

Re Opening of our Churches for Individual Prayer

Guidance and Declaration for Stewards



Thank you very much for volunteering to act as a Steward for your Parish. Your contribution is greatly appreciated by the Parish and the Diocese and will make it possible for your fellow parishioners to come to church to pray in a place they know well.

What does the Government mean by “Individual Private Prayer” ?

Individual prayer within a place of worship is defined as a person or household entering the venue to pray on their own and not as part of a group, led prayer or communal act. During it they must be socially distanced from other individuals or households. The public celebration of Mass and other Sacraments, communal prayer, Exposition and Benediction, and regular scheduled liturgies are not permitted at this time. This includes either a priest, deacon or lay person leading devotions or prayer.

Who can be a Steward?

The Guidance is that stewards *“should not be drawn from those instructed to shield themselves, nor, as a general rule, from groups considered more vulnerable to coronavirus.”*

Current Government policy is that there are two levels of significant risk: high and moderate.

People at high risk will have received a letter from the NHS.

People considered at moderate risk *“can go out to work (if you cannot work from home) and for things like getting food or exercising. But you should try to stay at home as much as possible. It’s very important you follow the general advice on social distancing, including staying at least 2m away from anyone you do not live with.”*

Anyone under 18 years of age will be able to volunteer however they must be accompanied by an adult member of their household who could act as a second steward if they so wished.

One of the stewards could be the Parish Priest himself; stewards should be already known to the Parish Priest and wherever possible be current volunteers in the Parish.

Where possible, one of each pair should be trained in safeguarding for another role in the parish community.

What are the Requirements for Stewards?

The following points are to assist you in understanding the duties of the role of Church steward during the Covid 19 Coronavirus Pandemic.

1. At least two stewards must be present in the church throughout the time it is open for prayer.
2. Stewards must ensure that hand sanitisation occurs at entry and exit points, social distancing is maintained by people in the church and if the church becomes full, to prevent others from entering the church. (Through, for example, a “one in, one out” policy.)
3. Stewards should advise people with cold or flu-like symptoms not to enter.
4. Persons under 16 years cannot enter the church building without being accompanied by an adult.
5. Stewards themselves should practice good hand hygiene through either regular hand washing or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser. They should not eat or drink or touch their face unless they have immediately washed their hands beforehand and should maintain social distance within the church.
6. Stewards should explain any one way circulation system in place and how and where people can leave the church, clearly defining areas that are not to be used.

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7. Stewards should explain the seating arrangements for individual prayer and any special arrangements made for family household groups.
8. Stewards should monitor those leaving church and immediately clean the area ready for another parishioner.
9. Stewards should not physically assist people unless absolutely necessary, for example in an emergency for first aid. In this case there are some basic steps which stewards should be aware of:
 - a. Be aware of the risks to yourselves and others in helping someone.
 - b. Make sure you wash your hands and use an alcohol gel, before and after helping someone.
 - c. Wear disposable gloves or cover hands when dealing with people and dispose of them securely.
 - d. Dispose of all waste from first aid safely in tied bags in bins.
 - e. Do not touch a wound with your bare hand.
 - f. Do not touch any part of a dressing that will come in contact with a wound.
10. Stewards should contact the Parish Safeguarding representative with any safeguarding concerns.

Keeping the Church Clean

1. The areas of the church open to parishioners must be cleaned fully at least once a day, paying particular attention to touch points (door handles, pews, collection boxes etc.).
2. All Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided by the Parish and stewards are advised to use these at all times.
3. During cleaning Stewards must wear disposable gloves and aprons. Stewards should ensure any cuts or grazes on their hands are completely covered with waterproof dressings.

Government and Public Health England advice on the control measures and social distancing continue to evolve. The Diocese with guidance from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales will continue to monitor the advice and updated guidance will be provided when available or required.

Declaration

I declare that I have read the above guidance and I understand the role and the responsibilities of the role of steward that I have volunteered for.

I also declare that I know of no clinical reasons or any other reason which would preclude me from undertaking this role.

Signature

Date.....

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