

Current Risk Mitigation Factors for Bell Ringing at St Mary's, Nantwich during the Covid-19 pandemic

This document identifies the current values and associated rationale that qualify the controls in the *“Risk Assessment for Bell Ringing at St Mary's, Nantwich during the Covid-19 pandemic”* (Issue 4.0). Any more restrictive UK Government or church constraint which may arise shall take precedence.

On 27 January 2022, the UK Government moved to its Plan A for handling the Covid-19 situation. The Government also published its *“COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19”*[12] (Updated 23 February 2022), which effectively removed all domestic legal restrictions in England from 24 February 2022.

Thus there are now no legal requirements to follow in England with respect to mitigating the spread of Covid-19. It should be noted that the virus has not gone away; the current predominant variant of Covid-19, Omicron BA.2, widespread in the community, is considered to be more contagious but less severe than earlier variants.

The UK Government's plan for living with Covid-19 recommends:

- 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 other people if you test positive; and,
- Washing your hands and following advice to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'.

Therefore, given the still high prevalence of Covid-19 in the community, the following mitigation factors are now in place for Ringing Events in the Tower:

Social Distancing

Whilst there is no minimum social distancing requirement, ringers are still requested to try to maintain a minimum distance of 1m from other ringers whilst in the ringing chamber and to be mindful of other ringers' concerns. The ropes will be kept 1m+ apart, and currently any combination of all eight bells may be rung.

Face Coverings

Ringers are not required to wear face coverings, but may do so if they feel more comfortable. Other ringers should be mindful of other people's concerns and give those people wearing face coverings more space.

NB: Face coverings should still be worn for face-to-face teaching of bell handling.

Ventilation

At least two of the doors should still be kept open during any ringing event. If there is no appreciable cross-draught, or if a ringing event is longer than 30 minutes, or there are more than 16 people present, three or more doors should be kept open.

Elapsed Time between Ringing Events

There is no longer any requirement for additional sanitisation time between Ringing Events based on intervening time intervals. Hand sanitiser will still be available in the ringing chamber and at the bottom of the tower steps.

Ringling Events

Event	Description
Service Ringing	<p>Happening: yes. For all normal services, and occasional services (subject to prior arrangements).</p> <p>Duration and Format: No specific constraints.</p> <p>Attendance: No fixed limit.</p>
Thursday Practice Nights	<p>Happening: yes.</p> <p>Duration and Format: The normal Thursday night two hour practice will still comprise two sessions: starting with a Rounds and Call Changes session for the beginners of an hour; and then a session for more experienced ringers (or a continuation of the beginners' session until sufficient experienced ringers are in attendance).</p> <p>Attendance: No fixed limit.</p>
Bell Handling Practices	<p>Happening: yes.</p> <p>Duration and Format: The additional bell handling practices (currently on Tuesdays) will continue but with no limit on duration. Face coverings should be worn during the face-to-face teaching elements.</p> <p>Attendance: By Invitation only.</p>
Quarters and Peals	Happening: yes.
Visiting Ringers	Happening: yes.

Appendix: References

1. [Coronavirus rules set out by the UK Government to address the Covid-19 pandemic](#), under constant revision, UK Government.
2. [COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship](#), as revised 25 February 2022, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.
3. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance](#), as revised 24 February 2022, The Church of England.
4. [Risk Assessment Template for Opening Church Buildings to the Public](#), Version 10.1, 10 December 2021, The House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group.
5. [COVID-19: Opening and managing church buildings](#), Version 2.4, 25 January 2022, The House of Bishops Covid-19 Recovery Group.
6. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Standing Guidance](#), as published 27 January 2022, The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.
7. [Carbon Dioxide monitoring whilst ringing](#), 9 May 2021, The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.
8. [Rapid lateral flow coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests](#), last reviewed 9 March 2022, NHS.
9. [Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#), Guidance on writing Risk Assessments including example templates, Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
10. [Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions...](#), updated 27 January 2022, UK Government.
11. [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings\) \(England\) Regulations 2021 \(expired\)](#), UK Government.
12. [COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19](#), Updated 23 February 2022, UK Government.

Appendix: Change History

Date	Version	Description
06/12/2021	1.0 Draft A	Initial version distributed for review/approval. To be read and approved in conjunction with version 4.0 of the Tower Risk Assessment.
08/12/2021	1.0 Draft B	Recommendation to wear face coverings simplified.
10/12/2021	1.0 Draft C	Updated to reflect mandatory requirement to wear face coverings in places of worship (unless exempt). Updated set of references included. Some references are flagged as requiring updates or retirement in the light of more recent changes to other higher level documents published by HM Government and the House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group.
30/12/2021	1.0 Draft D	Updated to reflect discussions between the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers and the House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group regarding whether bell ringers may be exempt from wearing face coverings. This does not change our approach to wearing face coverings. Updated and augmented set of references – now all appear to be consistent!
04/01/2022	1.0	Issued as approved after review (of Draft C) by members of the Standing Committee.
15/03/2022	2.0 Draft A	Updated to reflect the removal of all legal requirements in England for mitigating or handling the spread of Covid-19, from 24 February 2022.
16/03/2022	2.0	Issues as approved after informal review. Slight revision to text for readability.