

Ealing Green Church: Living with Covid-19

Introduction

This note seeks to set out the risks that arise as a result of Covid 19 and other illnesses, such as influenza. The basic working principles are:

1. The SARS-Cov-2 virus will be around for some time to come. From 1st April 2022, HM Government's policy 'Living with Covid-19' comes into effect, and may be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1056229/COVID-19_Response_-_Living_with_COVID-19.pdf

2. The virus spreads in aerosol 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, adequate ventilation and hand hygiene are therefore important in limiting spread.
3. Safe behaviours identified by HM Government are:
 - getting vaccinated
 - letting fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meeting outside
 - wearing a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, especially where you come into contact with people you do not usually meet, when rates of transmission are high
 - trying to stay at home if you are unwell
 - taking a test if you have covid-19 symptoms, and staying at home and avoiding contact with people if you test positive; and
 - washing your hands and following advice to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'.

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 Covid-19 and have not yet developed symptoms. It is therefore important folk continue to wear a facial covering if possible, maintain good hand hygiene and that rooms are well ventilated.

There is increasing evidence of the importance of circulating fresh air in reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Ventilation also helps with reducing transmission of other respiratory infections such as influenza, with some research showing that being in a room with fresh air can in some cases reduce the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19 by over 70%

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 Covid 19. The consequences of infection can be significantly different depending on age and underlying health conditions, and vaccination status.

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).

Appendix 1: Requirements for User Groups

Ealing Green (Methodist & United Reformed) Church 'Outside' User Groups: Requirements for Using the Premises

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 Reformed) 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).
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 any current legislation & guidance by HM's Government
3. Windows/doors in all rooms should be opened 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. If using the kitchen, the area should be cleaned thoroughly afterwards, including the use of disinfectant spray on all surfaces, handles and switches.
5. On arrival and before departure group leaders should wipe clean door handles, light switches, and any toilets/sinks/taps and doors to the entrances and exits. It is good practice to cleanse surfaces such as tables but the chairs need not be cleaned. 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.
6. All persons attending the group should sanitise or wash their hands upon arrival.
7. Adults and children aged 11+ are strongly encouraged to wear a mask/face covering within the building, particularly in communal areas such as corridors, toilets and kitchen, or if a large number of people are present, and groups should provide their own/spare masks or face coverings. Ventilation of the rooms between classes/sessions must take place. The corridor in particular is narrow and poorly ventilated.
8. 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.
9. While the Managing Trustees will provide hand sanitiser at entrances and outside or near toilets, User Groups should have their own hand sanitiser available.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. A full copy of Ealing Green Church's risk assessment is available upon request and will also be found on our website.