

## **Tilehouse Street Baptist Church**

### **Risk Assessment: Use of Church buildings - living with Covid-19**

#### **Summary**

Tilehouse Street Baptist Church is a mid-19th century worship venue designed to seat 700, but modern alterations mean it can only accommodate about 200 in seats at ground level and pews at first floor gallery level.

The site includes a hall with an auditorium seating up to 150 and smaller meeting rooms on two levels.

This assessment attempts to quantify the risk associated with holding events or worship with reference to the possible spread of Covid-19 and taking note of removal of all government requirements.

#### **Sources of risk**

Possible sources of risk from Covid-19 are as follows:

- Infected persons entering the building and contaminating items or surfaces
- Items or surfaces previously contaminated with virus

#### **'At risk' people**

The Church buildings serve varied communities. 'At risk' groups could be:

- Congregation, minister, deacons
- Elderly attending Church meetings and services
- Staff
- External hirers and users of Memorial Halls and Church building

#### **Covid-19 scenario**

A number of factors affect the probability of infection and its consequences:

1. The prevalence of the virus in the general population and, in particular, West Hitchin. See Reference 2 and enter the Church's postcode, SG5 2EE
2. The means of transmission: droplet infection; touch (direct & indirect)
3. The length of time in proximity or contact and the time elapsed between events
4. The type of surfaces contaminated
5. The amount of virus shed from an individual
6. The variable severity of infection from nothing at all, through mild discomfort, to severe illness and finally death.
7. Improvements in treatment, the effectiveness of previous measures and the roll-out of vaccine have reduced the risk and consequence of infection. The prevalent variant is now Omicron which produces milder symptoms but is more transmissible. See Reference 3 for further information.

## Church Scenario

The risk assessment matrix takes account of several operational modes:

1. Occasional events
2. Regular worship and meetings
3. Use of the Memorial Halls and Church building by external hirers (regular and occasional)

## Methodology

The Church has adopted the internationally recognised system of a 5x5 risk matrix combining probability and consequence to produce a numerical risk assessment as used in the oil, nuclear, rail and aviation industries. See the separate 'Risk assessment: Methodology' document.

Taking into account the infection rate in society and the number of attendees to meetings or worship it has been decided that the frequency of occurrence of an infected person entering and infecting others or contaminating items or surfaces is remote, allocated a value of 3.

Two consequences have been allowed for with different probabilities based on news reports of deaths versus infections. Zero symptoms to severe illness for multiple persons (allocated a value of 3) is considered to be a more likely outcome than a single death (allocated a value of 4). Multiple deaths as a consequence has not been considered, being less likely still. Roll out of vaccine and improvements in treatment mean that the likelihood of death is now considered remote. The probability is now reduced to a value of 2.

## Control measures

A separate document, *Precautions to mitigate risk of use of Church buildings*, will be prepared detailing the control measures to be taken which will apply to all scenarios shown in 'Church Scenario' above. These will be based on the current advice from BUGB and the UK Government and will be updated as that advice changes.

## Summary

The control measures listed in the documents referred to above will reduce the risk to As Low As Reasonably Practical (ALARP).

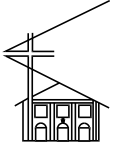
## References

1. Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB): [Coronavirus: Guidance for Baptist Churches](#)
2. Interactive map: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/interactive-map/cases>
3. The official UK government website for data and insights on coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

S.M. Hallas (Health & Safety Officer) / Revd. J. S. Robson (Minister)

## Issue Record

| Issue   | Date        | Details  |
|---------|-------------|--|
| 1       | 13 Jul 2020 | First issue  |
| 2.0     | 27 Jul 2020 | Removed children from 'At Risk' Group / removed #sectionA from 'References' / updated figure in point 1 of 'Covid-19 scenario'. Para 2 of Methodology added value of 3 in explanation. Risk (Before Controls) table column expanded. JSR/SMH |
| 2.1     | 3 Aug 2020  | Additional precautions documents included, slight layout changes. SMH  |
| 3.0     | 11 Aug 2020 | Added Staff to 'At risk' people  |
| 4.0     | 27 Aug 2020 | Added halls hirers to 'At Risk' people. Text size increased, layout changes. Use of halls added to 'Church Scenario'. Under 'Control Measures' the Precautions documents are generalised to allow for future additions. SMH                  |
| 5.1     | 30 Mar 2021 | Scenario: prevalence lowered, other improvements lowered risk. Methodology para amended accordingly. Matrix updated. Revised documents and links updated. SMH/ JSR   |
| 6 Draft | 15 Jul 2021 | Updated prior to Step 4 of government rules removing most requirements   |
| 7       | 9 May 2022  | Updated following government removal of all rules. Title changed to be more general "Use of Church buildings - living with Covid-19" Ref to government online resources included   |



**Risk Assessment Form**

**Tilehouse Street Baptist Church**

**Risk Assessment Matrix**

| Item  | Use of Church building - living with Covid-19                   | Applies to                           | Everybody |   |  |  |  |                          |   |   |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|--|--|--|--------------------------|---|---|
| Assessor:                                   | Sam Hallas  |                                      |           |   |  |  |  |                          |   |   |
| HAZARD                                      | TYPE/ CONSEQUENCE   | RISK<br>(Before Controls)<br>L, C, R |           |   | CONTROL MEASURES IN PLACE/<br>PROPOSED |  |  | RISK<br>(After Controls) |   |   |
| Infected person enters – severe consequence | Covid infection, breathing difficulty, pneumonia, death         | 2                                    | 4         | 8 | Risk rated as tolerable.               |  |  | 2                        | 4 | 8 |
| Ditto – less severe consequence             | Covid infection, flu like symptoms, infection spread to others. | 3                                    | 2         | 6 | ALARP                                  |  |  | 2                        | 2 | 4 |
|   |   |                                      |           |   |  |  |  |                          |   |   |

Key: L= Likelihood/ Probability, C = Consequence, R = Risk = product of LxC. (1-4 = negligible, 4-9 = tolerable, >9 = intolerable)