



## Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public:

### Issue 16.

This document is a work in progress. It is liable to change as guidance from Government, the Church of England and the Diocese changes and is updated. If we do not follow current and changing advice our insurance cover could also be affected. It is also likely to change as we gain experience in operation. Every effort is being made to keep the document up to date, please check the revision date or the C of E web site.

<b>Church: St Mary Hook with Warsash</b>	<b>Date completed: 15/6/2020</b>	<b>Review date: 24/05/2021 (Issue 16)</b>
<p><b>Decision to Close the Church for Public Worship.</b></p> <p>Ministry Team Decision made on 6<sup>th</sup> January and ratified by the PCC on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021</p> <p><b>The Ministry Team agreed that it is safe to re-open the church for public services from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021.</b></p>	<p>The decision was made for two reasons, (1) the age and vulnerability of several members of the Ministry Team and (2) the fact that new variants of the COVID 19 virus are at least 50% more easily transmittable than the original version with an escalating rate of infection and Tier 4 restrictions.</p> <p>Sufficient numbers or the clergy and congregation have received one or both vaccinations and the rate of infection locally remains low.</p>	<p>The Church remains open each morning Monday to Saturday from 10am to 12noon for private prayer. The provisions for cleaning, hygiene and quarantine remain in force.</p>

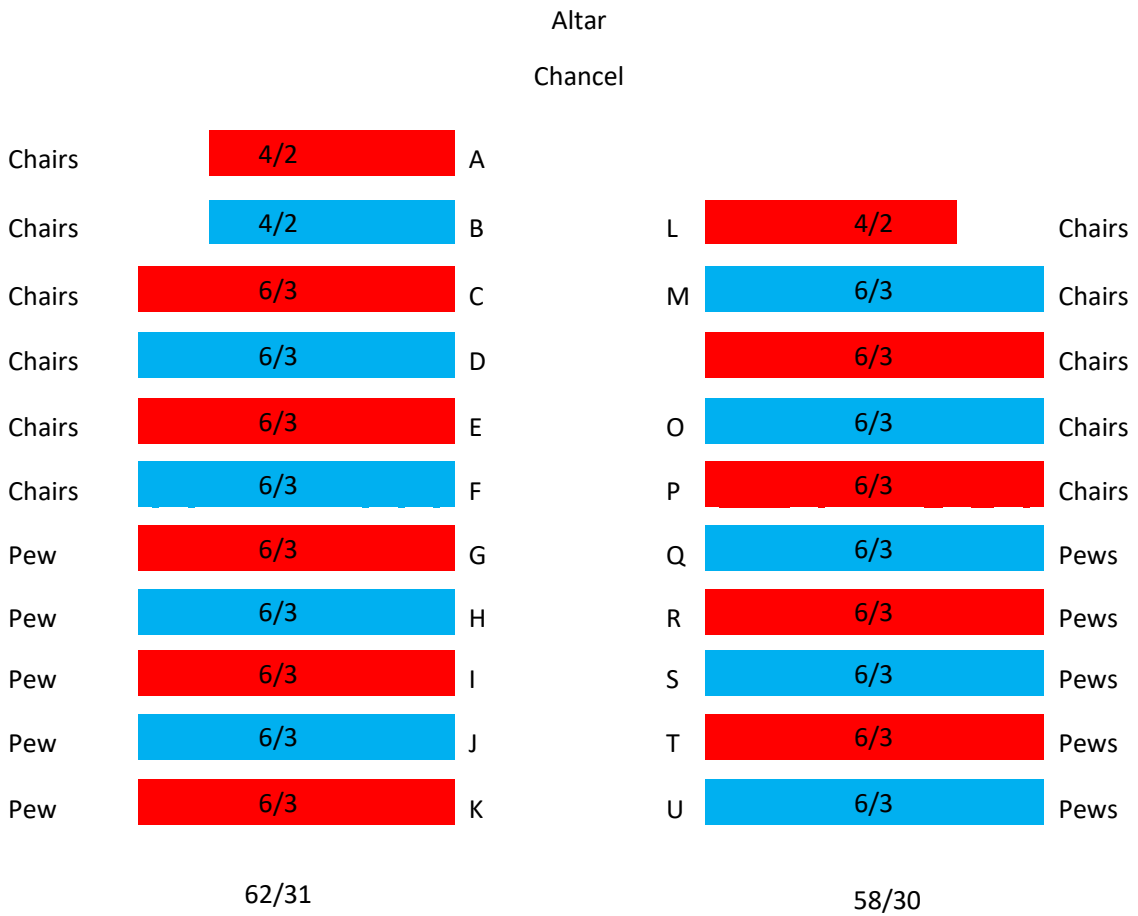
Area of Focus	Controls required	Additional information	Action by whom?
<b>Advice about Working with</b>	Children, your people and parents can now meet in groups of up to 15 people	<u>National C of E advice about working with</u>	

<p><b>children and young people</b></p>	<p>provided it is a support group and not a social gathering. There is guidance on the preparation and consultation required and a separate risk assessment is required.</p>	<p><u>children and young people</u> (1/10/2020)</p>	<p>Ministers, Youth and Families Workers</p>
<p><b>Preparing the Church: Initial entry, safety checks and cleaning</b></p> <p>Guidance on Church Heating and Ventilation</p>	<p>The two-stage process to be followed is contained in our document Re-Opening of Church Buildings After Lockdown. Issue 1. This follows all C of E guidance available at the time.</p> <p>Because the building has been closed for several months there is no risk of Covid-19 being present and therefore normal day to day safety precautions will be sufficient.</p> <p>New guidance on the types of heating system that are safe to use in church buildings.</p>	<p>Please see the C of E Document:</p> <p>“Access to church buildings during lockdown: general advice for incumbents, churchwardens and PCC members”</p> <p><u>National C of E advice on opening church buildings</u> (26/9/2020)</p> <p><a href="https://anglican.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5020cadd6c9a6a12c8af9a6e4&amp;id=a1570a972e&amp;e=83e6437125">https://anglican.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5020cadd6c9a6a12c8af9a6e4&amp;id=a1570a972e&amp;e=83e6437125</a> (1/10/2020)</p>	<p>Church Wardens</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>No action required</p>
<p><b>The “Rule of Six”</b></p>	<p>A suitable lone working policy has been consulted however it is not anticipated that lone working will be required during the initial stages</p> <p>The Government has introduced the “Rule of Six” which allows more than six people to gather in a venue but in groups of no more than six and they cannot interact between groups. The number of groups who can meet is determined by the capacity of the venue. Social distancing rules apply, sanitisers and face masks must be worn.</p> <p>Subsequently the Archdeacons have provided further clarification on the interpretation of the rules.</p> <p>The rule of six applies to the Church and the Church Hall. For the hall a separate event risk assessment and Attendance Form A must be completed.</p>	<p>Both Church Wardens to open the church. Four or five people can be involved in cleaning.</p> <p><a href="https://www.churchofen gland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches?mc_cid=7775ca1ebb&amp;mc_eid=83e6437125">https://www.churchofen gland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches?mc_cid=7775ca1ebb&amp;mc_eid=83e6437125</a> (12/10/2020)</p> <p><u>Archdeacons’ Q &amp; A about church activities</u></p>	<p>Church Wardens/ Carol Barnden.</p> <p>Vicars, and Wardens, Hall Manager Hall Hirers and Users</p>

<p><b>Preparation of the Church for individual prayer.</b></p> <p>A one-way flow system will be implemented. Church opening hours to be established and a rota system created for Stewards. A minimum of one steward on duty but they may be joined by members of the clergy etc for visitor pastoral support</p>	<p>Confirm that all steps (above) for access by clergy and individuals have been carried out before anyone else enters the building.</p>	<p><u>National C of E guidance on private prayer</u> (20/5/2021)</p>	<p>Church Wardens Completed</p>
	<p>Entry to the Church will be via the North Doors and Exit via the South Door. The only seating to be used for visitors are a number of plastic chairs since they are easy to move and clear.</p> <p>A one-way system will be established using Furniture and/or rope to prevent access to regular seating and restricted areas. Unnecessary furniture will be cleared out of the way. Access to the Chancel will not be allowed, but it will not be roped off.</p>	<p>Some furniture has already been re-arranged and plastic chairs put in place.</p> <p>In view of the limited number of visitors there is no need for a one-way system because social distancing can be easily maintained.</p>	<p>Church Wardens  Ongoing</p>
<p>General Principles for Public Worship Services</p> <p>Music and Singing</p> <p>Singing at Weddings</p>	<p>New guidance has been introduced for public worship and a range of other activities to meet stages 3 and 4 of the Governments coming out of lockdown roadmap. The other guidance on specific types of service still applies.</p> <p>Singing is permitted with an amateur choir limited to 6 singers, safely distanced from the congregation and each other. For services where music is a feature a choir of 6 can be located in the chancel, in front of the chancel steps or in the south side aisle adjacent to the organ loft and piano. In both locations the choir can be socially distanced from each other and from the congregation. Singing by the congregation is not permitted.</p> <p>The organ and piano can be played.</p>	<p><u>National C of E guidance on public worship</u> (20/5/2021)</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts</a></p> <p><a href="#">Covid-19 resources for churches   RSCM</a></p>	<p>All Clergy and Wardens</p> <p>Choir Members and others organising music or singing.</p>

<p>Professional Musicians</p>	<p>For weddings, where the marriage couple sit in the chancel and kneel at the alter steps only the south side isle should be used.</p> <p>A music group can play provided the musicians are socially distanced from each other and the congregation and no blown into instruments are used. The number playing should be the minimum necessary and can be located in the chancel or south side isle.</p> <p>Two professional musicians, say a pianist and violinist or a guitarist, can play provided they are socially distanced as above. For more than two musicians a separate risk assessment should be completed to ensure that both technical and COVID safety requirements can be met.</p>	<p>All arrangements for singing or the playing of live movements should be discussed with the wardens well in advance of the service.</p> <p>The Wardens will complete a risk assessment based of physical considerations and the technical needs of the performers.</p>	
	<p>Opening hours to be published on Church web site and weekly pew sheet.</p> <p>A notice to be provided regarding the route through the church, the seating to be used, areas out of bounds and cleanliness requirements.</p> <p>Opening hours to be agreed with the vicars. A schedule of people available to act as stewards to be prepared to match opening hours</p>	<p>A steward will not be required to do more than a two-hour shift. They should have their own mobile phone and bring their own refreshments because the kitchen and toilet will not be available.</p>	<p>Ian Wilkie/Liz Simpson</p> <p>Church Wardens</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Peter Upward</p>
<p>Strict hygiene measures to be implemented.</p>	<p>Hand sanitizers to be placed at the entry to the church and at the exit. Stewards to insist that they are used by every visitor before entry is permitted,</p> <p>Bacterial wipes and disposable rubber gloves to be available for use by stewards in order to clean the plastic chairs after use.</p> <p>Wardens to consider further cleaning before the church is locked each night.</p>	<p>Materials to be purchased as necessary.</p> <p>Each steward to use a fresh pair of gloves. Used wipes and gloves to be disposed in a plastic bag or alternative container which will be placed in the large waste bin by the hall at the end of each day.</p>	<p>Liz Simpson/ Roger Clear</p> <p>Church Wardens Stewards</p>

Seating Plan - Social Distancing Provision



Full capacity -  $62 + 58 = 120$

Social Distancing Best Case Scenario- All families  
so very few gaps =  $< 61$

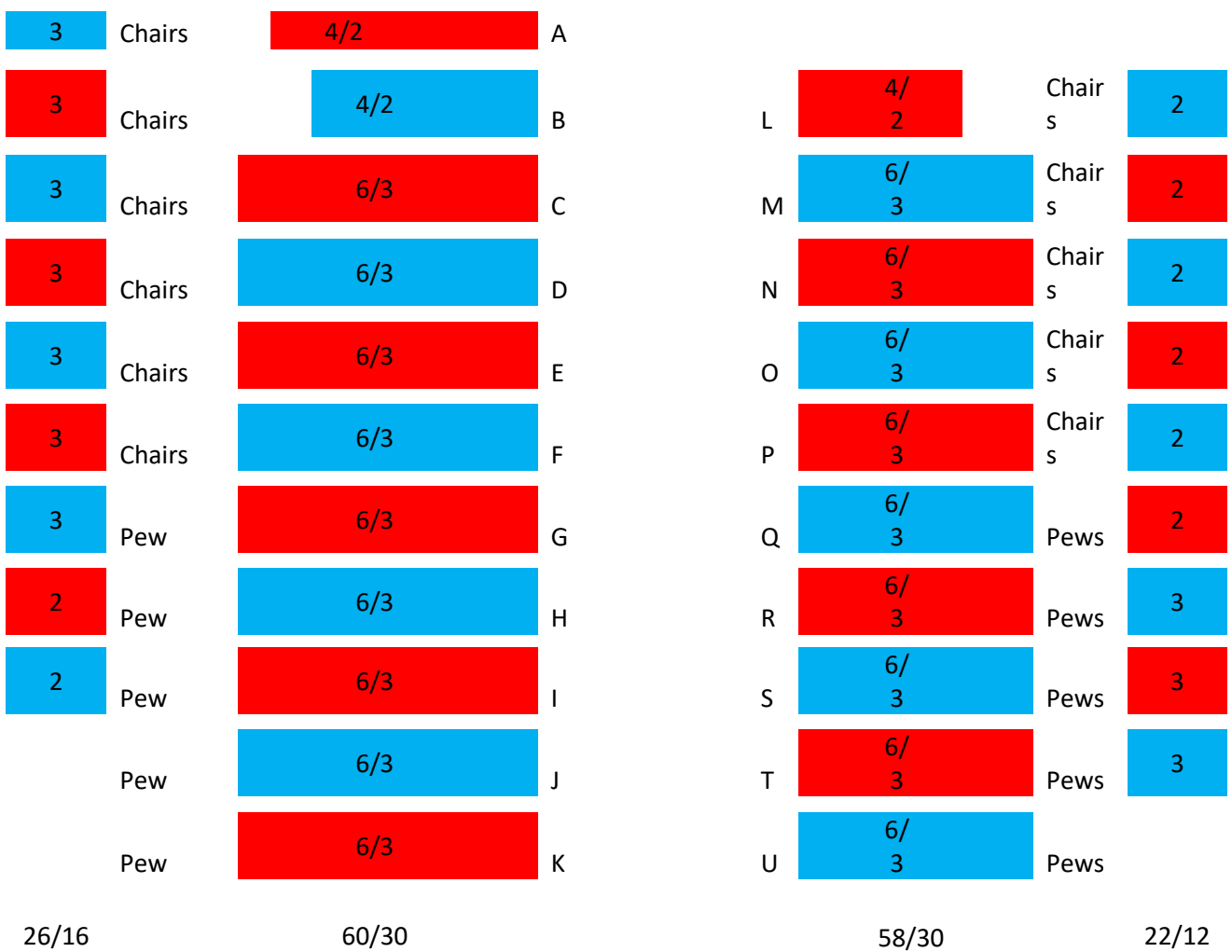
Social Distancing Worst Case Scenario - All single people so lots of gaps  
=  $< 30$

Median Scenario - Half Families, half single people =  $(61 + 30 / 2) =$   
C. 45

These figures are at best estimates, the actual capacity will depend entirely on the mix of people and the gaps in the rows that have to be left.

### Seating Plan - Social Distancing Provision

Altar  
Chancel



Full capacity - 26 + 60 + 58 + 22 = 168

Social Distancing Best Case Scenario- All families >88

<p><b>Over 70's and Those Shielding for medical or Other Reasons</b></p>	<p>The social distancing measures we have put in place are set out in this document,</p> <p>Our policy is that all are welcome to worship at St Mary's. We will advise those over 70 of the arrangements we have put in place for social distancing and cleanliness but it is then up to the individual to decide whether or not to attend.</p>	<p>If anyone has a doubt or concern about attending a service, they can discuss that concern with a member of the clergy.</p> <p>See also guidance on public worship.</p>	<p>Wardens</p>	<p>Before Services in Church are scheduled to start.</p>
<p><b>Timing</b></p>	<p>The Vicars will decide when the first service will be held in Church.</p> <p>As a target it is hoped to hold a regular communion service in church by the end of August but Zoom services are also likely to continue.</p>	<p>Bishop Christopher's advice on doing things safely has been taken into account</p>	<p>Revs Nicky-Sue and Mike Terry</p>	<p>Done</p>
<p><b>Holy Communion Services</b></p>	<p>All arrangements for holy communion services in accordance with General Principles above.</p> <p>In addition to the sanitisers available at the church entrance, individual bottles of hand sanitiser will be distributed or placed on seats for use during communion.</p> <p>There will be no Server or Lay Assistant.</p> <p>There is specific guidance on the safe administration of communion principally for ministers in the way the service is conducted. The salient points for communicants are as follows:</p> <p>In most cases communion will be distributed at the Chancel steps, not at the alter rail.</p> <p>The latest guidance allows intincted wafers, i.e. wafers dipped in wine, to be distributed to communicants. Wine is permitted for the president and members of his/her immediate family living together only and will not be distributed to communicants.</p> <p>Wafers will be dropped into the communicant's hands by the minister without each other's hands touching.</p>	<p>To be discussed in detail by the whole Ministry Team</p> <p>The guidance on administration of communion with the introduction of mandatory wearing of face masks from 1<sup>st</sup> August is now very specific.</p> <p><a href="https://www.churchofengland.org/COVID-19-Advice-on-the-Administration-of-Holy-Communion-v5.3.pdf">COVID-19 Advice on the Administration of Holy Communion v5.3.pdf (churchofengland.org)</a></p>	<p>Wardens/ Ministers</p> <p>President</p> <p>President/Minister</p>	

<p><b>Arrangements for limited attendance funerals.</b></p> <p><b>General Arrangements</b></p>	<p>Letters have been sent to funeral directors by the Diocese about arrangements but the officiating minister must explain to the bereaved family how the church will be arranged and the restrictions that will be in place, including limits on numbers, and NHS Track and Trace requirements</p> <p>All arrangements for funeral services in accordance with General Principles above.</p> <p>The bereaved family or Funeral Director to be asked to prepare a Form A of attendees. There is no limit on the number who can attend a funeral, subject to the capacity of the church and the mix of individuals, couples and families. Where necessary the Wardens will prepare a seating plan The church will be re-arranged so that the one-way system does not operate.</p> <p>Mourners will be asked to take their seats in church before the coffin is brought in. Two or three principle mourners may be allowed to process with the coffin provided they can be accommodated on the front row of chairs.</p> <p>If more people attend than previously agreed the minister should decide whether the service can go ahead safely. If he/she decide it is unsafe then people who are not members of</p>	<p>Do the minimum so that re-instatement for individual prayer is straightforward.</p> <p><u>National C of E guidance on funerals 20/5/2021</u></p> <p>Attendees to be checked on arrival</p> <p>Choir chairs and stands and first row of fabric chairs to be removed to ensure chairs are not too close to the coffin</p> <p>One-way system to be re-instated after the funeral and the church locked.</p> <p>If necessary, the minister should call the wardens for assistance.</p>	<p>Officiating Minister</p> <p>Officiating Minister</p> <p>Steward</p> <p>Minister/Wardens</p> <p>Steward/Church Wardens</p> <p>Steward</p>	<p>Coordinated so that time is available between individual prayer opening times and the timing for each funeral.</p>



	<p>the immediate family must be asked to leave. This applies to all Occasional Offices.</p> <p>The only Church personnel attending will be the officiating minister and one Steward. Steward to ensure that each visitor uses the hand sanitiser.</p> <p>Order of services to be provided by the Funeral Director left over after the service to be disposed of by the Steward using rubber gloves.</p>			
<b>Arrangements for Limited Attendance Weddings</b>	<p>The officiating minister must explain to the family how the church will be arranged and the restrictions that will be in place, including no live music and singing.</p> <p>The wedding couple will be asked to provide a list of up to 30 people attending and they will be checked against the list on arrival. Seating to be in “family bubble” groups, maintaining social distances. Please also explain track and trace requirements.</p> <p>Both doors can be used but with limited attendance consider using the north door alone. Other arrangements in accordance with General Arrangements above</p> <p>If kneelers and fabric chairs are used by the marriage couple in the Chancel they should be left in situ and not touched for at least 72 hours. This should not be a problem because the Chancel will otherwise be out of bounds.</p> <p>See specific guidance: The minister does not have to touch the ring or the couple’s hands and hand sanitiser should be used by each person before and after signing of the register.</p> <p>Other arrangements as for funerals above</p>	<p>If a rehearsal is held it should be timed so that there is no conflict with private prayer times</p> <p>Hopefully the couple will adhere to the number but if more attend they may have to be turned away.</p> <p><u>National C of E guidance on weddings (20/5/2021)</u></p> <p>Guidance does refer to volunteers or employees of the church, who do not count in the 30 people</p>	<p>Minister/Wardens</p> <p>Minister/ Wardens</p> <p>Minister</p>	<p>Timing to be coordinated.</p>

<b>Arrangements for Limited Attendance Baptisms</b>	<p>The officiating minister should explain to the child’s family how the church will be arranged and the restrictions that will be in place, including no live music and singing. The limitation on attendance explained and a list of attendees up to a maximum of 30 for a private baptism obtained. When baptism is to take place as part of public “the rule of 6” does apply and an assessment of numbers should be made so that the capacity of the church is not exceeded. Record keeping for NHS Track and Trace should also be explained</p> <p>When meeting the parents and Godparents before the service social distancing should be maintained in line with guidance current at the time. C of E guidance is that the minister should not hold or touch the baby. A parent or Godparent should hold the baby during the service at the font. See specific C of E guidance the conduct of the service.</p> <p>Other arrangements in accordance with General Arrangements.</p>	<p><u>National C of E guidance on baptisms</u> (20/5/2021)</p> <p>Oil should be applied to the baby in the form of a cross using an applicator, not the minister’s finger.</p>	Minister	
<b>Arrangements for limited attendance confirmations</b>	<p>This guidance follows the guidance for public worship including limiting numbers to 6 people per confirmation candidate up to a maximum of 5 candidates and the wearing of facemasks together with specific guidance on the conduct of confirmation and baptism. Guidance includes preparation of candidates as well as the conduct of the service itself.</p>	<p><u>National C of E advice on confirmations</u> (26/9/2020)</p>	Bishops, Ministers and Wardens	
<b>Guidance on Outdoor Worship and Churchyards</b>	<p>The law allows multiple groups of six to gather provided they do not mingle. This would apply to burials or interments but social distancing must</p>	<p><u>National C of E advice about outdoor worship and churchyards</u> (1/10/2020)</p>	Ministers, Wardens and Funeral Directors	When Required

	be maintained. Maintenance activities can continue.			
<b>Cleaning the church before and after general use (no known exposure to anyone with Coronavirus symptoms)</b>  Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a>	If sets of seating have not been used for 72 hours adequate quarantine will have been achieved then there is no need for cleaning.	Normal cleaning regime	Church Wardens	Inspections to decide when cleaning is necessary
	If 72-hour quarantine is not possible then check all cleaners are not in a vulnerable group or self-isolating. Clean, using normal cleaning materials, those areas where people have sat.	There must be extremely good reasons for not allowing 72 hours to pass.	Ministers/Wardens	
<b>Cleaning the church after known exposure to someone with Coronavirus symptoms</b>	If possible close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.		Church Wardens	
	If 72-hour closure is not possible then follow Public Health England guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings.	<a href="#">Public Health England guidance available here.</a>		
	If the building has been quarantined for 72 hours, then carry out cleaning as per the normal advice on cleaning.	Advice on <a href="#">cleaning church buildings can be found here.</a> and is posted on the cleaning cupboard door.		