

**Covid-19 Risk assessment relating to use of the chapel as a public place of worship in the light of the present pandemic.**

**Ebenezer Baptist Chapel, Bounds Cross, Biddenden, TN27 8JZ** Assessment carried out by: Pastor & Deacon

Date of next review: Following each Sunday as appropriate

Original assessment was carried out: 29/30 June 2020 & issued 2 July 2020

**EIGHTH REVIEW 3 DECEMBER 2020**

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
<b>1. People with symptoms or people who have those in their household with symptoms</b>	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.	Most people by now are familiar with government advice that in these circumstances people should return home and self-isolate for seven days or quarantine for 14 days as appropriate.	Such people should not attend and will be asked to return home. The government's advice will be reiterated in a guidance note.	Officers to include with updated guidance note and issue by email.  All worshippers/visitors to observe the advice.	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.  Upon arriving if not adhered to beforehand.	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing compliance required.</i>
<b>2. People who begin to feel unwell after arriving or during a service</b>	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.	Most individuals are aware of the symptoms associated with Covid-19 and the potential risks.	Such people will be asked to return home as appropriate. This will be covered in a guidance note.	Officers to include with updated guidance note and issue by email. All worshippers/	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.  When the person	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing compliance</i>

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				visitors to observe advice.	becomes unwell.	<i>required.</i>
<b>3. Worshippers/visitors attending who are at greater risk from contracting Covid-19</b>	<p>1. Individuals who are clinical vulnerable or over 70 coming into contact with individuals from other households.</p> <p>2. Individuals who are extremely clinically vulnerable coming into contact with individuals from other households.</p>	<p>Most of these groups are aware of the government advice.</p> <p>This group will have been advised by the NHS of their increased risk.</p>	<p>Reiterate the government's guidance and advice.</p> <p>Reiterate the government's guidance and advice with respect to this second group.</p> <p>Services will continue to be streamed for the benefit of such people as well as others not attending.</p>	<p>To include in updated guidance note and issue by email.</p> <p>All worshippers/visitors to take account of the advice.</p> <p>Officers/and or other volunteer.</p>	<p>Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.</p> <p>All worshippers in these groups to consider the advice before deciding whether or not to attend.</p> <p>When services are taking place.</p>	<p><i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing Consideration.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing.</i></p>
<b>4. Arriving and leaving by private car</b> (None of the current congregation arrive or leave by public transport or taxi. Buses are infrequent and the railway station is 2 plus miles away.)	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.	People from different households will arrive in their own transport. There is adequate space in the car park for the numbers of people likely to attend/that will be	We will ask each household only to get out of or into their vehicles if there is adequate space between them and the next vehicle or otherwise to wait if others are already getting out of or into their vehicles, to	<p>To include in updated guidance note and issue by email.</p> <p>All worshippers/visitors to observe the advice.</p>	<p>Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.</p> <p>When arriving for a service and upon leaving.</p>	<p><i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing compliance required.</i></p>

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		allowed to attend a service.	ensure social distancing is complied with.			
<b>5. Arriving and leaving as a pedestrian and/or presence of individuals within the grounds around the chapel</b>	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.	When arriving or leaving via either of the two ground entrances/exits there is adequate space and visibility within the grounds to be able to observe the presence of other people.	Everyone will be asked to observe social distancing and regrettably, we will also advise everyone not to give handshakes or hugs (a warm friendly smile will have to do for the time being!)  Whilst we are in a <b>Tier 3</b> location only minimal contact with others is allowed outside.	To include in updated guidance note and issue by email.  All worshippers/visitors to observe the advice.	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.  During the chapel being open and when arriving and leaving the chapel.	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing compliance required.</i>
<b>6. Entering and leaving the building</b>  <b>Congestion in the lobby and the aisles within the sanctuary</b>	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.	Officers and/or stewards are available to monitor people arriving and leaving, to open and close doors, to provide help and assistance as needed to ensure	We will be asking worshippers/visitors to keep within their household groups and children/young people to be supervised.  Each person/household will be asked to wait outside the chapel	To include in updated guidance note and issue by email.  Officers and/or stewards. All worshippers/	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.  When ready to enter the chapel	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing practice</i> <i>Ongoing compliance</i>

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		<p>people's safety and wellbeing are met.</p> <p>Fire exits are all</p>	<p>building until a steward is available to show them to or advise them of a suitable seat.</p> <p>If necessary we will also ask individuals/groups to queue observing the 2 metre social distancing to avoid congestion at the entrance and to allow space for others going into the building and the time to be seated. (There is adequate space within the confines of the grounds for queuing not to compromise security.)</p> <p>At the end of the service we will be asking them to leave a row at a time. Once outside to spread out so that social distancing is observed.</p> <p>Except in an emergency</p>	<p>visitors to observe the advice.</p> <p>Officers and/or stewards. All worshippers/visitors to observe the advice.</p> <p>This will be announced at the end of the service as necessary.</p> <p>All to observe.</p>	<p>At the end of the service</p>	<p><i>required.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing practice.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing compliance required.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing practice.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing practice.</i></p>

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		marked.	people will be asked to leave via the front doors.			
<b>7. Touching surfaces within and when entering and leaving the building</b>	Worshippers/ visitors including caretakers touching surfaces already touched by individuals from other households.	The building is subject to regular cleaning and will be cleaned thoroughly before reopening the chapel. Pew ledges and other shelving have been cleared.	<p>Doors will be opened and closed by one nominated person and remain open for worshippers/visitors arriving and leaving the building <i>weather permitting</i>.</p> <p>Everyone will be asked either to use the provided hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the building or to wash their hands with soap and water available in the toilets.</p> <p>Pew ledges and other surfaces frequently touched, such as door handles, door posts, will be regularly cleaned including between</p>	<p>Stewards to be nominated and advised.</p> <p>To include in updated guidance note and issue by email. Also advised on posters put up by officers. All to observe.</p> <p>Caretakers and/or other volunteer(s).</p>	<p>Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.</p> <p>Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December. When arriving for a service and upon leaving.</p> <p>Between services or prior to forthcoming services.</p>	<p><i>Paul and Marcus appointed.</i></p> <p><i>Email sent 4 December 20. Posters put up 2 July 20 Ongoing compliance required.</i></p> <p><i>Appropriate cleaning carried out afterwards and regular cleaning in the week.</i></p>

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			services.			
<p><b>8. Seating arrangements</b></p>	<p>Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.</p>	<p>With the current congregation there is spare seating capacity within the chapel. With the exception of the seat in front of the pulpit and two side facing all are forward facing.</p>	<p>We have closed off some rows of seating to allow sufficient distancing between seats for worshippers/visitors from different households, and will only be using forward facing seats. See also note in (6) above about stewards showing people to or advising them of a suitable seat.</p> <p>Appropriate ventilation is in operation at each service/meeting.</p> <p>Face coverings are required to be worn unless a valid exemption applies. Face masks and gloves will be available if anyone requires them.</p>	<p>Seats marked by Officers. To include in updated guidance note and issue by email. All to observe.</p> <p>Officers and/or caretakers.</p> <p>Officers</p>	<p>To be checked prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.</p> <p>When entering the chapel to attend a service.</p> <p>Prior to service commencing.</p> <p>Available when entering the chapel.</p>	<p><i>Seats marked 3 July 20. Email sent 4 December 20.</i></p> <p><i>Windows being opened for the service is an ongoing action.</i></p> <p><i>To be kept under review.</i></p>

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			<p>Numbers to the service will be limited to seating capacity.</p> <p>A temporary record of all attending will be kept for a period of 21 days to assist the government's test and trace service if required. Data protection requirements being observed.</p>	<p>Officers will keep attendance under review. Via the website and a notice on the gate visitors are asked to contact us first before attending.</p> <p>Officers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Upon arriving/before leaving.</p>	<p><i>Website updated 1 December. Updated notice posted at gateway on 4 Dec 20.</i></p> <p><i>Attendance record taken for each service.</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing practice.</i></p>
<b>9. Use of the organ</b>	Organists and caretakers	Prior to any service arranging which organist will be playing.	Wiping clean the organ keys and other surfaces which are touched. Having one organist for the time being.	The organist or caretakers.	Between services or prior to forthcoming services.	<i>Regular cleaning carried out in the week.</i>

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<b>10. Use and handling of supplied Hymn Books, Bibles and other printed material</b>	Worshippers/visitors touching books (etc.) already touched by individuals from other households.	The Hymn Books and Bibles have been removed from pew ledges and bookcases closed off.	Communal Hymn books and Bibles will not be in use. Singing is not currently allowed. Bible passages and hymns will be projected onto a screen for viewing. Worshippers will not be encouraged to bring their own books	To include in updated guidance note and issue by email.  All to observe.	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.  When attending a service.	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing practice Until further notice.</i>
<b>11. Use of toilets by multiple individuals</b>	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.  Caretakers when cleaning.	Regular cleaning. Paper towel dispensers have been installed and bins provided.	Additional cleaning if necessary.  Posting notices advising one in one out, avoiding unnecessary queuing in foyer and advice on hand washing.	Caretakers and/or other volunteer(s).  Officers to post notices.  All to observe.	Between services or prior to forthcoming services.  Notices already posted.  When in use.	<i>Regular cleaning carried out.</i>  <i>Notices put up 2 July 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing compliance required.</i>
<b>12. Use of other areas of the building by multiple individuals</b>	Worshippers/visitors coming into close proximity with individuals from other households.	On reopening the chapel for worship the main sanctuary and toilets are the	We will be advising worshippers/visitors of which areas of the building can be used, as appropriate.	To include in updated guidance note and issue by email.	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>



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		primary areas of use. Other areas such as the Sunday Schoolroom and Crèche and kitchen are subject to separate control measures. There will be no need for the 'tea' vestry to be in use.	Should use of the crèche be required for a particular reason only members of one household will be allowed to occupy it.	All to observe.  Officers and/or stewards.	When attending a service.  To deal with on a case by case basis.	<i>Ongoing compliance required.</i>  <i>Ongoing practice.</i>
<b>13.Cash donations</b>	Treasurers by handling the cash.	During lockdown we have encouraged donations to be made by voucher and BACS	Reiterate advice on how to make donations.  Remove any cash donations from offering box by using gloves.	To include in updated guidance note and issue by email. Treasurers	Prior to reopening of chapel on the 6 December.  After each service.	<i>Email sent 4 December 20.</i>  <i>Ongoing Practice.</i>
<b>14.Partaking in communion</b>	Worshippers/ visitors partaking of wine and bread served by others.	We have obtained individual wine cups and a cup filler. When held	We ask participants from each household to come to the front in turn and collect the bread and the wine from the table at	Members of the church and those who have been given permission by	When partaking communion.	<i>Ongoing practice Until further notice.</i>

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		communion is part of the afternoon service and worshippers are asked either to use the provided hand sanitiser when entering and leaving the service or to wash their hands with soap and water available in the toilets.	the front.	the pastor to partake.		
<b>15. Use of the Sunday School Hall for Sunday School meeting</b>	Pastor, teachers and children/young people attending prior to the morning service.	Measures in respect of the use of the premises indicated above will apply subject to appropriate adjustments. We have cleared benches and tables that are not required to allow more space for appropriate	A one way system for entry and exit will be put in place with appropriate signage.  Tables and chairs will be arranged so that children from different families are appropriately distanced from each	Officers  Officers and teachers	Signage already put up.  Entry and exit will be appropriately supervised.  Tables & chairs to be arranged beforehand. Seating arrangements	<i>Ongoing compliance required.</i>  <i>Ongoing practice.</i>  <i>Ongoing practice.</i>

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		distancing. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed.	other and from teachers.		will be supervised and monitored when the Sunday School meets.	
<b>16. Use of part of Kitchen area for the Sunday morning Bible class</b>	Teacher and young people	The kitchen is generally out of bounds. However the small bible class group can safely meet around the table in the kitchen for 35 minutes before the morning services without impacting on other activities. Hand sanitizer is available on entry and exit via the link building.	<p>Apart from adhering to all the relevant guidelines that applicable to the premises as a whole no further action is required at present.</p> <p>The situation will be kept under review and any necessary adjustments made.</p>	Officers and teacher	Regularly when Bible Class meets which will be twice a month.	<i>Ongoing practice.</i>
<b>17. Use of the Sunday School Hall for Friday evening youth meetings</b>	Pastor and young people	Measures have been taken as set out in row 15 above.	The room layout will be rearranged appropriately for the format of these meetings observing social distancing.	Officers	Before and after each meeting.	<i>Ongoing practice.</i>

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			At the end of the meeting the layout will be put back ready for the use of the Sunday School.			
<b>18. Use of the Sunday School Hall for Church Members Meeting which are held 3 times a year for reasons of church governance</b>	Officers and church members	Measures have been taken as set out in row 15 above and a one way system with signing adopted.	The room layout has been rearranged appropriately for the format of the meeting to ensure social distancing can be observed. The meeting will also be streamed via Zoom for those members who are unable to attend in person. At the end of the meeting the layout will be put back ready for the use of the Sunday School and necessary cleaning undertaken.	Officers and other helpers	Before and after each meeting.	<i>Ongoing practice.</i>

**Notes of first review**

Action taken is noted in the ‘done’ column together with matters that will continue to be addressed and that will continue to be a requirement or guidance that should be observed.

At the first service that took place on the 5 July the arrangements put in place for peoples wellbeing on the whole appeared to work well and there was no cause for concern. In the light of these observations and the review of this risk assessment it is not considered at the present time further measures need to be put in place. The situation will be kept under review and further adjustments will be made and guidance issued as appropriate. It is considered that this risk assessment should be reviewed again following Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July unless circumstances indicate otherwise in the meantime.

11 July 2020

### **Notes of second review**

Action taken is noted in the 'done' column together with matters that will continue to be addressed and that will continue to be a requirement or guidance that should be observed.

The government updated its guidance for the safe use of places of worship on the 17 July 2020. The main change of relevance to note is that whilst mandatory on public transport and from 24 July 2020 face coverings will be mandatory in shops and in supermarkets people are also encouraged to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet, such as a place of worship. In the light of this new guidance we have updated our church guidelines and will be reissuing these to worshippers by email and otherwise have copies available for any visitors.

23 July 2020

### **Notes of third review**

The updated church guidelines were re-issued to worshippers by email. In view that we are intending to hold a communion service on Sunday 2 August we have considered in more detail the preparation measures we will be taking and how the service will be conducted. The process that will be adopted is set out in a separate note. Members of the church participating will be advised of the process as the Pastor conducts the service.

This risk assessment will be kept under review in the light of any changes in government advice and/or circumstances as appropriate.

1 August 2020

### **Notes of fourth review**

Further to previous government guidance encouraging the wearing of face coverings, from Saturday 8 August they are required by law to be worn in a greater number of indoor settings including places of worship. Our church guidelines have been updated accordingly and re-issued by email to worshippers to ensure they are aware of the requirement to wear a face covering when inside the chapel buildings unless under age 11 or a valid exemption applies. A copy of the updated guidelines will be posted on the chapel noticeboard and a poster displayed at the entrance making it clear that face coverings must be worn.

6 August 2020

**Notes of fifth review**

As from Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August face coverings have been worn during services within our place of worship and will continue to be required until the government are able to amend the law and advise otherwise.

As from Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 Sunday School will be recommencing at 1015 prior to the morning service until 1050. The risks additional to those already previously covered by this risk assessment have been considered and documented in row 15 above. Furthermore the teachers met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August to consider the reopening of the Sunday School in the light of the Covid-19 restrictions and government advice. In view of the limitations including not being able to sing, the lesson format has been adapted and the time spent reduced by 10 minutes.

17 September 2020

**Notes of sixth review**

As from 14 September the government has restricted people from meeting in a group of 6 indoors or outdoors (the rule of 6) subject to certain exceptions including places of worship. Guidance relating to places of worship was most recently updated on the 24 September. With regard to communal worship it states that people must not mingle in a group of more than 6 (other than those they live with or have formed a support bubble with). Accordingly the congregation have been publicly reminded (as part of the notices) to respect this rule of 6 as it applies in addition to the ongoing social distancing requirements.

Given that a Bible Study class for a small group of young people has commenced and the occasional Friday youth meetings have recommenced the risks have been considered and documented in rows 16 and 17 above, respectively.

3 October 2020

**Notes of seventh review**

The risk assessment has been updated as set out in row 19 above given the need for a church members meeting to take place. Consideration has been given to the guidance in respect of safe use of places of worship and for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities where applicable to this type of meeting.

The government's introduction of a system of local COVID alert levels on the 12 October 2020 is acknowledged. We are currently in an area subject to COVID alert level – medium restrictions with currently no significant implications for Places of Worship. However, this risk assessment will be kept under review and any necessary adjustments or changes to current practice will be made and advised to worshippers and others as appropriate.

17 October 2020

### **Notes of eighth review**

During the 4 week lockdown which ended on the 1 December 2020 services and meetings held at this Chapel were suspended. However services on the 4 consecutive Sundays were broadcast live on Zoom in accordance with the government guidance issued on the 6 November 2020. Regular worshippers were accordingly advised of this by email dated 2 November 2020. Sunday school participation was also live on ZOOM and broadcast from the teacher's homes. The week evening services continued to be broadcast live on Zoom from Pastor's home.

Following lockdown the new amended regulations and guidance allow public worship at the chapel to resume. Most of the previous guidance has largely been reiterated. However as Kent has been placed in **Tier 3**: Very High Alert (local COVID alert levels) additional guidance relating to restrictions on households mixing now also applies. In the light of that our Coronavirus COVID-19 – Church Guidelines have been updated to reflect the guidance in order to bring it to worshippers attention. These updated guidelines will be issued by email and posted on the chapel noticeboard.

Template issued by the Health and Safety Executive 10/19 - More information on managing risk: [www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/)