

Coronavirus Updated Advice About Church Catering and Events

Acurate as of 13 March 2020

Following the most recent advice (12/3/2020) from the Church of England a number of questions have arisen regarding practicalities. We have sought expert advice and offer the following as recommended advice for clergy and PCCs to consider carefully.

This is currently unofficial local guidance – not official Church of England guidance yet (we are seeking official guidance on this at the moment).

- Common Sense is key and we should avoid ‘knee jerk’ reactions to just cancel events, as the scientific and medical advice is that we should continue as normal, but making sure we all take hygiene seriously to protect ourselves and others.
- We should all be washing our hands with hot soap and water regularly.
- Our church communities include high numbers of people in the ‘vulnerable’ older age group and we should be doing everything to reduce the spread of the virus.

Refreshments

Coffee and tea after services / events may still go ahead if the following guidance is followed.

- Reduce the number of people involved in preparing refreshments and ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly with hot water and soap.
- No biscuits (or equivalents) should be served on open plates as there is a risk of infection through cross contamination.
- Children & young people should not be helping prepare refreshments. Children & young people are a low risk group, but are more likely to be high risk in terms of spreading the virus.

Social Events / Meals etc.

Social events should continue to go ahead, but common sense and hygiene should be at the forefront of any plans.

- The use of homemade items brought to events should stop (i.e. home-baked cakes, puddings, soup, etc).
- No help yourself buffet type catering.
- Single sources of food are fine, so for example if you buy in pre-prepared items from a supermarket or catering firm.
- If you prepare food on-site then reduce the number of people involved and again ensure good hygiene. All those involved in preparing food should have the relevant and necessary hygiene certification.

Coffee Mornings

Ensuring the continuation of regular events, and good community support will be particularly important at this phase of the epidemic. It will help reduce fear and social isolation amongst the wider community.

- Reduce the number of people involved in preparing refreshments and ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly with hot water and soap.
- No biscuits (or equivalents) should be served on open plates as there is a risk of infection through cross contamination.
- No homemade cakes or refreshments should be served. Singular, pre-packed items would be fine.
- Children & young people should not be helping prepare refreshments. Children & young people are a low risk group, but are more likely to be high risk in terms of spreading the virus.

Youth Groups

Youth Group, Clubs or 'drop ins' are fine to continue to go ahead. In fact it will be particularly important to support these groups and allay fear and anxiety.

- Provide areas for hand-washing, and show good hygiene practice; empowering young people to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Snacks can continue to be served, but must be individually wrapped rather than sharing bowls of crisps etc.
- Young people are a low risk group
- Good hygiene common sense is key so before and after events surfaces and especially door handles should be wiped down.

Children's Groups

Children's Groups are fine to continue to go ahead. In fact it will be particularly important to support these groups and allay fear and anxiety.

- Provide areas for hand-washing, and show good hygiene practice; empowering children to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Snacks can continue to be served, but must be individually wrapped rather than sharing bowls of crisps etc.
- Children are a low risk group
- Good hygiene common sense is key so before and after events surfaces and especially door handles should be wiped down.

Toddler Groups

Toddler Groups are fine to continue to go ahead. In fact it will be particularly important to support these groups and allay fear and anxiety.

- Provide areas for hand-washing, and show good hygiene practice; empowering children to take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Snacks can continue to be served, but must be individually wrapped rather than sharing bowls of crisps etc.
- Children are a low risk group

- Good hygiene common sense is key so before and after events surfaces and especially door handles should be wiped down.

Use of School Buildings

If you meet in a school building you should check with the school to ensure that they are happy for events, worship etc to go ahead.

If you would like further church advice please contact: The Venerable Andrew Beane, Archdeacon of Exeter, 01392 425577 archdeacon.of.exeter@exeter.anglican.org

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