

Romsey Methodist Church

Risk Assessment in relation to Covid-19

Activity: Worship on Wednesday (WoW)

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Assessment date: 3rd December 2020

Review date: 3rd January 2021

Introduction:

The Coronavirus-19 is a highly infectious disease primarily affecting the respiratory system. The disease can be transmitted as an aerosol from human exhalation/inhalation or by physical contact with an infected surface or person. The disease can be transmitted prior to an infected person exhibiting symptoms. From information provided by the UK Research & Innovation website, surfaces can remain infected between 24 hours (cardboard) to 72 hours (plastics & stainless steel). In the form of an aerosol (ie a fine mist) 50% of the virus will settle out onto a surface in about an hour, whereas the remainder may remain in the air for about 3- 4 hours. It is understood that transmission of the virus likely occurs mainly indoors and in settings where there is poor ventilation and close proximity between people.

For the purposes of preparing and sharing food and drink the government has issued guidance that the Coronavirus-19 is very unlikely to be transmitted through food or food packing provided normal food hygiene precautions are undertaken <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19> and <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/personal-hygiene>

Description of Activity (WoW):

Prior to the pandemic of Covid-19 the main hall of the church building has been open on each Thursday morning of the week to facilitate participants of WoW to meet for several hours in order to hear a speaker of interest, aspects of worship, discussion and to enjoy refreshments. The refreshments are usually tea, coffee with food such as cakes and biscuits. The preparation of the event is undertaken by participants of the WoW. WoW seeks to reinstate this activity during October 2020. The event usually lasts about 2 hours and members tend to be seated for the duration. In order to facilitate a sociable environment, refreshments will be served at tables prior, during or after other aspects of the meeting.

Persons at risk:

The persons at risk are primarily participants of WoW, pianist and the cleaner.

Nature & Likelihood of hazard:

The probability of infection is highly related to the current prevalence of the disease in the community. The probability of infection within the WoW activity maybe associated with contact infection and aerosol transmission. Whilst the cleaner, working in isolation, might be at higher risk from contact infection, the risk from infection from inhalation is very unlikely. A duty participant of WoW at the entrance is more likely to be at risk from infection by inhalation from participants arriving.

Severity of Hazard:

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The severity of the infection primarily varies with age, gender, ethnicity, obesity and any underlying co-morbidity. The severity is increased with age; being male; being from a Black-Asian-Minority Ethnic group; being obese; having co-morbidities and for those people who are required to clinically shield. See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf

Children appear to be the least affected from the infection and would not normally attend the meeting.

Level of risk:

Without further demographic or clinical information it is assumed that all persons attending the activity are at the same level of high risk of infection without control measures, and that all mitigation measures apply to everyone.

Mitigation and control of risks:

The measures taken conform to the regulations

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1374/made/data.pdf> and Schedule 2 relating to **Tier 2** restrictions.

Within the following text 'support bubble' refers to 'Linked households' and is where a single adult living alone, or a single parent with children under 18, can form an exclusive network with **one** other household where social distancing does not have to be observed.

- i) The worship and study arrangements will comply with government guidance:
and guidance from the Methodist Church UK:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>
and
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/coronavirus-guidance-for-property/>
- ii) WoW activity operates under the arrangements approved by the Leadership Team and if the prevalence of the disease in the community is unacceptable the event will be cancelled at any time.
- iii) Those attending the service of worship have an obligation to comply with legal requirements and respect the decision of the managing trustees to ensure compliance whilst on the premises.
- iv) **Government legislation.** The premises have been designated as being in an area where Tier 2 (High Alert) restrictions apply. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know#high-alert>
- v) Whilst attending the premises for worship and study you **must not** meet or mingle with friends, family or others unless they are part of your household or support bubble. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household>). The requirement for social distancing does not apply to members of the same household or support bubble.
- vi) **Government guidance.** Whilst engaging in an activity on the premises, all parties should adhere to social distancing guidelines at all times. This means people should be 2 metres apart, or more than 1 metre apart as well as taking extra steps to stay safe (such as wearing a face coverings) to reduce the risk of transmission. The requirement for social distancing does not apply to members of the same household or support bubble.
- vii) **Government legislation.** It is a legal requirement to wear a face covering whilst on the premises excepting for children, valid health reasons or consuming refreshments. Surgical masks may be available at the entry for those without a suitable face covering on arrival. A

face covering is a material which safely covers the nose and mouth and must securely fit round the side of the face. More information can be found in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#:~:text=Face%20coverings%20are%20not%20required,you%20leave%20your%20seatin%20area>

- viii) All participants of the WoW activity undertaking duties must use the personal protective equipment as appropriate (ie surgical masks and disposable gloves).
- ix) Everyone attending the premises will comply with the signage and other instructions in order to minimise the risk of infection and/or the transmission of the virus.
- x) Personal greetings such as handshaking, hugs, etc are firmly discouraged.
- xi) Entry to the church will be via the footpath at the side of the building as this facilitates at least 8 persons queueing at the *social distance* between individuals from the side entrance doorway to the pavement.
- xii) A *social distance* will be maintained between individuals whilst waiting to enter and also within the building. Signage will be located outside and inside the building indicating the *social distance* between individuals. There will be no queuing within the building.
- xiii) Entry to the building will be controlled by a duty participant of the WoW activity.
- xiv) The meeting will take place in the main hall.
- xv) Provided there are no other people waiting to enter the building, exit from the building will be undertaken in a systematic and controlled manner through the side entrance at the conclusion of the meeting. If there are others joining an event in the sanctuary then the exit is via the front doors to the sanctuary.
- xvi) The door to the main hall will remain open so as to minimise door handles being touched whilst facilitating ventilation, and thereby reducing the transmission of the virus. Where practical windows in the hall(s) may be opened to increase ventilation or alternatively air filtration and purification units may be used.
- xvii) Everyone attending the church building will use hand sanitiser upon entry.
- xviii) All persons entering the building shall provide contact details registered in order to facilitate tracing should that be necessary as part of a public health requirement, and/or use the NHS app and NHS Test & Trace QR code. All local registers will be maintained by the leader of WoW for 21 days and destroyed within 4 weeks following attendance.
- xix) Personal material such as Bibles maybe brought to the meeting and should be removed from the building at the conclusion of the meeting.
- xx) Items belonging to the church should not be removed.
- xxi) Only the toilets adjacent to the hall, Wesley Room and the side entrance shall be used.
- xxii) When handwashing is undertaken in the toilets only paper hand towels and electric hand dryer should be used for drying hands. Hand towels have been removed to avoid contact transmission.
- xxiii) As well as washing hands, sanitisers are provided in toilets for users.
- xxiv) Sanitising wipes are provided in toilets so that users may clean handles, switches, etc after use. The wipes are to be disposed within the bins provided.
- xxv) Wherever possible everyone attending the building should be self-sufficient with tissues, pens, etc. Care must be undertaken not to touch, handle, replace or share objects (eg pens, pencils, books, etc) that might aid the transmission of the virus.
- xxvi) If not seated, speaking or consuming refreshments then all persons should wear a suitable face covering.
- xxvii) The invited speaker should maintain the *social distance* between themselves and any other person. If this is not possible the invited speaker should wear a face visor or mask.

- xxviii) The pianist should sanitise the piano keyboard prior and after use. The pianist must not encourage singing.
- xxix) Refreshments will be served to members at tables in the main hall only.
- xxx) The maximum number of persons seated in the main hall shall be about 20 depending upon the number of households attending. Only members from the same household (and social bubble) may sit within 2 metres of each other or at a specific table.
- xxxii) The tables and chairs shall be sanitised by a duty participant of the WoW using disposable paper towels/cloths prior and after use by members.
- xxxiii) At the time of entry participants will be welcomed and general enquiry made about their health. If a person appears to be unwell or not wearing a *face covering* then entry will be refused.
- xxxiv) A surgical face mask may be given to those people arriving without a *face covering*.
- xxxv) Participants will be advised to use a *face covering* on exit from the building, or at any other time when leaving the table (eg using toilet) and where *social distancing* may be less than 2 metres.
- xxxvi) Those persons waiting to enter the building may continue to queue along the pathway at the *social distance* or may disperse trying to maintain the social distance and/or wearing a *face covering*.
- xxxvii) A duty participant of WoW will take refreshment orders from each table. The refreshments will be prepared in the main kitchen and served to the appropriate table. Those participants in the main kitchen and serving, together with those sanitising tables must wear surgical face masks and protective gloves at all times.
- xxxviii) Participants should remain seated during their time at WoW and must not mingle with other groups or form new groupings.
- xxxix) All used cups, saucers, etc must be collected from the tables by a designated participant and placed on a table in the small hall. These items must not be taken into the Main Kitchen until service has ended. The cups, etc will be washed and sterilised normally using the commercial dishwasher before replacing in the cupboards. The team will sanitise tables, chairs and major contact points after the event has finished, but the furniture will remain in situ until the next event is prepared.
- xl) If a person is taken poorly during the event they shall be taken to the Wesley Room where they will be isolated by a Team member wearing protective gloves and surgical mask. A surgical mask and protective gloves may be given to the affected person. The person should remain in the Wesley Room until it is safe to exit the building without further contact of others. The Hall and Wesley Room and other areas where the person was sitting will be sanitised. A note against the name of the person will be made on the registration sheet. In the event of a more complex condition, emergency services should be contacted.
- xli) All those responsible for the event will be trained and briefed regarding the processes and procedures for the event, and shall have read a description of the event and the risk assessment.
- xlii) Waste disposal will comply with <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>
- xliii) Face coverings and PPE, such as gloves, may be disposed in 'black bag' waste' only (ie not recycling waste) and need not be double bagged or quarantined for 72 hours unless the waste is suspected to be associated with an infected person (eg a person taken ill).
- xliiii) The Cleaner will perform hygienic cleaning (ie sanitising toilets, wash basins, door handles, etc) as soon as practicable after the event and before the building is used for other purposes.
- xliv) In the event of fire, all fire safety measures take precedence.

Further guidance in the form of emails, noticeboards, notice sheets, website etc will be communicated to those wishing to attend the building for the WoW event. By registering those attending the building agree and will be required to follow the mitigation measures to ensure safety.