**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PARISH CONTINUITY PLAN**

*Last updated: 08/06/2020*

**ST PAUL’S PARISH CHURCH – WHITLEY BAY**

**The Continuity Plan for St Paul’s Parish Church has been drawn up and put in place in preparedness for further development of the Coronavirus situation following the check list of actions from the Diocese of Newcastle and further guidance from the National Church of England. The Continuity Plan and associated Risk Assessment are being kept under review by the Incumbent and Church Wardens and are being/will be adapted to reflect changing circumstances or updated guidance from the Government, the Church of England and Newcastle Diocese as appropriate.**

**A copy of the Continuity Plan has been shared with the Area Dean, including the contact details of the clergy and Standing Committee members.**

**1. Infrastructure**

**Overseen by the Incumbent and Church Wardens**

The aim of this plan is to ensure as far as possible the continued mission and ministry of parishes, and the maintenance of the critical ongoing business of the parish.

The Incumbent, with the support of the Church Wardens, is requested to now take steps outlined in this continuity plan.

The Incumbent’s nominated deputy is the Church Warden, Sandra Graham. The Church Warden, Ann Laing will fulfil this role should Rev John Vilaseca and Sandra Graham be unwell.

The Incumbent, or his nominated deputy, will provide a channel for regular communication, by email or phone, with the Area Dean and Archdeacon as requested.

1.1 The Incumbent and deputies will have emergency contact details for the Area Dean.

1.2 Identify critical leadership roles:

Incumbent / Church Wardens / Treasurer / Pastoral Group members / Parish Centre booking secretary.

1.3 Identify essential parish functions:

Daily Office / Weekdays Eucharist / Sunday Eucharist / Ministry to the sick and the dying / Funerals.

**2. Communication**

**Overseen by Ann Laing**

2.1 The incumbent and the Churchwardens must have contact details of:

a. Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers who are available for ministry, occasional offices and pastoral care,

b. those involved in services and other church activities.

2.2 Consideration has been given regarding how best to communicate information about the outbreak and any appropriate advice, via notice boards, news sheets, email and through social media as appropriate. Church leaders can play a key role in addressing rumours, misinformation, fear and anxiety.

At St Paul’s we will communicate information through our pew sheet e-mailing list, through every Sunday’s pew sheet, Church notice boards, parish website, Facebook and Twitter.

**3. General Hygiene**

**Overseen by Sandra Graham**

3.1 Alcohol-based hand-sanitiser (minimum alcohol content 60%), or appropriate hand washing facilities in the event of a shortage of sanitisers are available at the entrance to the church, with Notices and ‘Welcomers’ encouraging community and visitors to use on entry. Baby wipes are not a satisfactory alternative.

3.2 Tissues and bin provided at church entrance.

3.3 Notices/posters are displayed to remind people of the general hygiene advice. Examples can be found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf>.

3.4 We clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces as per government guidance. Doors into the church and Parish Centre will remain open where possible. All surfaces will be sanitised before the church is used and again afterwards. Some areas of the church may need to be cordoned off for safety reasons.

3.5 Paper towels only to be used in the toilet, and for drying communion vessels after their use for Communion.

3.6 The collection plate will be at the back of church, and removed after services, but will not be carried down the aisle and offered.

3.7 Every time the church is open, someone will stand by the entrance, encouraging social distancing (2 metres apart) and giving out sanitising gel to people as they come into the church building. If there’s no sanitising gel, we will encourage people to wash their hands as they enter the church building. A second person will be carrying out any necessary cleaning during this time.

3.8 Whenever a toilet has been used, it will be cleaned immediately.

3.9 Sides persons will use gloves to hand out and receive hymn books. After tidying up they will bin the gloves and wash their hands. Orders of service will be given to each person for their own personal use, and not shared with anyone else. Readings will be printed out for readers to use.

**4. Worship**

**Overseen by the Incumbent**

As far as possible, all services will continue to be held, either in church or in the Vicarage by live streaming and recording for YouTube, always following the Government’s guidance or instructions, and that of the national Church and the Diocese. Guidance for worship may change as the situation develops. Clergy and Church Wardens will keep abreast of communications coming from the Diocese, National Church and Public Health England. When the church can once again be used for public worship and / or private prayer, social distancing measures will be put in place to maintain safety. Special instructions will be given for receiving Holy Communion and for sharing the Peace, at the appropriate time.

4.1 We continue to offer alternative ways to offer worship and spiritual support to individuals and our community. St Paul’s continues to prepare and distribute resources for parishioners, including those without internet access. The Church of England offers online resources and <https://www.churchofengland.org/coronavirus>. More information can be found on our Parish website: <http://www.saintpaulswhitleybay.org.uk/>

4.2 Daily prayers can help give structure to our days for those who are housebound with more time for thinking and reflecting. We maintain the cycle of daily prayer on Zoom. We signpost people to the online Common Worship, Daily Prayer resources and we produce Prayer booklets on a regular basis. We will continue to deliver the orders of service and the pew sheet to people who are self-isolating and have no internet access.

4.3 A copy of the funeral service will be sent to the families of deceased persons, along with a recording of the service where possible. When the church reopens, copies of the funeral service and of the prayers for the departed will be available at the Church entrance for those unable to attend the funeral services of friends or loved ones.

**5. Pastoral**

**Overseen by the Incumbent, Standing Committee and Pastoral Group**

Clergy can offer an important public reassurance through ‘the sacrament of presence’ and being seen to be “present” and available. *This does not include physically visiting those diagnosed with COVID-19 or those who are self-isolating*: clergy need to protect themselves and others, making sure they adhere to hygiene precautions. They can also be a trusted voice in a community and help with the distribution of government advice ensuring isolated members of the community are aware of the precautions they can take.

5.1 Following Government and Church of England guidance, we expect St Paul's Church to be re-opened for personal prayer and eventually for public worship. The exact arrangements will be confirmed once the situation becomes clearer. The Incumbent will be in church at various times, celebrating the Eucharist and praying the Daily Office.

5.2 We will network as appropriate with local health, welfare, safety networks, funeral directors and other service providers. We will ensure contact details for these service providers are held by key parish leadership. We will maintain awareness of local information and peculiarities e.g. changes in public utilities or services that affect our community specifically. We receive regular updates from local authorities and from the Church.

5.3 We have developed a plan for the pastoral and practical support of those who are vulnerable or housebound in the parish, adhering to safeguarding policies and hygiene practices. The plan sets guidelines for identifying people who need help such as shopping for groceries or medication, or others who will need help to reduce anxiety in lonely and anxious periods. This help will be delivered within existing social distancing and hygiene guidelines.

5.4 If you are going to self-isolate for whatever reason please, ring the Incumbent: we will make sure everyone has the Incumbent’s details. The Revd John Vilaseca / 0191 252 4916 / 07860828852 / [vilaseca26@yahoo.es](mailto:vilaseca26@yahoo.es)

5.5 We offer to hold next of kin details for parishioners who live alone. We will make sure any such personal information is stored securely and that we have the individual’s permission to have these details in keeping with General Data Protection regulations. The next of kin form was made available to the congregation and is still available.

5.6 The Pastoral Group and other members of the congregation are encouraged to provide telephone support and prayer for those who are fearful or otherwise distressed, and / or housebound. This is done via the newsletter and during services.

**6. Activities**

**Overseen by the Incumbent and Standing Committee.**

6.1 Each church group should consider what action must be taken in the event of key people not being available to run the activity. The following should be considered:

• maintaining an up to date list of contact details for the group

• deciding at what point the activity will be cancelled

• decide how members of the group will be kept informed

• nominate at least one person to be responsible for hygiene

• notify the Parish Office or Churchwardens of decisions made in this context.

Each church group will be informed, and we will add their information accordingly.

6.2 St Paul’s Church groups:

- Flowers Guild

At present, there are only 5 Flower Guild members  whom we contact by phone or e mail. Apart from Mothering Sunday, when Pat Calboutin is doing a small arrangement, there will be no flowers until Easter. I (Margaret Barron) will take overall responsibility for hygiene and Dorothy Little would take over from me if required. We tend to work on our own but I will ensure everyone is aware of hygiene measures.

- Servers Guild

We have an up-to-date list of the servers’ telephone numbers and email addresses, through which we can contact all servers and, in turn, be contacted. I (Lilian Martin) will be the person responsible for personal hygiene whilst on church premises. I shall try to obtain some more alcohol hand gel to be kept in the vestry solely for servers.

- Choir

Contact details form part of the general congregational records. Any special information for choristers will be distributed by Ann Laing. (Churchwarden and chorister).

- Monday Group

We have a list of contacts for all members and will keep them informed by telephone. There are no meetings scheduled now before May so we can review the situation nearer the time. Pat Calboutin and I (Margaret Barron) will be responsible for hygiene and one would take over from the other should either of us fall ill.

- Sunday School

Sue Day (Sunday School leader) holds contact details for usual attendees and will keep them informed of any specific arrangements that may be made for them.

- Bell ringers

We will consider our Guild’s response and advise accordingly.

- Parish Maintenance group

Our general maintenance group is comprised of the usual suspects who may turn up. However, does not have a fixed membership. We plan to keep in touch via the pew sheet and email as to activity. We would keep you informed

- Parish Centre

The Parish Centre will be closed to the public until further notice following the Government’s advice and guidelines issued by the CofE.

6.3 We have determined the potential impact of outside agencies no longer being able to resource or serve the work of the parish church (e.g. suppliers and service providers)

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| **Supplier affected** | **Effect of loss of / delay to supply** | **Contingency** | **Impact H/M/L** |
| Sacristy supplies company/ies | Lack of candles for services / pricket stands | Do without, or source locally on temp. basis | L (for altar candles) M (for people wanting to light candles) |
| " | No hosts for communion | Use home-baked or commercially produced bread. Check if other churches have spare hosts. | L |
| Hand gel, hand wash stockists | Hard to comply with hygiene guidance | Switch to trad. soap and water (somewhat easier to source). Enter via parish centre and wash hands in toilets before entering church. | M/H |
| Paper towel stockists | As above | Switch to alternative supplier. Use kitchen towels as emergency option. | M/H |
| Toilet paper stockists | As above | Contemplate asking people to bring their own. Use paper tissues as emergency option (if available). | M/H |
| Electrical services / Alarm services | Unable to have any faults repaired; may render building unusable, depending on problem. | Use alternative contractor (could create delay) | M / H (but low likelihood of it actually happening) |
| Heating / gas services | As above | As above | As above |
| Cleaner | Toilets and kitchen would not be cleaned. | Congregation members to do essential cleaning till service resumed. | M |

**7. Finance**

**Overseen by the Treasurer Lilian Martin.**

7.1 The Churchwardens, as well as the Treasurer, are familiar with the church accounts, gift aid and regular giving and are able to administer them appropriately - this includes banking authorisation.

7.2  As large proportion of our income came from cash collections at services, we have now set up facilities for online and text donations. Our newsletter has encouraged people to move to online giving via standing order where possible. Our website and A Church Near You have been updated to give prominence to online and text donation.

7.3 Anyone handling cash will protect themselves from virus transmission by washing hands or using hand gel beforehand and afterwards, or by wearing appropriate gloves.

The Reverend John Vilaseca Bruch Ann Laing and Sandra Graham

Incumbent Church Wardens

Monday 08th June 2020

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|  | **Check List for St Paul’s Parish Church** | Date completed/reviewed and by whom |
| 1 | **Infrastructure** | **Incumbent / CW** |
| 1.1 | The Incumbent and deputies will have emergency contact details for the Area Dean and Area Dean’s deputy. | 14.03.20 |
| 1.2 | Identify critical leadership roles and essential parish and benefice functions. | 14.03.20 |
| 2 | **Communication** | **Ann Laing** |
| 2.1 | Parish/Benefice/Mission Community Offices, or incumbent and the Churchwardens will have contact details of:  a. Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers who are available for ministry, occasional offices and pastoral care,  b. those involved in services and other church activities. | 14.03.20 |
| 2.2 | Consider how to communicate information about the outbreak and any appropriate advice | 14.03.20 / ongoing |
| 3. | General hygiene | **Sandra Graham** |
| 3.1 | Alcohol-based hand-sanitiser, or appropriate hand washing should be available at the entrance to the church, with Notices | 14.03.20 / ongoing |
| 3.2 | Tissues and bin provided by church entrance | 15.03.20 / ongoing |
| 3.3 | Notices/posters should be displayed to remind people of the general hygiene advice | 14.03.20 |
| 3.4 | Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces as per government guidance. | 14.03.20 / ongoing |
| 3.5 | Paper towels only to be used in the toilet, and for drying communion vessels. | 14.03.20 / ongoing |
| 3.6 | Paper towels only to be used in the toilet, and for drying communion vessels. | 14.03.20 / ongoing |
| 4. | **Worship** | **Incumbent** |
| 4.1 | Consider alternate ways to offer worship and spiritual support to individuals and your community | ongoing |
| 5. | **Pastoral** | **Incumbent / SC / Pastoral Group** |
| 5.1 | Network as appropriate with local key service providers. Ensure contact details for these service providers are held by key parish leadership. | 14.03.20 |
| 5.2 | Develop a plan for the pastoral and practical support of those who are vulnerable or housebound in the parish | 18.03.20 |
| 5.3 | For those who need to self-isolate, consider how people can be supported | 18.03.20 / ongoing |
| 5.4 | Identify and brief lay people who can provide telephone support and prayer for those who are fearful or otherwise distressed. | 18.03.20 |
| 6. | **Activities** | **Incumbent / SC** |
| 6.1 | Each church group should consider what action must be taken in the event of key people not being available to run the activity | 16.03.20 / ongoing |
| 6.2 | Determine the potential impact of outside agencies no longer being able to resource or serve the work of the parish church (e.g. suppliers and service providers) | 14.03.20 |
| 7. | **Finance** | **Lilian Martin** |
| 7.1 | There should be at least one other person, as well as the Treasurer, who is familiar with the church accounts, gift aid and regular giving | 14.03.20 |
| 7.2 | Consider how you might manage cash flow | Ongoing |
| 7.3 | Anyone handling cash should protect themselves by appropriate hand hygiene | 14.03.20 |

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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