

Ealing Green Church: Church/Building Re-opening: Risk Assessment and Action Plan

Introduction

This note seeks to set out the risks that arise when the church building is permitted to re-open and what measures need to be put in place to ensure this can be done safely. The basic working principles are:

1. The SARS-Cov-2 virus will be around for some time to come and general measures to contain the spread are contained in HM Government's 'Roadmap to Re-opening' issued Spring 2021, until the vaccination programme has taken place. Guidance may also be found in HM Government's guides – Covid19: Guidance for the safe use of places of worship (appendix 4) and Covid19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community buildings (appendix 5), both dated 12 April 2021
2. The virus spreads in water droplets breathed out by infected persons. The virus is carried in heavier droplets that fall to ground within about 1m. Risk of infection is highest in enclosed spaces. Social distancing and adequate ventilation are therefore important in limiting spread.
3. The virus is also transmitted via objects or surfaces that have been contaminated either by droplets falling on them or by being touched by infected people. High standards of hand hygiene and cleanliness are therefore required.
4. The virus is not transmitted through sweat. This implies that infected persons do not exude virus material as they sweat.
5. Current guidelines indicate social distancing of 2m or '1m plus with mitigations measures'. For the purposes of this assessment and plan, 2m is taken to be the requirement.

Where does the risk come from?

Risk arises from people who are infected coming into the building. These will primarily be people who are asymptomatic or who are in the early stages of Cov-19 and have not yet developed symptoms. It is therefore important that in addition to hand hygiene and social distancing measures are in place to support the NHS Test & Trace system. Risk also arises from folk that do not adhere to social distancing guidelines or are unaware of how they are in place in Ealing Green Church (EGC).

SJH to continue to monitor advice from HM Government, The Methodist Church and the URC, and display posters/signage as appropriate, especially for restrictions local to our area.

Who is 'at risk'?

Everyone is at risk of infection by the SARS-Cov-2 virus. The consequences of infection can be significantly different depending on age and underlying health conditions. In general, children, young adults and people under 50 are least at risk of serious consequences. People over 70 and over 80 in particular are most vulnerable to serious consequences and risk of death. Men are more at risk than women & certain ethnic groups are more at risk than others (BAME).

A significant proportion of the congregation is over 70 with many being over 80. The age range of other users of the building is wider and includes children, young adults, and adults in their 30's and 40's with smaller numbers in higher age brackets. From this it is concluded that the group most at risk is the congregation and church groups such as Bible Study, Monday Fellowship and Discipleship, although in mitigation most of this group are now vaccinated.

It may be necessary for the minister and/or pastoral visitors to offer advice to individuals who are particularly vulnerable to serious consequences from attending church, and offer them the self-assessment form from the United Reform Church to aid their decision making.

NB. Sarah Hunter, Church Office Manager (SJH) has been appointed the Responsible Person for covid-19 health, safety & safeguarding as a single point of contact (with a delegated committee to support). SJH to arrange training and/or information to all building users, to ensure guidelines are adhered to, as well as arranging for signs, banners etc. as needed. SJH can also be regarded as the 'venue manager' with a committee to support.

Hand Hygiene

Risk	<p>People entering the building with hands contaminated with SARS-Cov-2 virus People contaminating handles etc. in toilets Contamination of church & communal equipment</p>
Mitigation	<p>Hand sanitiser units installed on walls:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Between the three doors in the foyer of the church (2 between the 3 doors) 2. Outside all toilets – ladies, gents & accessible toilets x 2 3. In the church space near to the organ/double doors to corridor 4. Inside the brown power door to the lobby, plus one on the lobby desk 5. Minister's Vestry 6. Inside the Church Office & the Circuit Finance Office 7. Inside the following rooms: Hall, Parlour & Rainbow Room 8. Units to be checked and re-filled regularly and as necessary (large 5L bottles with pump dispensers are kept in Utility Room for refills) 9. Signage to remind people to sanitise their hands by units at entrances 10. Signage to remind people to sanitise their hands before using toilets with brief explanation of why by units outside toilets. 11. Doors to remain propped open as much as possible when rooms in use (closed at night to reduce fire risk). <p>Kitchen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the handwashing sink to be encouraged, with the accessible sink also dedicated to handwashing. • The use of the main kitchen sink for washing hands is prohibited. • Fabric hand towels are to be removed from the kitchen, and paper towels only for hand-drying to be used. <p>Toilets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door to Ladies & Gents from corridor to be propped open • Signs placed regarding use of sanitiser before entering • Hand dryers and/or paper towels may now be used. • SJH to empty bins on days that the cleaner does not visit if necessary • Handwashing signs are present along with cleaning materials available for 'clean as you go' as necessary, especially for baby changing stations. <p>Tissues are provided around the building, with a litter bin in each area.</p>
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJH to monitor stocks of sanitiser/masks and other necessary supplies • SJH to ensure signs remain current • SJH to remove fabric towels in kitchen

Social Distancing

Risk	People getting too close to each other
Mitigation	<p>Masks to be worn within the building by adults and children aged 11+ to reduce the risk of droplet spread. These are to be provided by EGC for church groups/congregation, but outside user groups must provide their own</p> <p>Provide markers on floors indicating 2m distances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spots/hazard tape placed 2m apart in church foyer • Spots/spray paint placed outside church & entrance to church offices <p>Chairs to be arranged to allow 2m (or more) between household 'bubbles' or individual persons in all rooms, including church space; with 3m between pulpit, lectern and forward facing speakers from the congregation.</p> <p>Signage at entrances/room doors to remind people to keep their distance</p> <p>Room capacities have been adjusted to allow enough space for all.</p> <p>Building capacity to be carefully considered to prevent overcrowding</p>
Action	SJH & Property Team

Social Distancing during Fire Evacuation

Risk	Social Distancing not adhered to during the evacuation of the building.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assembly point for building evacuation is The Green, an open space opposite the church building, and social distancing will not be a problem in this area. The areas outside the church, either to the front or rear courtyard of the building, are not sufficiently distanced from the building for assembly. • Fire marshals must ensure that folk leave the building in a calm, orderly manner, maintaining distancing (unless the emergency is such that the danger of life from fire is so great that rapid evacuation becomes a priority). Multiple exits should be used to ease queuing or crowding at the doors, providing they are safe to use: the doors in the church foyer, the office lobby and the rear fire exit to Grove Road. Infirm persons should leave via the front of the church or lobby to ensure step free exits, or via the rear door at the end of the corridor, but not via the courtyard. • Fire marshals should also ensure distancing continues to be met outside the building, en-route to the Green, particularly at crossing points. • Infirm persons should be supported by those in their social 'bubble' or household if at all possible. If the church wheelchair is used for an infirm person, the person pushing it should wear a mask, available in the meeting room being used. The wheelchair is located behind the organ in the church space, if time allows it should be cleaned with disinfectant spray before use.
Action	SJH to arrange for staff training, if necessary. SJH to test alarms regularly. Alarms serviced March 2021.

Items that can be touched by multiple people

Risk	Transmission of virus by several people touching items
Mitigation	<p>Remove items not required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflets, magazines etc. removed from church foyer & office lobby • Books removed from rooms or boxed up (such as Rainbow Room) • Surfaces/desks to be kept clear in offices/vestry • Surplus chairs to be stacked neatly at the edges of rooms • Hymn books, worship books, Bibles to be removed from foyer & church and stored (bookshelves covered over) • Access to church office/circuit office to be restricted & keyboards should not be shared • User Groups that would normally provide shared books for their group may no longer do so.
Action	Property team, stewards, cleaner

Use of worship books etc. during services/meetings

Risk	Transmission of virus by several people touching service books/bibles
Mitigation	<p>Preferable to use the projection system for orders of service OR pre-printed materials to be provided by church office (<i>note at EGC we do not have enough service books for folk to use one each, anyway</i>), or folk may bring their own bible. If bibles are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles to be placed at marked seating positions • Only bibles that have not been touched for at least 72 hours to be used • Before placing books, steward to wash hands thoroughly/sanitise hands • Before collecting books at end of service, steward to wash/sanitise hands • Books to be returned to a separate table (location to be decided) and left untouched for at least 72 hours. • After handling books after placing and collecting steward to wash hands thoroughly. • Same procedure to be followed for printed Orders of Services, except they are to be discarded after use. • Shared books in meetings (such as AA, or ballet waiting area) are not allowed
Action	Stewards, Vestry Stewards/ SJH to prep Orders

Use of Radio Mics

Risk	<p>Transmission of virus between preacher and steward in close proximity to each other while radio mic is being fitted.</p> <p>Contamination of radio mic by an infected person.</p>
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should a steward assist the preacher in fitting the radio mic, both should wear face coverings while the radio mic is being fitted. • Before handling radio mics, hands should be sanitized. • After use, radio mics should be wiped and stored away.
Action	Steward on duty, preacher

Offertory

Risk	Transmission of virus by several people handling offertory bags Moving closer together to pass bag from person to person.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offertory bags not to be used. • A plate for people's cash/envelope offerings to be placed at the rear of the worship space (location to be determined). • After the congregation has departed, stewards to take the offertory to the Minister's vestry, place it in storage bag and lock it in the small safe where it must be left for at least 72 hours before counting. A second steward to observe ensuring 2m distance is kept. The steward handling the offerings must either wear disposable gloves, or must immediately wash hands thoroughly afterwards. • All to be encouraged to donate via bank transfer if at all possible, Government advice is not to handle cash if at all possible
Action	Stewards, Vestry Stewards

Offertory Counting

Risk	Transmission of virus as a result of 2 people being in close proximity and both handling cash and envelopes.
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person only to count and return cash to safe. Hand to be washed thoroughly/sanitized after counting and before leaving the building. • Second person to observe and record. • Distance to be kept at all times. • Monies need not be counted on a Sunday, but during the week if preferred.
Action	Team counting offertory

Refreshments (after the service, during church group meetings, or at any other time)

Risk	Transmission of virus as a result of people getting too close together while collecting tea and coffee from the foyer kitchenette and while talking. Several people handling cups, saucers etc. Handling cash donations
Mitigation	<p>At this point, no refreshments to be served, and folk to be encouraged to leave promptly after the service.</p> <p>To be reviewed if guidelines change, at which point a procedure can be decided upon Group leaders may provide water if a person is unwell.</p> <p>NB – a return to refreshments has not yet been decided upon, as 'table service' may not be practical for church groups.</p>

Worship Area Seating Plan

Risk	
Mitigation	<p>Chairs to be arranged so that individual seating positions are placed 2m or more apart, while family groups and people in social ‘bubbles’ can sit together. Chairs should not be placed too near the Minister, who is facing the congregation, 3m at least is required.</p> <p>NB: when the 2m rule is allowed to be relaxed, there should still be at least 2-3m between the Minister and the congregation (possibly from 17 May 2021 – to be confirmed)</p> <p>The flow of people into the space and the order in which seats are taken has to be regulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats should be occupied starting at the front working towards the rear. Seats towards the walls should be accessed from that side and folk should not touch chairs before they sit on them. • Seats should be reserved for stewards and certainly a steward should sit immediately inside the door. • Ticketing/pre-advice of attendance should mean that stewards can set the church appropriately, but there must always be a few seats spare for an unexpected visitor to the church. • At the end of the service, people should leave in reverse order, starting at the back. • Once seated, people should remain so until the end of the service. • If chairs need to be moves as folk arrive (to accommodate a bubble for example), hands should be sanitised before picking up a chair • Stewards should avoid physically assisting persons to their seats wherever possible
Action	<p>Stewards/Vestry Stewards must be fully aware of the seating plan and the order in which seats should be occupied and a steward should direct people to seats. For additional duties, see below & EGC Steward’s Protocol (copy attached)</p>

Special Considerations – Additional Duties for Stewards (NB please see Steward’s Protocol document)

- Welcome folk back to Church!
- Recording who attends church and ensuring contact details are available, ensuring records are placed in the agreed location in the minister’s vestry. Note: pens should not be shared, and recording attendance is not mandatory for worship, if worshippers do not give their consent to their data being collected.
- Reminding people attending church to sanitise their hands upon arrival.
- Reminding people to sanitise their hands before using toilets.
- Directing people to seats in the worship area.
- Ensuring people leave promptly at the end of services and in an orderly fashion.
- Reminding people not to stand or congregate in the church foyer.
- If required by preachers, placing worship books or orders of service on chairs and collecting them after services
- Ensuring the worship space is ventilated before services, opening windows and doors.
- Either cleaning the area afterwards (‘clean as you go’) or ensuring this task is carried out by volunteers
- Bible Steward to ensure vestry stewards and door stewards are fully aware of these additional duties.

Ventilation

Windows should be opened during the services or meetings, even if the weather is cold, in all rooms including the church space. It is now thought that the greatest risk of spreading Covid19 is through aerosol droplets. Rooms should be aired between users, as well as cleaned.

Risk	The risk of virus transmission is highest in poorly ventilated enclosed spaces
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open windows in hall and other rooms when they are in use. Wipe window winders and handles and sanitise hands after use. • The top high windows in both the church and the hall should be left open at all times for continuing ventilation. • During services in the worship space: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. keep entrance doors from the church foyer open 2. keep fire exit door through to hall open 3. Keep front doors open to allow air to enter the building before & after the service 4. For at least 15 minutes before services, open hall doors to allow air to be drawn through the building.
Action	User group leaders, stewards.

Use of Toilets

Risk	Contamination of handles, flush handles/buttons, taps etc. Droplets containing virus material in the air in poorly ventilated enclosed spaces
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks should be worn in all areas of the building by adults & children aged 11+ • Stewards should open all windows in toilets (except for the foyer accessible toilet which doesn't have an opening window) before the service and close them again afterwards. Foyer toilet should be aired by propping open the door before and after the service, door wedge provided. • Doors to the main ladies & gents to be kept propped open during the service • Users should sanitise their hands before entering toilets to reduce the risk of contamination. • After use, hands should be washed thoroughly & then sanitised before returning to rooms • Toilet use to be monitored by group leaders to prevent queues forming in corridors, which are narrow • Toilet use to be considered by group leaders to minimise cleaning – for example one group might use a single accessible toilet only • Certain toilets to be reserved for staff use only
Action	Persons using toilets, SJH to provide signs & sanitiser stations

Congregational singing is not allowed at this time. Music played either by organ, piano or via the AV system is NOT to be familiar hymns/tunes, to discourage 'singing along' in an informal way.

Chanting or singing by a single small group may be allowed if essential to the act of worship.

Use of Offices/Staff Safety

Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices are small and social distancing/ventilation may be more difficult during meetings • Persons may contaminate office equipment with their breath or by touch • Persons may use offices without staff knowing, at times when they are not there • Fabric office chairs are difficult to clean (fabric must be hoovered) • Staff may not be comfortable using public transport • Staff may prefer to work at home • 'Hot Desking' could allow transmission of disease between office users
Mitigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings must be by arrangement only and only if staff are comfortable, meetings with more than one other person can be located in an alternate room, to be arranged by SJH. Ad hoc callers should be strongly discouraged/disallowed. Zoom meetings may be arranged to avoid face to face meetings. • All persons entering offices must sanitise their hands prior to entry to any office, wall mounted sanitisers have been fitted near to doors (regardless of how recently hands have been cleansed) • Door(s) should be left open if possible, particularly for the Church Office, which does not have its own window • During meetings face covering must be worn by all parties. When working alone staff do not need to wear one whilst in their office, but they should when moving around the building, especially if there are other users on-site • Anyone using an office should sanitise the area after use • Fabric office chairs to be designated to the use of a single worker only if preferred, otherwise fabric should not be handled and arms should be disinfected after use • If offices are shared separate pens/keyboards should be provided for each user. Hands must be cleansed frequently during the working day. • Staff may use the car park if necessary • Staff should be allowed to work from home if possible, if they wish • Cleaning baskets are present in both offices, as in other rooms
Action	<p>Anyone using an office MUST advise staff in advance and disinfect the area afterwards.</p>

NHS Test and Trace

For the purposes of the NHS Test and Trace system, a record of all people with their contact details attending services and other activities on the premises should be kept by group leaders. Records should be kept for 3 weeks from the date of the activity and then destroyed. The principal contact for NHS Test & Trace at EGC is Sarah Hunter, Church office Manager.

QR codes are displayed in the Lobby, Foyer and within the building. All EG staff/volunteers should use them each time they enter the building, and visitors strongly encouraged to do so, too.

For church services, one of the stewards on duty on the day must be deputed to record who attends services, and SJH is to provide a register of all those who have their contact details recorded on the Church database, as a simple tick-list. Records of those new or unknown to the church should include the name of each person along with their telephone number and e-mail address if they have one. Records should be stored in the Church Office in a location agreed with the principal contact. Stewards should note down this information on behalf of those attending and pens must not be shared. Note however it is not mandatory for worshippers to give their consent to their details be collected and leaving contact details should not be a condition of worship (HMGov Guidelines 12April21).

Anyone who comes into the building for services and subsequently develops symptoms must follow NHS guidelines for self-isolation and testing and should inform the principal contact if they test positive for Covid-19. If contacted by NHS Test & Trace the principal contact will provide details of those persons the infected person may have come into contact with.

All other groups using the building are required to keep similar records. Any person attending those groups who develops symptoms must follow NHS guidelines for self-isolation and testing and should inform the leader of the group if they test positive for Covid-19. If contacted by NHS Test & Trace the group leader must provide details of those persons the infected person may have come into contact with. The group leaders must also inform the principal contact for Ealing Green Church: the cloud-based diary system (iKnow Church) will be used to record ALL meetings/groups and **everyone entering the building must advise SJH to that their visit will be recorded, including Church meetings/activities.**

Please note that is a requirement that Ealing Green Church records the details of all those attending church activities for Test & Trace, either manually or by the use of the QR codes, with the exception of worship, where it is mandatory. For lettings, it is the hirer's responsibility to do so. Failure to comply may lead to the Church being fined.

Cleaning

The level of cleaning required depends on the degree of use of the premises. Generally, it should be assumed that ALL rooms are to be cleaned after use, unless otherwise authorised in advance by SJH (it is unlikely that rooms will remain empty for 72 hours after use, and so they must be cleaned). The cleaning schedule will be kept under constant review in the light of experience and changing levels of use.

Risk	<p>Areas are left dirty or cleaned with incorrect products, risking contamination by infected persons. Hot water may become infected with legionella if not used.</p>
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning provision is currently three times a week, with toilets cleaned & bins emptied every visit. • While the building is closed a flush through of the water systems takes place weekly, legionella testing has been carried out, and the water system is clear • Door handles, switches, chairs, tables & other surfaces are cleaned every visit using products compliant to BS EN 1276, BS EN14476 and/or BS EN 13697, and disposable cloths. Current products provided include bleach and disinfectant sprays & floor cleanser, along with gloves & disposable aprons • Any toilets used must be cleaned, along with sinks, door handles and all other surfaces in that area • Doors into and out of the building must also be cleaned, including the alarm keypad • Soft furnishings in all rooms to be removed, or marked out of bounds • Cleaners are to be instructed to wear a disposable apron, mask and gloves, provided by EGC, once other users are allowed into the building • Kitchens are cleaned once a week by the cleaners, and also on a clean as you go basis by users. Cleaning materials are provided by EGC. • Clean as you go systems actioned by Users are to be introduced for all rooms as they are used, with cleaning materials provided by EGC. • Consideration to be given to increasing cleaning provision. SJH can clean door handles, light switches and empty bins between cleaner's visits, as necessary. • Flip top bin lids have been removed to avoid risk of touching lids in use
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJH to appraise cleaning firm as safe procedures and liaise with them closely as an ongoing process. Suitable cleaning products/PPE are supplied by EGC. SJH to ensure adequate stocks and to reassess cleaning times required. • SJH to provide monitor supplies in 'clean as you go' baskets • SJH to clean door handles, light switches etc. daily, on weekdays as needed. • ALL USERS to clean as and when necessary – it must never be assumed that the cleaner will 'take care of it'

Special Considerations: Cleaning

Parlour: the stacking chairs with fabric seat pads may not be used (as the fabric seat pads cannot be wiped); and have been stacked in the corner facing the wall. SJH has taped off and move hard seating into the parlour, numbers appropriate to capacity.

Church Offices: office chairs are to be reserved for named staff only (i.e. SJH & Will Quansah, WQ) and not to be used by anyone else, UNLESS the main users are happy for sharing to be done. SJH & WQ responsible for cleaning the surfaces in their offices after use, their offices are NOT to be used by others without prior arrangement. If 'Hotdesking' does take place, this must be arranged in advance and items such as keyboards, pens and telephone should not be shared.

Alarm keypads are frequently used – fobs are available instead

First Aid to those injured followed accident, or taken unwell with Covid19 symptoms

Risk	Those providing First Aid or tending to illness are at risk of contracting COVID-19
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folk advised that they must not attend events if symptomatic with COVID-19. Signs have been placed at the doors to this effect. • If folk are tending to others who are unwell, or have had an accident, they should wear a medical paper face mask, disposable apron and gloves, which will be found in the First Aid Box. • If the unwell person is suspected of having COVID-19 a plastic face visor should also be worn, which will be located nearby to the first aid box. • The unwell person should be moved to an empty, well ventilated room if possible, and the location of this should be recording, for cleaning purposes. • If at all possible this room should be placed out of bounds for 72 hours • All treatments must be recorded in the first aid book, as usual. Cleaners/SJH are provided with their own dedicated visors, which are not to be shared.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJH to ensure PPE is placed into First Aid box, and the location of visors is clearly indicated. • 'Ready packs' of visors, masks, plastic aprons & gloves to be made up, in case of emergency. • SJH, cleaners & other key personnel to have their own dedicated visors available, in a 'ready pack', not to be used by anyone else

'Outside' Lets and User Groups

- Following discussion by the Trustees it has been decided to carefully reopen the building to outside lets/user groups, with preference given to those groups who are under the guidance of regulatory bodies, or 'parent' groups such as (but not limited to) The Royal Academy of Dance, AA, ABRSM, or the University of West London, in line with HM Government's 'roadmap'.
- All groups, church based or otherwise, are responsible for the safe operation of their groups. Therefore, all those hiring any part of the building must carry out risk assessments and develop plans to show that they can operate safely, and must share these assessments with the Church Office Manager before they recommence their sessions.
- It is the responsibility of the Hirer to ensure their activity adheres to current legislation.
- It is the responsibility of the hirer to collect details of attendees for Test & Trace purposes, and the use of the QR code at the entrances is strongly encouraged.
- This risk assessment does not cover the activities of particular groups, however a set of requirements to which they must adhere is set out in Appendix 1.
- The Trustees retain responsibility for the safe operation of those groups run by church members, including Bible Study, Monday Fellowship, Discipleship and (when/if allowed to resume) Lunch Club. The leaders of these groups must show how they can operate safely before starting to meet again.
- Note: Children's parties are not being considered at this time.

Review

This Risk Assessment and accompanying Action Plan will be kept under constant review and will be updated and amended as necessary in the light of experience and changes to guidelines.

Agreed by Church Council (Managing Trustees): 6th August 2020 & reviewed at Church Council meetings regularly thereafter. HM Government's 'roadmap to re-opening' was reviewed by the Trustees on 17th March 2021. Church Council met in March 2021 to review the reopening of the building to community groups and on 15th April 2021 to review the return to worship by Ealing Green Church.

Last reviewed & updated by SJH on 16th April 2021.

Appendix 1: Requirements for User Groups

Ealing Green (Methodist & United Reformed) Church

'Outside' User Groups:

Requirements for Using the Premises during the SARS-Cov-2 Pandemic

The Managing Trustees have taken steps to make the premises safe for use. However, User Groups not run by Ealing Green Church are responsible for the safe operation of their groups and for ensuring the safety of people participating in their activities. Therefore, all these groups must carry out their own risk assessments and develop plans to show that they can operate safely.

The requirements set out below are intended to help user groups stay safe when using the premises at Ealing Green (Methodist & United Reform) Church.

1. Sarah Hunter, Church Office Manager (SJH) has been appointed the Responsible Person for Covid-19 health, safety & safeguarding as a single point of contact (with a delegated committee to support). SJH is also the 'Venue Manager' with a committee to support.
2. Prior to re-commencing operation, Group Leaders must provide the Trustees with a copy of their risk assessments and plans for safe operation showing how they will comply with government guidelines and any specific regulations applicable to their activity. Although the Trustees may comment on users' risk assessments and plans, their receipt of those assessments and plans should not be taken as indicating that the Managing Trustees have given their approval to those plans. Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly, and changes advised to the Church Office. It is the responsibility of the Hirer to ensure their activity complies with current legislation.
3. Windows/doors in all rooms should be open to allow ventilation during sessions, and afterwards. The small high windows in both the hall and the church space should be left open to allow continuing ventilation, although the larger, lower windows should be closed when leaving.
4. Group leaders should keep records of who attends their sessions for the purposes of NHS Test & Trace. Should any person attending the group become infected with Covid-19 they must follow NHS guidelines for self-isolation and testing and should inform the group leader if they test positive for Covid-19. If contacted by NHS Test & Trace the group leader must provide details of those persons the infected person may have come into contact with. The group leaders must also inform Sarah Hunter that they have done so. Folk attending the building are also strongly encouraged to 'sign in' using the displayed QR code/NHS app. Note that it is the responsibility of the hirer to comply with NHS Test and Trace and failure to do so may result in a fine.
5. Persons including group leaders should not enter the kitchen, unless it is an emergency. Group leaders may provide water for their group if wished, and the area should be cleaned afterwards.
6. On arrival and before departure group leaders should wipe clean door handles, light switches, and any surfaces that they or any person attending the group use or has used, including toilets/sinks and doors to the entrances and exits. Group Leaders must agree to adhere to this 'clean as you go' policy to ensure safety for all. Ealing Green Church will provide suitable cleaning materials.
7. All persons attending the group should sanitise or wash their hands upon arrival.
8. Adults and children aged 11+ should always wear a mask/face covering within the building (unless otherwise arranged with the Church Office Manager), groups must provide their own/spare masks or face coverings. Persons participating in an class or activity where they are hindered by wearing a face covering (such as group exercise or drama rehearsals) may participate without wearing one, however they must still wear one when entering, exiting or otherwise moving around the building, including using the bathrooms. Ventilation of the rooms between classes must take place.
9. All persons using toilets should sanitise their hands before doing so. This is to reduce the risk of people contaminating toilet handles and fittings. They should also wash their hands when finished.

10. While the Managing Trustees will provide hand sanitiser at entrances and outside or near toilets, User Groups should have their own hand sanitiser available. As time goes by, a small PPE charge may be requested, if necessary.
11. Group leaders will be asked to sign a fresh copy of the booking form, and provide a copy of their current public liability insurance, before their booking recommences.
12. As guidelines may change at short notice, all groups must agree to adhere to instructions from their own regulatory bodies, or given to them by the Church Office, as necessary.
13. A full copy of Ealing Green Church's risk assessment is available upon request and will also be found on our website.
14. A copy of the current poster with a summary of guidelines is attached to this document and also displayed throughout the building.

Updated by SJH 16th April 21

Appendix 2:

Ealing Green (Methodist & United Reformed) Church Guidance for People Attending Church Services

The experience of attending church will be very different from what we have been used to. Special arrangements have had to be put in place in order to minimise the risk of transmission of the SARS-Cov-2 virus which causes Covid-19 and to comply with Methodist & United Reform Church and government guidelines. As the situation progresses these arrangements will be reviewed and amended as necessary and, in due time when circumstances permit, relaxed.

Whilst these arrangements may seem rigid, please remember that although the number of infections in Ealing is going down, the virus can spread rapidly causing a sudden spike in infections. In addition, the consequences of infection can be very severe and possibly fatal for people who are older or who have underlying health issues. Since the majority of our congregation falls into that category, we need to remain careful in order to minimise the risk of infection.

A self-assessment form from the URC can be provided to you, to help you risk assess your attendance at church, if you wish. This is completely voluntary and for your eyes only, unless you prefer to discuss it with someone.

- Please 'book in' by letting someone know that you plan to come to church, so we can accommodate you safely. You can ring or email Sarah in the Church Office, or maybe speak to your pastoral contact, or advise Sue.
- Please follow the instructions of the stewards on duty.
- Please arrive at church no more than 5 -- 10 minutes before the service is due to start.
- Please sanitise your hands when you arrive and observe guidelines on social distancing at all times.
- Face coverings should be worn by adults and children aged 11+ if possible, if you are not able to wear a covering please advise the Steward. Face coverings are available for Church services/meetings upon request.
- Make sure that the steward on duty records your attendance at the service (see below), and also use the QR code if you are able.
- After you have sanitised your hands and your attendance has been recorded, please do not stand or stay in the foyer – go straight to your seat.
- Seating positions should be occupied from the front of the worship area working towards the back, please allow the Stewards to guide you.
- Please be aware that some seats will be reserved for the Stewards, or 'for Elijah'.
- Family groups/bubbles may sit together, however you may not mix with anyone who is not, while inside the Church
- Once all seating positions have been occupied no further people can be admitted to the service.
- While in the building please do not talk loudly.
- At the end of the service, please leave one by one starting from the back of the worship area working towards the front. Please do not linger in either the church space or foyer but leave the building promptly. If you wish to chat to people, please do so outside the building in the fresh air, remembering to observe social distancing.

Use of toilets

If possible, please avoid using the toilets. However, if you do need to use them, please sanitise your hands before entering a cubicle, you will find gel on the wall by the door. This is to minimise the risk of contaminating the handles etc. When you have finished remember to wash your hands thoroughly and leave the door of the cubicle open when you leave.

Records of Attendance

To assist the NHS Test & Trace service, a record will be kept of your attendance at church. Please make sure that the steward on duty has a record of your attendance along with your contact details, (telephone and e-mail). Once you have given your contact details you do not need to give them again when you attend church. Records of your attendance will be kept for 21 days only and will then be destroyed. You should also check in to the NHS system using the displayed QR code, if you are able.

Why are we asking you to provide this information and what will we do with it?

The Government requires that Churches in England assist the NHS Test and Trace service by keeping an accurate temporary record of visitors for 21 days. Please assist the Church in fulfilling this request by completing the record as indicated. However, worship is not conditional on your providing these details, if you do not consent to give them.

The Methodist Church cares about your privacy and your trust is important to us. Our Privacy Notice explains how Local Churches, Circuits and Districts within the Methodist Church in Great Britain collect, use and protect your personal information. It also provides information about your rights (paragraph 9 of the Privacy Notice) and who to contact (paragraph 1 of the Privacy Notice) if you have any questions about how we use your information. You can find our Privacy Notice online (www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection/managing-trustees-privacy-notice) or displayed at the Building. Please ask us for a copy of the Privacy Notice if this would be of assistance.

In addition to the information in our Privacy Notice we confirm that the information we are asking for on this record is collected for the purpose of assisting the NHS Test and Trace service with contact tracing. If the NHS Test and Trace service request details of our visitors for the purpose of contact tracing, we will share relevant information from this record with them and contact details e.g. telephone number and/or email addresses. These will either be contact details that we already hold for you or details that you provide when you attend church. This record will be destroyed after 21 days in accordance with Government guidelines.

Reviewed by SJH 16 April 21

**Ealing Green Church: Church / Building Re-opening:
Church Steward protocols / procedures during Cov-19 restrictions**

*These protocols / procedures are to be read in conjunction with
EGC Risk Assessment and Action Plan

Welcome folk back to Church!

Hand hygiene: Remind people to hand sanitise on arrival and on exit. This includes Stewards.

Respiratory hygiene:

- Remind people to wear a mask on entry - provide one if required - adults and 11+, as it is now a requirement by law for folk to do so within a Church, including Stewards, unless a person is exempt. Anyone handing out a mask should sanitise hands before doing so, individually wrapped face masks are available on the serving counter.
- Ensure church spaces are well ventilated prior to welcoming worshipers by opening windows and doors in areas to be used, including toilets
- Ensure the lower, larger windows are closed after the service and handles / winders are touch cleaned. The smaller top windows should be left open to allow for continuing ventilation.

Social distancing:

- Remain 2m away from other adults at all times
- Arrange chairs to allow 2m distance between individuals and or household *bubbles*, and there should be at least 3m between the Minister (who is forward facing) and the congregation.
- **The maximum capacity for Worship Space at this time is 30 persons, including the Minister and those on the Sunday Worship rota.** From 12th April our capacity for Sunday Worship is the capacity of the church space, rather than a set limit, however 30 is a comfortable number of persons to be accommodated and will be adhered to for now. Trustees acting as Stewards may use their discretion regarding capacity and seating arrangements, for example groups of households will take up less floor space than 5 or 6 single persons, providing they adhere to our safe practices.
- Open church doors no more than 5-10 minutes before service is due to start
- Remind people to avoid congregating or standing in the main foyer, but to move to the seats

Seating plan - entry and exit:

- Pre booked attendance should ensure seating numbers are known, including household groups / individuals
- Set out a few extra chairs for unexpected guests
- Reserve steward seating on front row and on the back row
- Direct people to seats from the front towards the rear - once seated they should remain so until the end of the service
- When escorting folk to their seats, if distancing is difficult stewards should ensure they walk side-by-side with people (not facing) and both are wearing masks. Hand sanitiser should be used in between contact with people. Arms could be extended if at all possible.
- If a well ventilated space, with masks and sanitiser, the risk of transmission is low, HOWEVER Stewards should step back once folk are seating, if they are chatting. Also bear in mind it is acceptable to offer verbal guidance, or to ask someone else to help a person, if someone should feel personally uncomfortable in assisting.
- When exiting, direct people to leave in reverse order starting from the back avoiding bottle neck at main door and accessing side doors if required. Discourage them kindly from chatting either in the church space or the foyer; folk need to leave promptly and hold any conversations they may wish to have outside in the open air.

- Access side seats from the edge of the church space
- Avoid touching seats whilst passing
- Wash/sanitise hands before and after if movement of chairs is required
- Once all seats are occupied no more people can be admitted (+ allocated pews in balcony?)

Fire evacuation:

- Assembly point – Ealing Green
- Stewards to support evacuation in calm and orderly manner maintaining social distancing where possible
- Encourage use of multiple exits where needed (including the back door if necessary)
- Wheel chair available where necessary - stored behind organ in church space

Touch point items:

- Hymn books - not to be used as there will be no singing
- Orders of service - placed on seats prior to service. Collected and discarded after use (if wished they can be placed in a carrier bag in the Church Office for recycling). Handwashing/sanitising before and after distribution
- Bibles - placed on seats prior to service. Collected and stored in isolation under the desk in the Vestry for 72hrs- prior to reuse, or left labelled in the church space.
- Handwashing/sanitising before and after distribution.

Use of radio mic:

- Steward, if required, to assist fitting but face covering must be worn by both parties
- AV stewards to clean radio mic
- Handwashing/sanitising before and after (SJH to ensure sanitising gel/cleaning spray is available for the AV area)
- Steward to alert minister / speaker / preacher not to touch the static mics if in use.

Offertory:

- Collection plates to be located in a convenient location, of Steward's choice.
- After service, stewards take plate to vestry, place in storage bag and secure in small safe. Social distancing to be maintained.
- Sue to have safe access
- Counting to be done after 72hrs by 2 stewards-- one to count and one to record; gloves to be worn. Offertory returned to the safe/taken directly to the bank (SJH to assist if needed)
- Handwashing/sanitising to be carried out.

Junior Church: remains closed at this time, although it is the wish of Ealing Green Church run Junior Church again, when we are able and it is safe to do so.

Refreshments: This facility will not be available. If a glass of water is given in extremis, the dishwasher should be used, rather than washing up by hand.

NHS Test and Trace:

- Church attendance should be pre booked prior to service
- Attendees are asked to give contact details to Stewards on arrival: full name and telephone / email address (SJH to provide register), however this is not compulsory for worship. It IS compulsory for all other church activities
- Stewards to post these records under the office door – SJH to store. **Do NOT leave them in the foyer as this is sensitive data under GDPR.**
- QR code poster for EGC is displayed in the foyer, lobby, and on noticeboards within the building. Please encourage folk to use this to check in, if they are able to do so.

Cleaning:

- Locate "Clean as you go" baskets
- Gloves and apron to be worn - as well as face covering
- Chairs to be stacked beside the font and left unused for 3 days – in this case they will not require cleaning: PLEASE LABEL
- Wipe clean accessible toilet – avoid use of corridor toilets
- Wipe clean – entrance area, church space, office where safe is accessed
- Avoid use of all other areas – including vestry
- Wipe down touch points-- door handles, finger guards, vanity tops, sinks, taps, hand rails, window winders and handles, light switches

Non Cov-19 first aid:

- Wear gloves, apron and face mask - located in first aid box before administering any treatment (in kitchen)
- Dispose of gloves/ apron / face mask as normal
- Record incident in the first aid book - located by the first aid box in kitchen

Cov-19 Suspected Case:

- Wear gloves, apron, face mask and visor: a 'ready pack' containing all items placed nearby to first aid box in kitchen
- Move patient to an empty well ventilated isolation room / area – Lobby area
- Facilitate safe return home of patient - avoiding public transport
- Advise them to be tested and to inform Church Administrator of test result
- Record incident in first aid book - include full name and contact details
- Record isolation room / area for further cleaning
- Gloves, apron, face mask to be double bagged & placed directly into Veolia bin in car park
- Visor to be sanitised, double bagged and stored for 72hrs before re-use (SJH to provide bags)

**CARE! DO NOT LIGHT CANDLES WHILE HANDS ARE WET WITH SANITISER GEL, IT IS HIGHLY FLAMMABLE.
WAIT UNTIL HANDS ARE COMPLETELY DRY FIRST,
OR BETTER STILL, WASH HANDS INSTEAD.**

Reviewed by SJH 16 April 21



COVID-19: Restrictions in England

From 12 April

STEP 2

<p>MEETING OTHERS </p> <p>You must not socialise indoors except with your household or support bubble. You can meet outdoors, including in gardens, in groups of six people or two households.</p>	<p>OVERNIGHT STAYS </p> <p>Domestic overnight stays are allowed, but you must only stay with members of your household or support bubble.</p>	<p>EDUCATION </p> <p>Early years settings, schools and colleges are open for all students. Students on practical university courses can return. Students and staff will be regularly tested. Other Higher Education students should continue to learn remotely.</p>	<p>WORK AND BUSINESS </p> <p>You should work from home if you can.</p>
<p>RETAIL AND PERSONAL CARE </p> <p>All retail open. Hairdressers, beauty and nail salons open.</p>	<p>BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS </p> <p>Open outdoors for groups of six people or two households. Those that serve alcohol must provide table service. Closed indoors.</p>	<p>ACCOMMODATION </p> <p>Campsites and self-contained holiday accommodation open for visits with your household or support bubble only. Hotels, hostels and B&Bs closed.</p>	<p>LEISURE AND SPORTING FACILITIES </p> <p>Gyms, indoor sports facilities and spas open for use on your own or with your own household or support bubble. Saunas and steam rooms closed.</p>
<p>ENTERTAINMENT </p> <p>Outdoor settings and attractions, such as zoos and theme parks open for visits of two households, or in a group of up to six people. Drive-in-events open for visits with your household or support bubble. Indoor entertainment closed.</p>	<p>PUBLIC BUILDINGS </p> <p>Libraries and community centres open.</p>	<p>RESIDENTIAL CARE </p> <p>People who live in a care home in England will be allowed two named regular indoor visitors.</p>	<p>SHIELDING </p> <p>Clinically extremely vulnerable people in England are no longer advised to shield, but should continue taking extra precautions such as minimising social interactions and shopping at quieter times of the day.</p>
<p>DOMESTIC TRAVEL </p> <p>You should minimise travel as much as possible. Avoid the busiest times and routes - plan your journey and what you need at your destination ahead of time.</p>	<p>OVERSEAS TRAVEL </p> <p>You must not go on holiday abroad. You could be fined £5,000 for travelling abroad without a legally permitted reason.</p>	<p>PLACES OF WORSHIP </p> <p>Places of worship open and communal worship is permitted, but you must not mix indoors with anyone outside your household or support bubble.</p>	<p>WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS </p> <p>Funerals can continue with up to 30 attendees. Weddings, outdoor receptions, and commemorative events such as wakes can take place with up to 15 attendees (in premises that are permitted to open).</p>

For more information and detailed guidance visit: gov.uk/coronavirus

COVID-19
Let's take this next step, safely.

