

Re-opening of Methodist Churches in the Liverpool District

Following the recent government announcement to allow churches to open for public worship from the 4th July, the Superintendents of the Circuits of the Liverpool District have again conferred together to review the situation. This note is produced to assist Managing Trustees who are now considering reopening church buildings for worship and church activities or services not permitted in church buildings under previous Government policies.

Managing Trustees are required to follow the Methodist Church guidance which can be found here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17897/opening-churches-for-worship.pdf>

There are two key principles to any planning work being undertaken locally:

1. **“The overriding priority remains to save lives”**

This is a quote in the forward to HM Government’s Covid-19 strategic planning document ‘Our Plan to Rebuild’ (12th May 2020) – this must be at the heart of any planned use of church property.

2. **Communicate and Co-operate**

The implementation of any local strategy will be based upon good communication between all parties and working together in partnership. This second principle will support the best outcomes for the first principle.

As previously stated

1. To open buildings requires comprehensive risk assessments for churches. Without these, Managing Trustees might be held personally liable (that is, not covered by insurance) if there was a claim against them for negligence.
2. There are procedures concerning cleaning and sanitising, distancing, and movement through the building, that need to be in place and enforced when we resume meeting together in the church building.
3. We need to ensure that people opening and managing our buildings, and these procedures, are not those in the 'highest risk' categories. We are concerned to protect not only those who are vulnerable but also those who live in households where someone is shielding. We need to act in the best interests of the wider community, which is a more complex matter than the opening up and managing of buildings.