



# Seven Towers Group of Churches

*Down Hatherley, The Leigh with Evington, Norton, Sandhurst,  
Staverton with Boddington.*

## Using church buildings for individual private prayer and funerals

Churches are legally permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer and under House of Bishops guidance to open for funerals.

This policy outlines the steps taken to ensure our churches allow private prayer in a safe and manageable environment.

- i. A risk assessment must be prepared by the PCC and must be signed off by the Incumbent and Benefice Administrator. All necessary actions that are identified must be taken before the church is re-opened.
- ii. A 'venue manager' must be appointed (normally the churchwarden or delegate) who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy.
- iii. The church is well aired and cleaned before re-opening for the first time. (*see risk assessment*)  
Loose fabric cushions & kneelers are removed and inaccessible to visitors to the church, and hymn books/prayer books/service books are not available.  
There will be no lending library, card sales or other paper materials.
- iv. Whilst the church is open all access gates (including outside) and main entrance door will remain open and lights remain switched on.
- v. Social distancing within the church is planned and will be enforced. Pews that are not to be used will be roped off.
- vi. Access beyond the altar rail is clearly marked as 'off-bounds'.
- vii. Suitable hand sanitizer is available to everyone entering the building. Tissues/paper towels and bin are clearly visible. (sanitizer/paper towels/tissues to be sourced & purchased centrally for all churches in the Benefice.)
- viii. All frequently touched surfaces are wiped down with antibacterial cleaning product at the beginning and end of each open period. (eg door fittings, light switches, pew frontals, altar rail.)
- ix. Instructions are clearly given with suitable signage. General posters will be distributed to all churches and these must be displayed. Church specific notices will be prepared by the PCC.

- x. Each PCC will determine if and when the church will be open and for how long. (2 hours recommended) Between each opening period there must be a gap of 3 days (72 hours).
- xi. The PCC will consider whether a period of the opening time should be set aside for those people who are over 70 or clinically vulnerable, before others are admitted.
- xii. People entering the building will be requested to scan the displayed NHS Covid-19 QR code (where this is available) or register on paper their name & contact details (eg in a notebook).
- xiv. For a funeral held in the church; taking into account social distancing, the number of mourners/ households that can be admitted should be determined prior to the service and the funeral directors/clergy/family advised accordingly. Social distancing in the church building and outside will be strictly enforced. Ref Government Covid-19 guidelines)