

Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Dear fellow members / attendees of Salway

You will be aware that the Government in England has recently announced that Churches are now permitted to re-open if following “**Covid-19 Guidance for safe use of places of worship**”.

As a result, we have considered whether we should re-open the church building, initially on a very limited basis purely for our Sunday services over the summer weeks and we have carried out a risk assessment as required in light of that consideration. As those responsible for use of the building, we are of the view that whilst there are always residual risks, mitigation can take place to reduce these down to an acceptable level so long as we all abide by the rules which are there to protect each one of us and enable us to be considerate to others too.

Having reviewed the risk assessment, our view as Trustees and members of the Leadership Team is that we consider it safe to open for worship on the limited basis of the mitigations and precautions set out below. Initially we are limiting ourselves to one service a week only, on Sundays starting at 11 am. The service will continue to be broadcast throughout the summer (and probably beyond) on Facebook as Salway Live and for Sundays 19th and 26th July the building will be used for the broadcast rather than the participants homes. Only those taking part in the service will be permitted to be in the building on these Sundays. We are also hoping that use of the Church wifi will reduce some of the connectivity issues we have had recently but please bear with us if there are teething issues.

From 2nd August we are aiming to allow a small number of people to watch the service being broadcast from the building if they would like to. This will be restricted to twenty people on that date and will be gradually increased week by week so long as the precautions below are adhered to. We are trying to put a booking system in place and will provide more details shortly as chair configuration will depend on how many people want to attend and whether they are single households sitting separately or family groups sitting together. The rear hall will not be accessible so we minimise the need for extensive deep cleaning and consequently there will not be any refreshments served. The Government has also advised that anyone attending should leave the premises promptly after the conclusion of the service and not stand around talking as that could spread the virus. The only toilets that will be accessible will be the two in the main front entrance lobby and it is likely that the main hall doors and windows will need to be kept open to aid ventilation flows so if the weather is not warm you may need to dress accordingly.

Our service format will continue to be broadly in line with that used for Salway Live although we may need to make some small amendments to ensure our precautions are applied appropriately.

Attendance at the service is open to all but we need to reiterate that this virus is still very virulent and certain groups are still being reminded that whilst shielding and additional measures are gradually being reduced, they still need to be extremely careful about mixing with other people outside their households. If you are in one of these groups, we would ask you to speak to either Ian or Ann so we can jointly assess the risk you and your fellow attendees will be facing.

You will be aware that Pre-school has been using the building exclusively (until the 19th July). During the summer the Church will have exclusive use of the premises so if we believe that we

can open the building for other activities such as prayer meetings, we will need to revisit our risk assessment. Once the autumn school term starts we will need to consider how we move forward and we may need to revisit and adjust our precautions. We will advise you in due course if anything set out in this letter changes significantly.

Key things you should be aware of are:

Access

Depending upon the number of people attending services, attendees may need to queue at the ramp door to gain admittance. You will then be asked to use the sanitiser on your hands on entry or wash them. Please apply appropriate social distancing measures. Please follow the one way signs. We are asking that attendees arrive by 10.50am latest as there may be queues and also the leader may need to give out notices specifically to attendees before the broadcast starts. If you arrive once the broadcast starts you may be asked to wait until a suitable moment to enter exists. Exit will primarily be by the main front doors.

The use of shared items

Attendees will be permitted to bring essential items including their own bibles as these will not be provided. Readings will continue to be put on the screen wherever possible. Rainwear will need to be placed under, or on the back of, your seat.

Food & drink

No refreshments will be available before or at the conclusion of the service. If you require for instance water during or after the service, please bring it with you for your personal use.

Singing and the use of musical instruments

Singing is not permitted, nor is the use of any musical instrument that involves blowing. Participation by attendees in the broadcast will be very limited but if required it will be led by the service team.

Children

The Government has advised that unnecessary movement around the building increases risk. The attendance and involvement of children is very important in Church life. However, being realistic, very young children will find it hard to stay in one area for the whole service. Parents are welcome to attend with their children but they will need to supervise their children if attending and we suggest they bring a small number of “quieter” toys for personal use. Ian and Ann will try to make as much of the service as accessible to all as they can but clearly this can be difficult to achieve. They are keen to hear any ideas you may have how to do this more effectively or if you can assist them in this.

Donations

Handling cash is not recommended at the moment, so the usual boxes will not be available. Online giving will help avoid virus transmission. Please ask if you do not have the church's bank details.

Test & Trace

We will keep a hard-copy record (name & phone number) of every person attending a service for 21 days from the conclusion of the service purely for tracing purposes. If you feel ill during the service, please leave as quickly as you can preferably advising a steward of this fact on your way out. If you develop Covid-19 symptoms after attending a service please arrange a test and if positive you will be advised how to proceed.

Capacity

It is difficult to assess the capacity of the seating available without knowing in advance the mix of visitors. You should be aware that we are sending round a questionnaire which includes questions surrounding intention of attending the building in person again so please help us by completing this asap. Going forward we will need you to request a seat (or if a family, seats) by Friday lunchtime so we can advise who may attend if requests exceed places. We will advise you of the process for booking Sunday 2nd August and onwards shortly. Initially as stated above we will restrict places to twenty and we aim to increase this as the weeks go by.

Social distancing

We will adhere to social distancing of at least two metres, or one metre with risk mitigation (where two metres is not viable) between households. Mitigations include side-by-side seating and face coverings. You will be asked to use hand cleanser on entry (or hand washing if the latter is a problem). Please make sure that you rub the hand gel in thoroughly. You will be reminded of the need to maintain social distancing at all times and will be shown where you can sit by a member of the welcome team.

Toilets

Two toilets are available which are accessible from the main front door lobby. Queues or bottlenecks need to be avoided wherever possible outside each toilet. Liquid soap and disposable towels will be available and should be used in each toilet. Users are reminded to leave the toilet clean after use and requested to minimise use as far as possible.

Cleaning

While use of the building is restricted to one service per Sunday, regular cleaning will be carried out after 72 hours from the close of the service.

Communication

Every church member and regular attendee is being sent this letter with this guidance which has been derived from our risk assessment. A copy of this guidance will also be placed on the Church website to alert potential visitors or assist you if your letter is misplaced.

Protective security

Religious organisations nationally have been advised to consider any protective security (terrorism threat) in consequence of any of the above. At this current time, we are not aware of any issues that require a change to our procedures.

PPE

The welcome team will be asked to wear face coverings and gloves to minimise the risk of passing on the virus. It is part of our precautions that all attendees in the building also wear a face covering unless taking part in the broadcast. If this causes a problem please speak to Ian in advance and alternative measures may be required to compensate.

Review

The risk assessment will be kept under ongoing review and formally reviewed at the end of August.

Volunteers

You will appreciate that the changes outlined require a lot of hard work both in terms of preparing the broadcast, using the IT broadcast systems, stewarding as part of the welcome team, providing teaching activities for the children and young people, managing the cleaning

regime etc... It is therefore very important that you all consider what you can do to assist in this effort and Ian, Ann and the Elders would be very keen to hear from you even if it was to say you are willing to play a part but don't know where you can help. Roles such as managing bookings, being on the welcome team, overseeing the welcome team, assisting Craig with management of the cleaners and looking after the building are all very important roles.

With ongoing talk of a second wave either as we undo lock down or in the winter, it is important that we re-shape and re-build family life at Salway in a sustainable way.

I remember reading of a sign in the Australian outback which told travellers to choose their rut carefully as they would be in it for some considerable time! We may be living this new normal for some time so let's make sure that we aren't stuck in a lengthy rut but are pulling together for God's glory on the path he desires for us.

Phil Albon
On behalf of the Elders