

Woodfield Gospel Hall Risk Assessment: Planning for Exit from COVID-19 Emergency Period

It is likely that we will move towards re-opening the Hall in the coming weeks. This risk assessment is designed to help address the key aspects that will need to be considered and to guide our next steps. This return will be gradual and staged. We will not be able to do things exactly as we normally would – we must recognise that these are different times, therefore it is important for us to be practical rather than legalistic and dogmatic. At all times we will seek to be scriptural, whilst considering the spiritual, physical and mental well-being of all in fellowship or who may be visiting us. Please remember that all of this is subject to changing and developing government advice. [The latest advice can be accessed through this link.](#)

Deuteronomy 33:12 Of Benjamin [Moses] said:

“The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, who shelters him all the day long; and he shall dwell between His shoulders.”

Assessment conducted by:	The maintenance committee of Woodfield in consultation with Trustees	Covered by this assessment:	Assembly members, their families, and visitors
--------------------------	--	-----------------------------	--

Date of assessment:	22 nd July 2020	Review interval:	Monthly	Date of next review:	26 th August 2020
---------------------	----------------------------	------------------	---------	----------------------	------------------------------

Risk rating matrix High (H), Medium (M), Low (L)		Likelihood of occurrence		
		Probable	Possible	Remote
Likely impact	Major: Causes major physical injury, harm or ill-health, area of significant concern	H	H	M
	Severe: Causes physical injury or illness requiring first aid, area requiring urgent attention	H	M	L
	Minor: Causes physical or emotional discomfort, area limited overall impact	M	L	L

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
1. Ensuring that the premises are fit for use		<p>Assembly members should avoid entering and using the premises during the closure period and once we begin to re-commence, including not using the premises for toilet stops. Any such visits need to be followed by cleaning surfaces touched before leaving.</p> <p>During the closure period, the building is being checked for defects and other concerns and the grounds are being maintained.</p> <p>Prior to re-opening a thorough flush-through of the water system will be carried out to ensure a reduced risk of legionella.</p> <p>All major services will be checked for functionality.</p> <p>A deep clean will be completed one week before re-opening.</p>	

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
		<p>Once the deep clean is completed, cleaning will revert to the regular cleaning teams who must ensure that their normal duties, and more, are fulfilled thoroughly in order to avoid the risk of the virus, particularly ensuring that toilet areas and surfaces are thoroughly cleaned. This includes door handles, woodwork, and other surfaces.</p> <p>Children should not be moving around the building – see below for further detail.</p>	
2. People bringing the virus onto the premises		<p>Remind all in fellowship not to enter the building if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus. Clear notices and regular reminders to all.</p> <p>Electronic communication giving frequent reminders.</p> <p><u>Following the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection.</u></p> <p>Continue with all basic hygiene guidelines association with COVID-19 as pre-closing, facilitating regular hand washing for 20 seconds with running water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach.</p>	
3. Risk of virus spreading on the premises		<p>Always enable social distancing, in line with prevailing government guidance.</p> <p>Consideration when arriving in cars – remain in car until the car park is free from others moving through. If arriving before the doors are opened remain in car until the stewards arrive to open the hall. Only the designated stewards should open the hall.</p> <p>We are asking people to wear a face covering at all times when entering and leaving the building as well as during meetings.</p> <p>Controlled entry to the building – maintain 2m distancing when entering, waiting outside the building if others are in the entrance area – remember the testimony to others outside who will be watching.</p> <p>No handshakes, hugs, or other forms of embrace – no physical contact at all!</p> <p>Hand sanitiser will be available and should be used when entering and exiting the building.</p> <p>All those attending will be marked off on a register. Visitors will be asked to complete a slip giving their contact details (including holiday location where appropriate) which will be added to the list, in line with government guidelines and to support contact tracing should this be required. These lists to be retained for 21 days and then disposed of.</p> <p>Once hands are cleansed, move immediately to seats.</p> <p>Regular members will have allocated seats.</p> <p>Seats arranged with 2m distancing in mind – family groups will be grouped together more closely and will be designated as being for these families. Face-to-face seating should always be avoided.</p> <p>Hymn books and bibles will not be given out – these will be distributed in advance to any who need them where they can be wiped and brought to and from the meetings.</p> <p>Only the main hall to be used for congregational groups.</p> <p>Kitchen to only be used by one individual or family group at a time. All other areas are out of use.</p>	

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
		<p>Toilets to be used as little as possible and by only one person at a time – a vacant/engaged sign to be hung on the doors of gents, ladies and accessible toilets and to be turned when in use/when finished. Toilet areas to be cleaned after every meeting, using suitable PPE (gloves as a minimum, also apron and face coverings as required).</p> <p>The hall to be used for the minimum possible time for the purposes of the meeting itself, in the first instance. Further conversation and fellowship should be conducted outside in the car park area but giving due consideration to the neighbourhood, as necessary.</p> <p>When leaving the building, members and visitors will use the fire exit at the platform end of the Hall, and should give due regard to others when exiting, ensuring that social distancing is always observed. Exit in order – those nearest the door first.</p> <p>The hall will always be kept ventilated.</p>	
4. The spread of infection through meeting and greeting		<p>Meeting and greeting will be contact free.</p> <p>Temperature will be taken at the door.</p> <p>As above, hymn books and bibles will not be given out.</p> <p>Meeting and greeting will be carried out initially by PR/SG – others as requested but not those in vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Those on the door will remind people of requirements as they enter the building and guide them to the appropriate seating (2 or 3 additional trained people for each meeting).</p>	
5. Risk of people not being aware of expectations		<p>Ensure that this risk assessment is shared with all in the assembly. An abbreviated version will also be shared with copies available at the hall for visitors.</p> <p>As well as providing a paper copy, take time on a Zoom call to outline the main procedures to everyone.</p> <p>Parents to ensure that children are aware of expectations at an age-appropriate level.</p> <p>Premises committee and trustees to walk through procedures in the building prior to commencement and adjust risk assessment if necessary.</p> <p>Those on the door to outline expectations for visitors as and when they arrive.</p>	
6. The risk of visitors bringing the virus into the meetings		<p>All visitors to have shared the main expectations upon arrival and to be asked whether they have had any symptoms in recent days.</p> <p>The website should have a notice asking visitors to contact us prior to coming to the hall.</p> <p>Those on the door to guide them to appropriate seating.</p> <p>Any visitors showing symptoms to be asked to leave, to get tested, inform us of the outcome and to return only when well.</p> <p>Visitors to understand that things are different to normal and that our approach to the breaking of bread, for example, is not our preferred style.</p>	

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
		Where the building reaches capacity to maintain social distancing, visitors or members may have to be turned away.	
7. Risk of spreading the virus through lack of basic hygiene such as handwashing.		Additional handwashing items will be available – soap, hand towels, hand sanitiser. No-hand-contact waste bins will be used for hand towels – foot pedals or similar. All waste will be double bagged at the current time and securely tied – to be removed after each meeting. Ensuring people are reminded of the catch it, bin it, kill it advice and that bins are provided in suitable places.	
8. Dealing with any suspected and confirmed cases of disease		Follow government guidance. Anyone showing symptoms will be asked to leave promptly. Where they are unable to leave under their own strength, ensure they are isolated in the accessible toilet area until suitable transport or medical attention can be arranged. Anyone needing to be with someone showing symptoms (only in the case of a medical emergency) should wear suitable PPE. If necessary, contact 111 or 999. Advise that they take a test as soon as possible and inform us of the outcome. Advise those who have been in contact to take precautions and to be prepared for a call from contact tracers. Where the person tests positive, the rest of their household will be advised to self-isolate for 14 days, as may others in the fellowship. In the case of a positive test, the elders will consider arrangements for the next two weeks and whether any changes need to be made. Also, whether additional cleaning is required.	
9. Reducing the risk of spreading the virus by ensuring a gradual return to meetings and activities		We will have a clear priority list for the re-commencement of meetings and will move through this on a gradual basis over several weeks – the priority list is subject to review: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breaking of bread (Sunday morning). 2. Bible study (Tuesday evening) but subject to a change in evening to Wednesday. 3. Outreach activities – it is not anticipated that any outreach activities in the hall will commence soon. 4. Other activities. We will be guided by the success of each occasion, the confidence that people are feeling and prevailing government guidance. As we build towards full functionality, we will take a blended approach of face to face meetings and Zoom, where the technology permits this. Where it is not possible to convey live images, a recording will be made and circulated afterwards. Sound quality may be difficult in the circumstances. Should government indicate a need, we can take a backward step at any time to ensure public safety.	

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
		<p>For any public speaking, the lectern will be situated towards the back of the platform area, a good safe distance from those in the congregation. The lectern will be cleaned after every use by the preacher or one of the elders.</p> <p>Those taking a public part in the gatherings, including during the breaking of bread, need to be alert to the danger of spreading the virus when speaking – either through a mask, by directing their voice away from the congregation, or controlling their speech carefully to avoid the risk of aerosol conveying the virus from one member to another.</p> <p>For outreach activities to resume eg Explorers, the activity leaders will need to submit a suitable risk assessment to the elders for approval prior to recommencement.</p> <p>There will be a free-standing microphone for use by those brethren taking part.</p> <p>A plexiglass screen will be used for those brethren praying or speaking.</p>	
10. Transmission of the virus through the taking of the bread and cup and the taking of the offering		<p>We want to take a careful and pragmatic approach to this, recognising this is not our preferred way of breaking bread. We will take a three-staged approach over the coming weeks as confidence grows and advice changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The emblems will be distributed through pre-prepared cups and bread to begin with, which people can take as they enter the building. We will break the bread and pour out the wine at the front of the hall at an appropriate point, but people will then take what they received on the way into the building. 2. The next stage will be to reintroduce the emblems from the front but broken into individual pieces at the front and poured into individual cups. 3. Finally, we hope to return as soon as possible to the normal manner of distributing the emblems. <p>Encourage giving directly through the bank in liaison with the treasurer. Where cash or cheques are given, this should be through the box at the back of the hall as no offering bags will be used. The box will be accessed by only the treasurer and he will be the only one to handle the money. Gloves must be worn when handling the money.</p>	
11. The heightened risk of spreading the virus through singing		<p>In the initial stages, meetings will take place without singing.</p> <p>It may be desirable to have some piano music playing at some meetings while people are entering – the piano must be thoroughly cleaned immediately after use.</p> <p>Those wishing to share the words of a hymn can do so by reading out the lyrics.</p> <p>People should bring their own hymn books (see above).</p> <p>We will follow advice to introduce this as and when it is appropriate.</p>	
12. Transmission of the virus through serving food and drink		<p>There is an increased risk of spreading the virus through preparing, passing and consuming food and drink.</p> <p>At the current time, no food or drink will be prepared, distributed or consumed on the premises.</p>	

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
		We will hope to move forward from this gradually over the coming weeks as confidence returns and advice changes, but this will not be quick.	
13. Risk of transmission through excessive mixing		Conversations and further fellowship should be conducted outside the building or in parks/gardens as per government guidance. It should be noted that a place of worship includes the grounds/car park. Parents need to ensure that children remain in their family groups and do not move freely around the building before and after meetings, for the time being. People will be asked to leave the hall in order such that those nearest the doors leave first.	
14. Ensuring that safeguarding has a high priority		Be alert to this as ever. Extra vigilance will be required as vulnerable saints and others emerge from lockdown and may visit the assembly meetings.	
15. Reduce the risk of transmission by the provision of sufficient PPE		People should wear PPE in accordance with government guidance. Face masks should be worn on entering and leaving the building as well as during the meetings. To participate verbally in the meeting, a facemask can be removed but generally people should remain seated as this is recognised to be more effective in not spreading the virus, than standing. Sufficient PPE will be available for dealing with handwashing, cleaning, and medical emergencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposable gloves. • Masks. • Hand sanitisers. 	
16. Ensuring that adequate first aid provision is available		Identify first aiders. Check that supplies are properly stocked. Ensure suitable PPE available for dealing with suspected case of the virus if necessary.	
17. There is an increased risk of mental, physical and spiritual challenges at the current time: It is possible that members of the fellowship or visitors may have experienced significant grief or anxiety as a result of the current situation.		The elders will seek to be alerted to needs in this respect and support where possible. Home visits by elders can be arranged following the 6 person/2 household guidance and they remain available for outdoor meetups or online in order to support. We will advise seeking professional help where this may be needed. Please email, text or call regarding any needs which can be kept in complete confidence if required.	
18. Risk to more vulnerable members of the fellowship, particularly those with prevailing medical conditions, those over 70 years of age and those with shielding letters		Identify early who these people might be and make special contact with them. Consider their needs and those of their wider family as we plan. In the current circumstances, most meetings will not resume until shielding is no longer required. For meetings people are not able to attend, we will consider whether the technology allows for live-streaming or recording. Where events are recorded as visual or audio, ensure copies are shared with these people as soon after the meeting as possible.	

Risk area / Scenario	Initial risk rating	Control Measures and Mitigation	Residual risk rating
		<p>Ensure additional pastoral support for these people as required.</p> <p>Ensure that all pastoral support is within guidelines at any particular time.</p>	
19. Ensuring that the elders are alert to developments and can respond accordingly.		<p>The elders will continue to meet online for as long as is necessary.</p> <p>These meetings will take place monthly.</p> <p>Meetings will return to face-to-face only when it is deemed suitable to do so, recognising that some of the oversight are in the vulnerable group.</p> <p>Other smaller gatherings will be advised to meet online for the foreseeable future.</p>	
20. Special activities that increase the risk of infection.		<p>Weddings and funerals must currently be limited to 30 attendees.</p> <p>Baptisms are advised against at the current time.</p> <p>Each request to be assessed on its merits.</p> <p>Additional protective measures in place, including additional cleaning, as required.</p> <p>The limit of 30 does not apply to all meetings, if protective measures are put into place, including suitable social distancing.</p>	
21. Travel to and from the hall		<p>Arrive in households/support bubbles.</p> <p>Single members brought by others to follow guidance issued by government.</p>	
22. Responding to emergencies		<p>An emergency escape route will be agreed in advance and signposted not to be impeded by room layout</p> <p>An orderly exit in accordance with marshals' instructions maintain social distancing as far as possible</p> <p>Congregation to gather at notice board area in car park in household groups maintaining social distancing</p>	