score = (Severity x Likelihood) + (2 x Severity)

(this formula places additional emphasis on high severity issues)

Summary		Recommended timeframe for implementing any identified control measures
20+	High	Immediate / within days
15-19	Medium	Within weeks
1-15	Low	Whenever viable to do so

Risk:	Coronavirus entering the chapel and potentially infecting users of the chapel					
Persons at risk	Ministers, members, attendees, cleaners					
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	4
	Severity	3			Severity	1
	Overall Risk	21			Overall Risk	6

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Instructions to be issued that anyone symptomatic is not to attend	Y	Nick Rowe	On website and signage at chapel
2. All attendees instructed to follow government guidance on self-isolation after symptoms and/or positive test/contact tracing/quarantining after foreign travel etc.	Y	Nick Rowe	On website and signage at chapel
3. Hand sanitising stations to be installed at every entry point to and within the building.	Y		10 installed
4. Everyone requested to use hand sanitiser on entry to the building.	Y		Signage installed and included in stewards briefing paper
5. Display suitable posters to ask people with symptoms not to enter the building	y		In both porches
6. Action Plan in place in event of Coronavirus case known to enter premises	Y		Trace, Test, Protect procedures to be followed with enhanced cleaning
7. Test, Trace and Protect to be implemented	Y		Signage installed for app.

Risk:	Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual direct from infected person					
Persons at risk	Ministers, members, attendees, cleaners					
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	4
	Severity	3			Severity	1
	Overall Risk	21			Overall Risk	6

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
<p>1. Singing is permitted subject to the following being adhered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Singing may only take place in the main chapel area to ensure adequate space and ventilation b. All persons aged 11 or over must wear a face mask to sing, irrespective of any medical conditions that may provide an exemption in other circumstances. Visors are not an acceptable replacement c. The Minister officiating at the service must either wear a face mask to sing or provide evidence of a negative lateral flow test taken the day before the service d. Indoor temperature must be at least 15 degrees Celsius 15 minutes before the start of a service e. Individual hymns to be spaced out during a service f. Piano volume to be restricted so as not to encourage loud singing g. No hymn books to be provided. Limited copies of hymns to be printed for those unable to see the projection and without access to a device to download or a printer at home h. Chapel windows to be left open between morning and evening Sunday services, subject to the need to maintain a minimum temperature as per (d) above 	Y		

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
2. Signage in place to remind people of safe practices	Y		Signage in place
3. All attendees to be required to wear face masks unless have a valid exemption as per Welsh Government Regulations. NB stricter requirements are in place to participate in singing as per (7) above.	Y		<p>Included in signage and instructions</p> <p>The preacher shall not be required to wear a face mask whilst conducting the service as a result of the following announcement by Welsh Government on 15 September 2020 – “We consider that those leading worship or a ceremony may have a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering if they cannot effectively do so while wearing one, as long as they have taken other sufficient mitigations such as staying continually over 2 metres away from others and/or wearing a visor.”</p> <p>As the pulpit is considerably more than 2m away from any attendee this is considered sufficient mitigation.</p>

Risk:	Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via a contaminated surface/item (excluding toilet facilities)					
Persons at risk	Ministers, members, attendees, cleaners					
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	4		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	3
	Severity	3			Severity	1
	Overall Risk	18			Overall Risk	5

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Doors kept open where possible to reduce contact with door handles (may not be appropriate for fire safety or to maintain minimum required temperatures)	Y		Signage in place for doors that will remain open
2. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.	Y		Cleaning requirements discussed with cleaner
3. Offering not counted for 72 hours after service.	Y		
4. Building not used again for 72 hours after service unless appropriate cleaning is undertaken	Y		Cleaning products supplied for high contact surfaces
5. No bibles, hymn books, supplements or children's materials – attendees asked to bring their own and take them away with them.	Y		All removed from pews
6. Storage areas for books, toys etc to be marked as out of bounds.	Y		All cupboard are sealed
7. Microphones and other necessary equipment kept to a single individual	Y		

Risk:	Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via toilet facilities					
Persons at risk	Ministers, members, attendees, cleaners					
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	4		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	3
	Severity	3			Severity	1
	Overall Risk	18			Overall Risk	5

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Regular cleaning of surfaces likely to be touched regularly with appropriate sanitiser spray.	Y		Cleaner advised
2. Toilets supplied with disposal hand towels or dryers (not a reusable linen towel), liquid soap.	Y		Already standard practice
3. Key contact surfaces to be cleaned between services	Y		
4. Children under 11 to be accompanied to the toilet	Y		

Risk:	Transmission of Coronavirus to an individual via contaminated waste					
Persons at risk	Cleaners and anyone else handling waste					
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	4		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	3
	Severity	3			Severity	1
	Overall Risk	18			Overall Risk	5

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Everyone asked to take waste home with them if possible	Y		Included in instructions
2. All waste to be assumed contaminated and handled appropriately	Y		New pedal bins installed
3. Anyone handling waste to be trained in suitable working practices	Y		
4. All waste handled with suitable PPE	Y		
5. All bins lined with disposable liners and all waste double bagged prior to disposal and kept for 72 hours prior to disposal in general waste.	Y		
6. Lidded bins operated by foot-pedal to be provided	Y		
7. Additional bins to be provided at entry/exit points	Y		

Risk:	Injury or illness to persons as a result of underuse of Chapel prior to reopening					
Persons at risk	Ministers, leaders, members, attendees, contractors, cleaners					
Risk Rating before control measures	Likelihood	5		Risk Rating after control measures	Likelihood	1
	Severity	5			Severity	1
	Overall Risk	35			Overall Risk	3

Control Measures	Control in place (Y/N)	Person Responsible	Comments
1. Ensure annual servicing has been undertaken where required (e.g. boilers)	Y		Completed end of August
2. Visually inspect all visible wiring for signs of damage, e.g. from vermin	Y		Done – no matters noted
3. Complete repairs to emergency lighting system			Majority of work complete – some minor matters to address but building will only be used in daylight hours
4. Run all taps for a minimum of 10 minutes to flush water systems	Y		Done 12 Sept
5. Drain, refill, reheat and re-drain drinking water boilers.	Y		Done 12 Sept
6. Recheck first aid stocks and obtain additional PPE for use by first aiders	Y		Completed w/c 7 Sept
7. Undertake “deep clean” of building prior to reopening	Y		Complete 1 Sept