

New Milton Evangelical Free Church - RISK ASSESSMENT



Date of assessment: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Assessor: *John Harman* John Harman

Date verified by Trustees: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021

On behalf of the Trustees: *Ben Fidler* Ben Fidler

Address of Premises: 24-26 Whitefield Road, New Milton, BH25 6DF, Hampshire

Type of Risk Assessment:

- (a) Review of regular risks plus assessment of risks based on the Governments Guidance for Step 4 of coming out of lockdown on 19<sup>th</sup> July
- (b) Review of risks associated with work on the building extension from the 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

Notes:

At step 4, the Government will remove outstanding legal restrictions on social contact, life events, and open the remaining closed settings. The Government will instead enable people to make informed decisions about how to manage the risk to themselves and others. The Government will provide guidance to the public and to businesses on how they can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the risk of a resurgence which puts the NHS under unsustainable pressure.

Previous guidance for Places of Worship has been withdrawn and new guidance dated 16<sup>th</sup> July issued for use from 19<sup>th</sup> July (the step 4 changes).

Whilst personal responsibility is the new focus in England, this means us all acting for the good of everyone, it does not mean acting on one's own belief or solely for one's own benefit.

Businesses, organisations and churches, under Health & Safety legislation still have to act reasonably and responsibly for the good of employees, and all those who enter their premises or those they interact with. This should include the ongoing risks associated with Covid-19.

**BUILDING RISKS:**

Routine statutory checks are carried out at the prescribed frequency on Electrical wiring, PAT testing, Gas safety / boiler servicing and lift servicing.

A Fire Safety survey and risk assessment has been completed. Weekly tests of alarm call points, fire doors & fire escapes, and monthly tests of emergency lighting and fire extinguishers are undertaken. Fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and emergency lights are also serviced by an approved maintainer at the agreed intervals.

A first aid kit is in place in the kitchen, stock is checked and certificates for First Aiders are displayed.

A list of those with food hygiene certificates is also displayed in the kitchen.

Fire procedures are up to date and wardens and meeting leaders have been issued with a copy.

**Further actions:**

1. Wardens, deacons and group leaders to be trained as required in fire safety procedures including use of evacuation chairs.
2. Training courses in First Aid were not available during the pandemic, but have now been scheduled as required to train new people and bring others up to date.
3. Certificates need to be displayed for all or as a minimum a list of those qualified for Food Hygiene & First Aid displayed.



## **ALL CHURCH VISITORS (FROM 19<sup>TH</sup> JULY)**

All those entering the building are liable to bring in and pass on the Covid-19 virus so need to follow the general guidelines. Specific requirements and variations follow the general guidance.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, should not attend. They should self-isolate immediately and get a PCR test.

If someone has been instructed by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate because they have tested positive for COVID-19, or they are the close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they must self-isolate and not attend.

Hand sanitiser is available at the entrance, in toilets and kitchen for those who wish to use it.

Face coverings no longer have to be worn, but visitors may choose to wear them. Face masks are available at the entrance for those who have not brought a face mask and want to wear one.

Thorough washing of hands is encouraged for those who use the kitchen and after using the toilet.

There is no longer set measures for social distancing, but close personal contact such as the shaking of hands or hugging should be discouraged.

## **ALL MEETINGS (ADULT & CHILDREN) ADDITIONAL MEASURES**

All planned meetings, whether one-off or regular meetings should be booked on Google calendar.

Those who welcome should do so in words, avoiding close personal contact. They may also point out the availability of hand sanitiser and face coverings for those who wish to use them.

It is likely to be recommended that anyone speaking from the front at a service maintains a safe distance from the congregation.

It is also likely to be recommended that musicians and singers maintain a safe distance from each other and the congregation.

Congregation singing will be allowed, but depending on the number of people present in relation to building capacity the wearing of face coverings may be recommended.

Seating should be arranged to minimise passing others to get to seats, reaching across others with communion. Two gangways giving 3 blocks of seats, rather than a central gangway would be preferable, as would be leaving an empty seat between families.

Fans should not be used, but windows should be open to provide ventilation, but draughts and strong air flows should be avoided.

Communion should be safely prepared and distributed. In the immediate future we should continue to use the disposable cups and have individual portions of bread.

Those handling food or drink should wash thoroughly and sanitise their hands. All items should be safely prepared and served. There may be other recommendations issued on or after 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Children should not enter the kitchen.

Parents should be asked to inform our leaders if a child or young person develops Covid-19 symptoms within 48 hours of a meeting or has a case confirmed.

## **CLEANING**

Appropriate Sanitiser, Face Masks, Pedal bins and Cleaning Materials are available.

Toilets should be cleaned on the day, between services or before the next scheduled use.

Special attention should be paid to areas frequently touched, such as door handles, door edges, hand rails & tables.

Waste should be disposed of as normal unless: (a) there is a suspected Covid case, in this case items should be double bagged and stored until a case is confirmed as +ve or -ve. (b) there is a confirmed case, in this case items should be double bagged and stored for 72 hours before disposal.



## **ADDITIONAL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH BUILDING EXTENSION (FROM 2<sup>ND</sup> AUGUST)**

Introduction: The building work includes a small rear extension to the existing building. The work will be in 2 stages, each of 8 to 10 weeks. Stage 1, external work only during which the building will continue to be used. Stage 2, when old and new are joined and modifications are made to the old building.

Use of the building in Stage 1, will only continue if it is safe to do so, and items such as fire alarms and emergency lights are working. In stage 2 the building will not be used.

Congregational Insurance have also asked that the alarms including the intruder alarm and operational during the building work.

### **SAFETY MEASURES – STAGE 1 (on building start)**

1. The car-park will not be accessible to church users.
2. Barriers will be erected to block access down either side of the church to the car park and the church end of the car-park will be fenced off.
3. A new fire evacuation plan has been prepared with escape routes to the front rather than to the rear of the church.
4. Shrubs and a small section of fence will be removed to the West side of the church to form a new escape route from the hall.
5. The neighbour in the downstairs flat at #22 will be given access to their car in the Almana House end of the car-park through the gate on the corner of their building.
6. Fencing will be erected to keep all other than workmen away from the work in the car park.
7. When scaffolding is erected, safety screening will be provided on the East side to protect people and property.
8. No access to the external store will be possible, so any items needed will be removed before the work starts.
9. The windows on the North side of the existing building will be boarded over to prevent accidental damage.

### **SAFETY MEASURES – STAGE 2 (when building is no longer in use)**

10. There will be disruptions to the electrical supply and alarms during the work, but both the intruder alarm and fire alarm will be operational outside working hours.
11. Items in the church will be moved to the South end of the building and a dust screen erected to give some protection.
12. Access to pick up post, or other items need to be limited and arranged through Hallmark builders.
13. Services and Tuesday evening meetings will move to Bashley Village Hall during Phase 2. A new Risk Assessment will be required.

### **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT**

There will be regular meetings between the Builder (Brian Vaas), our Contract Administrator (Simon Ellis) and ourselves.

Any issues arising which affect the security or safe use of the building will be communicated and the risk assessment updated as appropriate.