



COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT: MUSIC IN LIVE SERVICES

RSCM template updated: 18th August 2020

Church: St Nicolas Church, Forest Hill with Shotover	Assessor's name: Julia Stutfield	Date completed: 9 September 2020	Review date: Updated 10 October 2020
---	---	--	--

[Seating plan for 4 singers added 19 Sept 2020. Plan for 3 singers deleted 10 Oct 2020 and then restored]

Churches and cathedrals have been permitted to open for purposes of individual private prayer since 13 June. Government guidance currently requires that a risk assessment is carried out for every building and site open to the public. Since 4 July, church buildings have been allowed to reopen, providing physical distancing rules remain in place. As of 15 August, small groups of singers have been permitted to sing in accordance with government guidance; see Appendix 1 for more details. **Congregations are not allowed to sing.**

Protecting those most at risk

Current evidence for COVID-19 shows that age, ethnicity, biological sex, disability, pregnancy and underlying health conditions place certain individuals at great risk from the disease. Taking into account the demographic of our congregation and our musicians is therefore important.

Steps to a safer service:

- We have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment (see [Parish_Risk_Assessment_Template_v.4.1 St Nicolas v3a](#))
- We have cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures in line with guidance.
- We have taken reasonable steps to maintain distancing measures.
- Where people cannot be distanced, we have done everything practical to manage transmission risk.

1. Access to church buildings for purposes of performance in live services

What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Where possible use a different entrance and exit to the congregation or other attendees.	Musicians will arrive early (i.e. before the congregation) to rehearse and will exit the church after the congregation.	Choir Director to inform musicians	
Additional risk of infection	Cordon off or remove from public access the area occupied by the musicians, as appropriate.	Musicians to have sole use of the Chancel. Churchwardens to be asked not to enter Chancel – musicians will light and extinguish candles.	Choir Director to inform musicians and churchwardens	
Separated space is not observed for musicians	Survey the area to be occupied by your musicians to plan for physical distancing in seats, aisles, and allowing for the safe flow of visitors. Plan for social distancing of 2m where possible and specify mitigations where this cannot be followed in full.	Placing musicians in the Chancel ensures separation from the Minister and congregation. The attached seating plans ensure physical distancing of musicians with mitigations specified as needed.	Choir Director	
Transmission of virus through close personal contact	Consider bottlenecks such as staircases or narrow corridors. Will you need to implement a one-way system?	Musicians to exit the Chancel via the North Aisle if they need to go to the toilet and use the fire exit door to leave and enter the building between the rehearsal and the service.	Choir Director to inform musicians	
Risk of musicians being unaware of what they need to do.	Remind your performers beforehand about important safe practices. E.g. no physical contact, practice hand washing.	Reminder to be sent by email beforehand, together with copies of this risk assessment and the Risk Assessment for Opening Church Buildings to the Public.	Choir Director to inform musicians	

2. Ensuring participants' safety

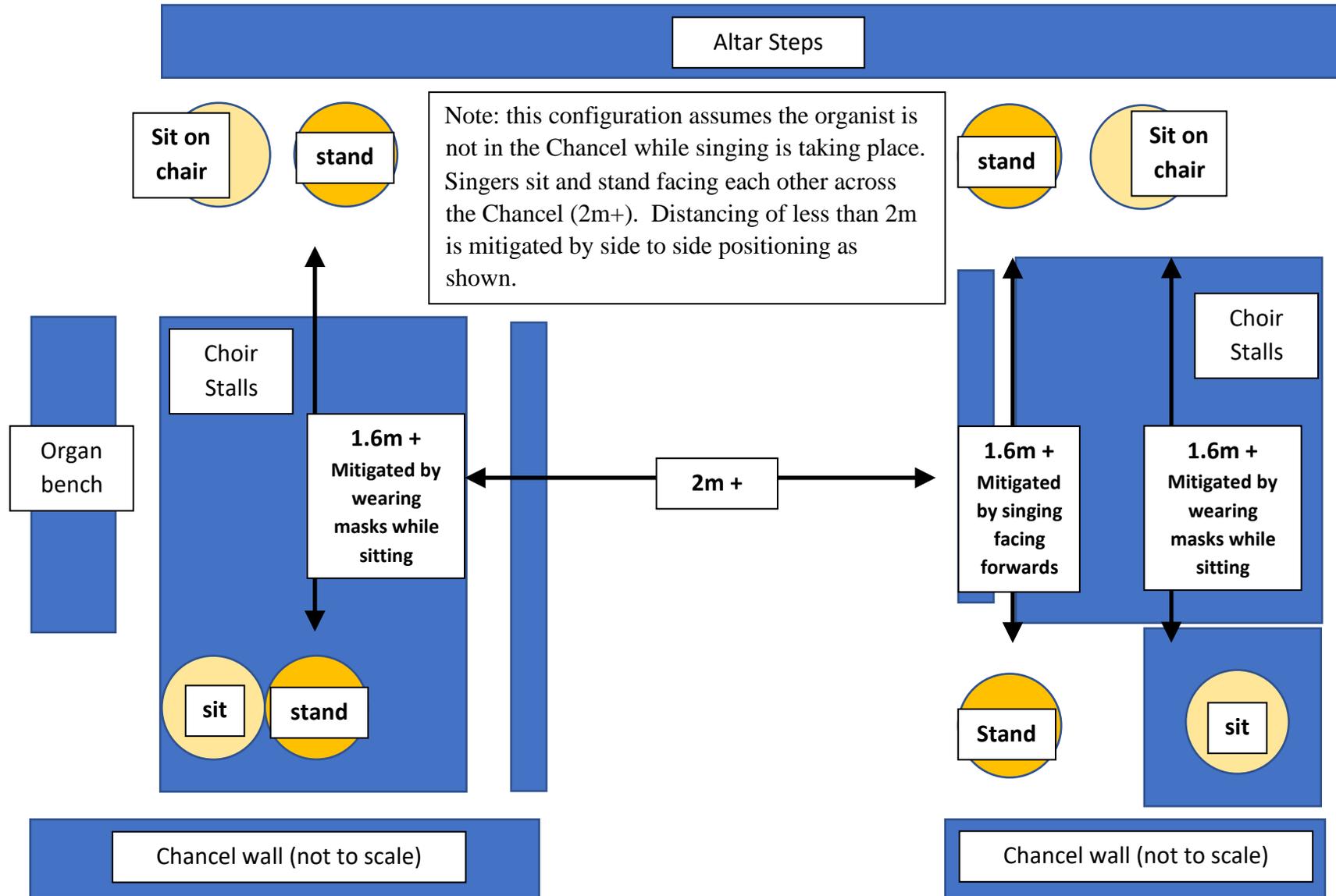
What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Attendee within the group is a virus carrier	Ensure current guidance on not attending if unwell is emphasised in pre-event communications.	Reminder to be sent by email.	Choir Director to inform musicians	
Virus spread by hands	Determine placement of hand sanitisers available for your musicians to use.	Hand sanitiser available at entrance door as usual and also in Chancel.	Churchwardens	
Virus transmitted via printed music	Ensure that everyone has their own copy of the music/worship materials. Ideally, these should be brought from home. If music is handed out on the day, ensure the music is distributed and collected by one person wearing disposable gloves and that the music stays with one individual throughout the performance.	Copies of music and service sheets will have been distributed to musicians beforehand.	Choir Director	
Virus transmitted via printed music	Ask attendees to drop loaned music into a box at the end of the event and leave it for 72 hours before sorting and returning.		Choir Director	
Virus transmitted through sharing of items	Ask attendees to bring their own writing implements (for marking music etc.)		Choir Director	

What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Virus transmitted via (keyboard) instruments	Minimise the number of people playing the piano or organ during the service. Ideally, have only one accompanist.	Only the organist (Peter) to use the organ.	Choir Director	

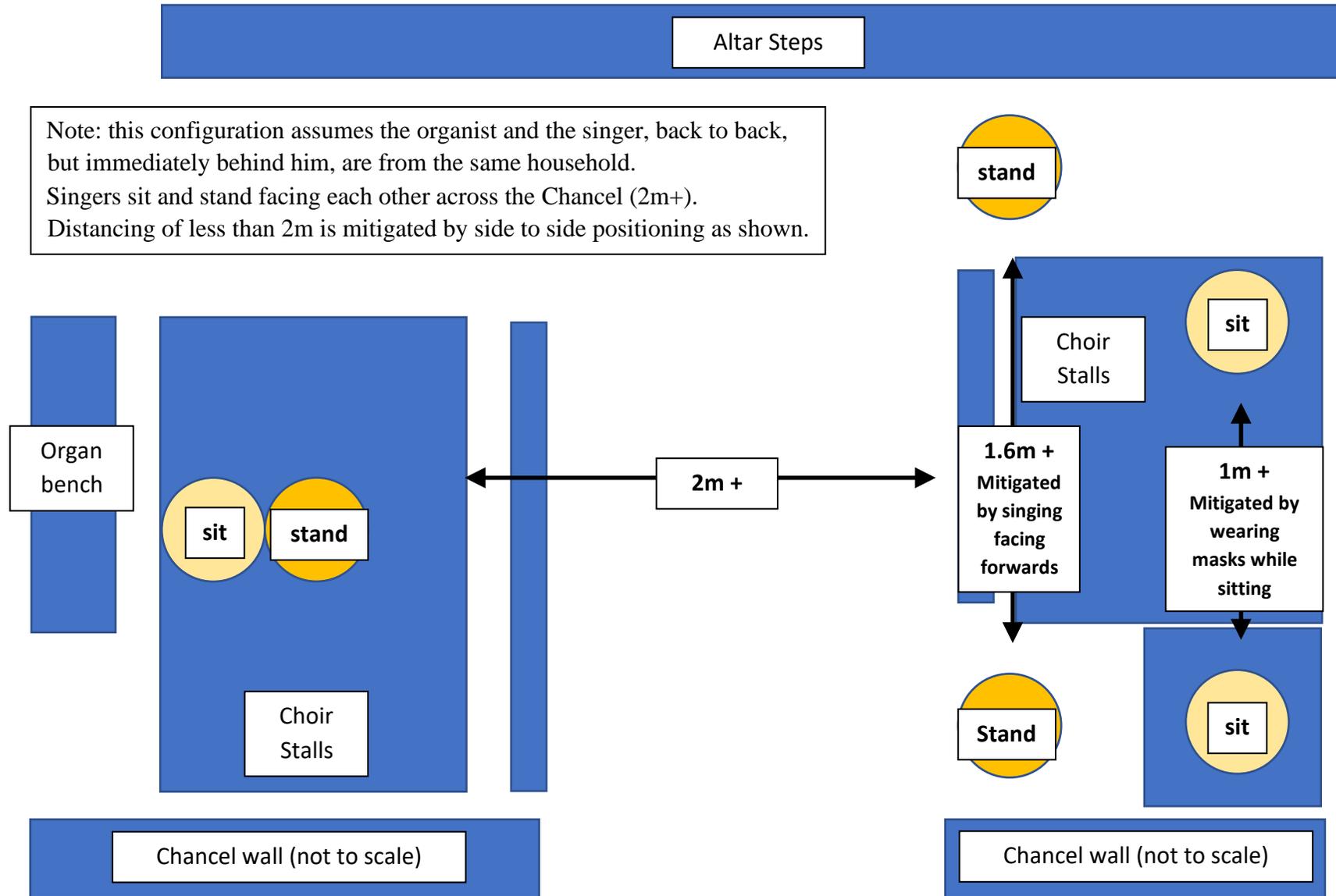
3. Unawareness of control measures amongst attendees

What is the outline risk?	Controls required	Additional, specific control measures to be implemented	Action by whom?	Completed – date and name
Attendees unaware of risk and procedures	Make an announcement at the start of the event to highlight the key control measures in place.		Minister	
	Make a risk assessment document available online before the event and alert attendees to its presence.		Choir Director	
	Identify someone to whom attendees can speak if they have any concerns or questions.		Minister or Choir Director	

Seating Plan in Chancel showing 4 singers in sitting and standing positions



Seating Plan in Chancel showing 3 singers in sitting and standing positions



Appendix 1 Social Distancing Rules for Choirs

Evidence for the RSCM guideline of '1m plus in all directions from each person'

Extract from 'Church of England Covid-19 Guidance'

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches#na>

FAQs - CAN A CHOIR SING DURING WORSHIP?

Yes, the congregation may not sing yet, but **providing adequate distancing can be achieved**, a small choir may sing. Please see our **Guidance on public worship** for more information.

Please also see **Guidance from the RSCM** on the safe resumption of choral singing.

Extract from Church of England 'Guidance on public worship'

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/COVID%2019%20advice%20on%20conducting%20public%20worship%20v2.3.pdf>

17. Can we sing?

It is now permissible for both professional and non-professional singers and musicians to perform in small groups to people inside and outside of buildings **in line with the recommendations for physical distancing** and hygiene set out by the Government in their **performing arts guidance**.

This includes those who regularly volunteer to do music and singing, as part of a choir for example, to perform as a part of worship.

Extract from 'Guidance from the RSCM'

<http://www.rscm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FAQs-re-Resumption-of-Singing-25.08.20.pdf>

FAQ 6. I don't have any 'bubbles' (consistent, school-based groups of children) in my choir. How far apart should the singers be?

A cautious approach would suggest at least 1 metre with mitigations (eg not singing 'at' each other but singing in a straight line facing forwards and 2 metres from people in front of them).

FAQ 11. What about masks?

All choir members should wear masks on arrival and departure from church (though Government guidance does not require children under the age of 11 to wear a mask). As members contributing to the leading of worship, they may remove masks to sing. Masks may be removed in rehearsal, as long as social distancing is complied with.

Extract from 'Government performing arts guidance'

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts>

Social distancing in performing arts environments

You must maintain social distancing in the performing arts environment wherever possible.

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, organisations should consider whether that activity needs to continue, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff, workers, participants and audiences. Mitigating actions include:

Using back-to-back or side-to-side positioning (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.