

Resuming Public Worship at HPC

On 25 August the PCC approved a proposal to enable the safe return to public worship at Heathcote Parish Church on Sunday, 6 September.

This document describes how we foresee public worship taking place at HPC in accordance with the latest Church of England Risk Assessment guidelines and factoring in the current Covid-19 restrictions.

For the month of September, we will focus our energies on offering an all-age service of worship at 11am in the church building. This will replace the HPC Zoom service for these weeks. The service will be live-streamed and available to view on the church's YouTube channel.

After 4 weeks the PCC will review the service and consider what needs to be adapted and what other provision could be offered to best serve the needs of our church family at this time.

Booking a Seat for Church

It is essential that church family members **pre-book a seat** at church for any upcoming service.

Tickets can be booked on our church website (<https://www.heathcoteparishchurch.org/>). The bookings will close 24 hours before the service starts to enable the church to be appropriately set up on Saturday. To book a ticket there will be a disclaimer ensuring each person declares they are feeling well and free of Covid-19 symptoms and that they are also aware that the services are live-streamed which may mean that they and any members of their household may be filmed within the service.



The church will have been thoroughly cleaned on the Saturday before the service.

To ensure appropriate social distancing the usual layout of church will be altered. For example, 50 chairs may make up 19 different groupings of chairs comprising: 3 x 1 seat; 10 x 2 seats; 2 x 3 seats; 4 x 4 seats; 1 x 5 seats.

There will be a 2-metre spacing between the different groupings. (The photo is just an approximation of how it may look.)

Please note this seating arrangement does not mean that we can automatically offer space for 50 people to attend our services. Households and bubbles may sit together without social

distancing, but our capacity is determined by the combination of how many individuals, couples and families wish to attend.

Sadly, we are unable to accommodate all our church family in church at the same time. Therefore, we are asking that people look to book a **maximum of two** Sunday services in September. This should hopefully mean that everyone in the church family will have the opportunity to be able physically to attend at least 2 services in the month. If there are extra unreserved seats for one Sunday, we will send an email encouraging other people to join if they would like. By live-streaming services we also hope that those unable to be physically present will still very much feel part of our church family and corporate worship.

Arriving at Church

People who have reserved a seat will be asked to arrive between 10:45am and 10:50am (please no earlier).

They will be greeted by Welcomer 1 outside the church building and shown where to queue (alongside the exterior church and community centre wall) at 2 metre intervals. There will be floor markers to demonstrate the necessary spacing.

Welcomer 1 will have a record of all people with pre-booked tickets for that Sunday and will complete an attendance register accordingly (this will be kept for 21 days, in line with the current track and trace guidelines).

Welcomer 2 will be positioned by the main entrance doors. These will be both wedged open to minimise contact with door handles. Their role is to invite people in, one (bubble) at a time and to ensure social distancing. They will also direct each person to use the hand sanitising gel that will be in the entrance lobby. Everyone over the age of 11 is required to wear a face-covering.

Welcomer 3 will be stationed at the church doors, again both will be propped open, to escort the person(s) to their assigned seat(s) and ensure a consistent and safe flow of movement.

The current circumstances mean there will be no time of gathering in the central foyer **and no refreshments will be served.**

The **sports hall will be out of bounds** on Sunday mornings.

The Service

The service will be prepared as a simple all-age service, including music for reflection, prayers, Bible readings and a talk. We envisage this will take approximately 40 minutes.

Sadly, there are restrictions on what can and cannot take place in our worship services.

Currently, we are not able to sing together, open the crèche, or organise any groups for Junior or Youth Church during the Sunday mornings in September.

Everyone is required to remain seated at all times during the service. We appreciate this will be difficult for some of our younger church members – especially as we have, up until now, tried to encourage a relaxed culture of generous welcome which enables our younger church members to walk around.

We do realise that this will pose a particular challenge to some families. We therefore fully understand if some families choose to connect with the live-streamed service from the comfort of their own homes rather than face the 'battle' of keeping children seated and engaged!

Departing from the Church

Welcomer 2 will ensure the main doors are re-opened.

Welcomer 3 will invite different groups to leave when it is safe to do so (think primary school method!) and ensure the reversed one-way system is enforced.

After the service has ended people are very welcome to connect with one another **outside the building** for physically distanced chats or to pro-actively arrange sports, picnics, walks at the local park, etc.

Use of Toilets

The disabled access toilet will be available to use during the service, but only if absolutely necessary.

Welcomer 3 will be seated by the church doors and ensure people can use the toilet when it is vacant. Children of primary school age will be required to go with their parent or carer. The blue dividing screens and signage will be used to cordon off further access to male and female toilets and the sports hall.

The current restrictions pose a number of logistical challenges and this paper represents our best effort to try and resume meaningful public worship in our context. It should be recognised that the service will be quite different from our pre-Covid services. Every effort will be given creatively to construct a service that helps everyone to worship the Lord, to pray, praise and hear his word. Everyone will be very welcome to participate in person or via the online stream. Inevitably, we will make mistakes as we embark on this learning curve and seek your prayers and patience in these early weeks. If you do have any feedback at this early stage, then we ask that you share this with Rob or one of the wardens - Rachel Butt or Amy Brann - in the first instance.

There is a lot of information to process in this document, please contact Rob (vicar.hpc@gmail.com) if you need further clarification.