

## **COVID – 19 Risk Assessment for Ashcroft Christian Fellowship, Ashcroft Hall, Ashcroft Road, Ipswich IP1 6AA**

### **A. Key Principles**

1. No-one with COVID symptoms should attend the meetings.
2. Shielding persons should continue to follow the government guidance and are advised not to attend.
3. Government guidance stresses that over 70's may be at an increased risk of severe disease through COVID-19, regardless of medical conditions and are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household. If you are in this category, please consider this very carefully before deciding whether you should attend the meetings or not.
4. In accordance with Government guidance, from 8th August 2020, face coverings must be worn in Places of Worship. This means you must wear a face covering immediately before entering Ashcroft Hall and must keep it on until you leave.
5. Ashcroft Hall will be cleaned weekly, in advance of each service, with special attention to toilet area's and frequently touched surfaces such as taps, door handles etc. An updated cleaning schedule will be provided to our cleaner emphasising the focus on these area's
6. All attendees will be required to wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and water on arrival and after using the toilets. All attendees will be required to use either soap and water or a hand sanitizer to clean their hands before leaving the building.
7. Posters will be displayed to support hygiene and good hand washing techniques.
8. To minimise contact with "touchpoints", some internal doors will be wedged open when the hall is in use to avoid touching door handles. This will also help ventilation flow.
9. The Kitchen will be out of bounds for normal use apart from:
  - a. for hand washing on arrival using the hand wash basin.
  - b. For preparation of the bread and wine for use during the Sunday morning service
10. An attendance list for all meetings will be maintained, to assist, if needed, in Track & Trace. Records will be removed after 21 days. Attendees will be asked to complete a consent form in relation to this.
11. All recommended guidelines from our insurer, Congregational Insurance as set out in their paper "Preparing your church building for re-opening" – see attached - have been followed.

### **B. General Use of Toilets**

#### **Issue 1: Overcrowding**

Risk: 2m social distancing will be compromised if more than 1 person uses one of the toilets (Ladies/gents/disabled) at the same time

Remedy:

- (i) People attending Ashcroft Hall to use their toilet at home before leaving in order to minimise the need to use the toilets at the hall.
- (ii) Persons using the toilets to knock on the door before entering – if someone is already in then wait in middle hall until they vacate
- (iii) If there is a queue of people waiting to use the toilets then they must observe 2m social distancing

## **Issue 2: Cleaning toilets after use**

Risk: contamination by touching

Remedy:

- (i) After using the toilet, and washing hands with soap and water, the user must then take an antibacterial wipe and wipe the door handle, the taps and the toilet seat, (in that order) and dispose of the wipe in the bin provided.
- (ii) Hands can then be cleaned again if required with hand sanitizer.

## **C. Sunday morning service**

### **Issue 1: Entrance to building by main door before meetings.**

Risk: Congestion, aggravated by queues for hand-washing.

Remedy:

Households are requested (a) to stagger arrivals and (b) to wait in car park at 2m distance until entrance clear. This will be monitored by an Elder or person nominated by the Elders.

### **Issue 2: Use of Bibles and hymn books retained at the Hall.**

Risk: Transmission of virus if these were used within preceding 48 hours.

Remedy:

- (i) Regular participants to bring own Bibles.
- (ii) A small quantity of bibles and hymn books will be available on bookshelves if needed. After the service books used should be left on the users seat to quarantine min 48 hours
- (iii) The *Spiritual Songs* hymnbook is used only on Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings, so no risk to the 48-hour rule.
- (iv) This should not be an issue while only one service per week is being held as previous use greater than 48 hours

### **Issue 3: Finding a seat:**

Risk: Congestion and droplet transmission.

Remedy:

- (i) All seating and spacing to be controlled by Elders or their nominee.
- (ii) Seats will be assigned to specific households, and if sufficient capacity, places available for visitors
- (iii) All rows to face the same way and at 2m distance
- (iv) All attendees will be expected to wear a face covering (Key Principle A4 above) as they go to their seats. This is because they may pass occupied seating at less than 2m distance.

### **Issue 4: Hymn singing.**

Risk: droplet transmission of virus through singing.

Remedy:

Hymns will be read instead of being sung until government recommended advice removes this restriction.

### **Issue 5: Prayers & Scripture readings**

Risk: Droplet transmission.

Remedy

- (i) Brothers contributing to the service by praying or reading scripture, will do so from their seat and will already be at least 2m from other members of the congregation

- (ii) It is recommended that brothers contributing in this way remain seated to avoid compromising the 2m rule
- (iii) Brothers participating in this way are permitted to remove their face covering while they are speaking but must replace it when they have finished speaking

**Issue 5: Words of ministry.**

Risk: Droplet transmission.

Remedy:

- (i) Before brothers take part in this way they should move forward to the front of the hall and speak from the platform
- (ii) The brother is permitted to remove his face covering on arrival at the platform and while delivering this ministry, but must replace it when he has finished speaking and before he returns to his seat.
- (iii) the microphone should be turned on to avoid speaking with excessive volume
- (iv) The front row of seating will have been placed more than 2m away from the platform speaker

**Issue 6: Administering the breaking of bread.**

Risk: transmission through droplet or handling of elements.

Remedy:

- (i) The bread and wine will be prepared before the service by an Elder or their nominee, wearing disposable, single-use gloves and a face mask. The wine will be poured into individual cups; the loaf will be cut in half and one half cut into individual portions and placed on a plate; the other half will be placed uncut onto another plate; The bread and wine will then be covered and set out on the table prior to the service in readiness for the act of thanksgiving.
- (ii) The brother giving thanks will do so from his seat, away from the communion table. Having given thanks for the loaf, a brother designated by the elders will put on a face mask and approach the table and uncover the uncut half loaf only, and break the bread. That brother will then uncover and distribute the pre-prepared pieces on the second plate to all who are participating and then return the plate to the table.
- (iii) Participants must exercise care to ensure they do not touch the bread other than the piece they take for themselves
- (iv) The brother giving thanks will continue to give thanks for the wine, from his seat away from the communion table. After the thanksgiving, the brother nominated by the elders, still wearing face mask will take the tray round the communicants before returning the tray to the table.

**Issue 7: Collection bag.**

Risk: transmission through handling cash and the bag.

Remedy:

- (i) Cash collections will be suspended during the pandemic and contributions are encouraged to be made by direct bank transfer.
- (ii) If any are not able to make direct bank transfer, then cheques or cash donations can be given provided they are in a sealed envelope and left in the designated receptacle on the table at the main hall entrance. They can then be quarantined for 48 hours before handling.

**Issue 8: Dispersion of attendees.**

Risk: Congestion, aggravated by queues for handwashing.

Updated 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Remedy:

- (i) All attendees must keep their face coverings on until they have left the building (Key Principle A4 above)
- (ii) Departure should be made, one household at a time, using the closest exit point, either by front main entrance or by fire exit door beside the piano in main hall.
- (iii) Hand sanitizer will be available at both exits to be used on departure to expedite the departure.

**Issue 9: Conversation after meetings.**

Risk: lack of social distancing.

Remedy:

- (i) Government guidance states “wherever possible, try not to engage in conversation with anyone outside your household group”
- (ii) A prompt departure will be encouraged with conversations in the hall being discouraged.
- (iii) Short conversations can be held in the car park, observing full social distancing and general group social guidelines, i.e. maximum 6 people from different household or two households

**Issue 10: Social distancing by children.**

Risk: lack of social distancing by those too young to understand.

Remedy:

Parent of young children will be responsible for ensuring their children observe social distancing requirements

**Issue 11: Overcrowding.**

Risk: Inability to comply with social distancing expectations. Overcrowding is likely to happen if more than 32 people or 13 households are in the building.

Remedy:

- (i) A practical assessment of the capacity of the hall has been made whereby space was made for all regular members/households, accommodating the 2m social distancing rules. If not all regular members are in attendance there may be capacity for a few visitors.
- (ii) At present, priority will be given to existing members and visitors may be admitted only if sufficient space permits. This has been risk-assessed to a maximum of 32 people given the current mix of households.
- (iii) Visitors will also be provided with a copy of the risk assessment so they understand the basis on which we will be operating.

**Issue 12: Ventilation**

Risk: Poor ventilation increases risk of droplet transmission.

Remedy: Windows and doors will be opened to allow air to circulate.

**D. Meeting 6.30pm Sundays.**

It is currently not planned to recommence this service at the present time but this will be kept under review . Provided the incidence of new Coronavirus cases continues to fall and if there is no evidence of a second wave of the disease, it is hoped that this service may re-commence in the future.

At that time, section A - Key Principles above will apply and this risk assessment will be updated with the appropriate measures necessary in relation to that service.

Updated 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**E. Thursday evening - Prayer meeting and Bible reading.**

It is currently planned that the Thursday evening prayer meeting will continue on Zoom. However, should that decision change, section A - Key Principles above will apply to this service and this risk assessment will be updated with the appropriate measures necessary

**F. Tuesday Youth club**

It is currently planned that the Tuesday evening youth club will continue on Zoom.

**G. Friday Coffee morning**

It is currently planned that the Friday coffee morning will continue on Zoom.

**H. After-service refreshments.**

Risk: manual transmission of virus.

Remedy: Refreshments only provided after Sunday evening service but this will be suspended for the time being.

Approved by Ashcroft Christian Fellowship Elders: 14 August 2020