

Volunteering during Coronavirus (COVID 19): Church stewards



COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. When someone with the virus coughs or exhales, releasing droplets of infected fluid, most of

these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects e.g. tables, seating. When people touch contaminated surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, they can catch the virus and so the cycle goes on.

Where people are near someone infected with COVID-19 (less than two metres between individuals), they can breathe in droplets which have been coughed out or exhaled.

Simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19

- ☼ Stay at home if you or someone you live with starts to show symptoms or you are advised to do so because you have been in contact with someone who has the virus.
- ☼ Keep at least 2 metres away from people you do not live with.
- ☼ Wash your hands regularly.
- ☼ Disinfect frequently touched surfaces e.g. door handles, handrails, light switches, pews, tables.
- ☼ Wear a face covering if you are required to e.g. on public transport or in a hospital and if you are in an enclosed space where social distancing is difficult or impossible.
- ☼ Avoid unnecessary travel and check travel advice before travelling.

Why stewarding matters

Making sure people observe social distancing and clean their hands is vital to reducing the spread of COVID-19. Stewards help to remind people of what they need to do. They can also help with practical issues e.g. ensuring roped off areas are not used, helping people who don't usually visit the church, discouraging rough sleepers and other vulnerable people who use the church as a base.

Who should steward?

If you are shielding or in one of the groups vulnerable to severe symptoms of COVID-19, you should **NOT** help with stewarding during COVID-19.

If you live with someone who has been advised to shield during COVID-19, you should also consider whether assisting in this way is the safest way to help your church.

What does stewarding involve?

Stewarding during COVID-19 is likely to involve:

- ☼ Opening and closing the church.
- ☼ Reinforcing social distancing and hand washing.
- ☼ Explaining where visitors can go in the church and when people may come in.
- ☼ Checking for obvious hazards that could cause an accident e.g. slip and trip hazards, fire hazards.
- ☼ Checking temporary signs, notices and barriers remain clear, legible and in the right place.
- ☼ Replenishing hand washing materials.
- ☼ Monitoring votive candle stations where these are in use.
- ☼ Carrying out cleaning of hard surfaces that are touched frequently by multiple people.
- ☼ Implementing emergency procedures in the event of a fire or accident.
- ☼ Being a point of contact for visitors.

There may be other duties which you are asked to help with from time to time. These will be discussed with you as they arise.

How to keep yourself and others safe?

In addition to general COVID-19 precautions you should follow these guidelines:

- ☼ Familiarise yourself with the arrangements for social distancing, hand washing, cleaning and emergencies so you know what is expected of you and the precautions to take.
- ☼ Within the stewarding team, check that someone has a fully charged mobile phone with a reliable signal in case you need to call for help.

- ⚙ Wear protective gloves if you are wiping surfaces or handling rubbish. If you are stewarding in the car park wear a high visibility waistcoat.
- ⚙ Wipe down equipment you use which is likely to be used by other people who you don't live with an anti-viral sanitiser before and after use.
- ⚙ Don't steward by yourself. There should be at least 2 people on duty when the church is open for individual prayer.
- ⚙ Try to work with the same people to reduce the number of people you meet.
- ⚙ If someone confides in you, listen without passing comment, take their details and pass them to the Parish Priest.
- ⚙ Unaccompanied children should not be admitted to the church.
- ⚙ Toilets should be closed to visitors.
- ⚙ **STOP** - If you're not sure about something, **ASK**.
- ⚙ Bring your own food and drink. Sharing kitchen facilities increases the risk of transmission.
- ⚙ If you see something that doesn't look safe and you can't easily and safely put it right yourself, report it to someone who can.

Face coverings

Wear a face covering if it is difficult or impossible to stay 2 metres away from other people. You may also prefer to wear a face covering for reassurance. However, this should not be a replacement for the other ways of avoiding the spread of the virus.

What if someone becomes unwell or is injured?

If you must give first aid and cannot practically achieve the 2 metre social distance, be mindful of the risk of infection to you and the injured person.

- ⚙ Wash your hands before and after administering first aid.
- ⚙ Do not cough or sneeze over someone while helping them. Wear a face covering if possible.
- ⚙ Cover any open sores or wounds on your hands before putting on disposable gloves before beginning treatment.
- ⚙ Do not touch a wound with your bare hands and don't touch any part of a dressing that will come into contact with a wound

- ⚙ Dispose of all waste including dressings and protective equipment safely.

All incidents and accidents occurring on parish premises must be recorded in the Accident Book and reported to the Parish Priest.

What if you have symptoms or have been asked to self-isolate?

You must stay at home if you or someone you live with starts to show symptoms or you are advised to do so because you have been in contact with someone who has the virus. Tell your Parish Priest as soon as possible.

Thank you for helping during this difficult time.



www.safetytoolbox.co.uk

This briefing sheet is produced for general application. As such it is not exhaustive or definitive. Every effort has been made to ensure that the content is accurate and not misleading, but SafetyToolbox Ltd cannot accept responsibility for any loss or liability perceived to have arisen from the use of any such content. It is the responsibility of the person(s) using this briefing sheet to adapt the content to suit their needs.