

GUIDE FOR SHOPS IN YOUR CHURCH BUILDING

Version 1	10/07/2020	Simplification of previous guidance
Version 2	28/7/2020	Guidance on face coverings added

1. **Introduction**

Managing Trustees will be aware that Government policy decisions affect parts of Methodist Church property in different ways and at different times. We have therefore adapted this guidance to work with the overarching **Guide to Reopening and Managing your Church Building**.

This Guide is part of STEP 5: Safety First in the process for reopening and managing your church building. It provides specific considerations in relation to reopening and managing church buildings which accommodate shops which commenced from 15 June 2020.

It is acknowledged that some Methodist Properties may be affected by this, for example those who run charity shops or community cafes or lease retail units to others who run such businesses. The complete list is found in Government guidance.¹

This guidance is intended to provide Managing Trustees with a broad overview of the requirements on them or for other groups who may potentially want to reopen their business which is run from Church property. This guidance may not cover every eventuality, and therefore we would recommend that Managing Trustees contact the Connexional Property team for further guidance if they have specific matters they wish to discuss at – property@methodistchurch.org.uk

2. **Government Policy Basis & Timescales for Implementation**

‘Opening non-essential retail when and where it is safe to do so, and subject to those retailers being able to follow the new COVID-19 Secure guidelines. The intention is for this to happen in phases from 1 June; the Government will issue further guidance shortly on the approach that will be taken to phasing, including which businesses will be covered in each phase and the timeframes involved. All other sectors that are currently closed, including hospitality and personal care, are not able to re-open at this point because the risk of transmission in these environments is higher.’

Our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government’s COVID-19 recovery strategy pp. 30 (HM Government 2020)

3. **Considerations Prior to Reopening**

This planning process is essential, as it checks and ensures that the church property can meet the requirements of the shop unit and its ancillary accommodation; or alternatively highlights what other considerations need to be discussed and agreed to make the shop safe to open.

In considering the risks and action planning, whether as a Church project or landlords to a third party tenant, Managing Trustees should refer to the following Connexional Property guidance found on www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/coronavirus-guidance-for-property/ –

- Risk assessment
- Action Plan
- Re-opening buildings
- Cleaning

¹ Refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>

There is detailed guidance provided by the Government in terms of how to implement changes within the shop unit itself which will apply if this is a Church project, see – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

If a Church property provides shop accommodation as a Church project, then Managing Trustees should make reference to this guidance in discussing arrangements and planning ahead with directly employed staff and volunteers.

Alternatively if the shop is leased to a third party, then it is expected that the tenants will also carry their own risks assessments, the details of which should be shared with Managing Trustees, and vice versa, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to risk and the action plans going forward.

In both case, this communication needs to ascertain what risks are associated with allowing people to work again in the property and whether all the requirements for safe working can be achieved.

4. Undertake Consultations Widely

In addition to consulting with those directly associated with the shop unit(s). It is important that Managing Trustees consult and engage with all those who use or access the building (stakeholders), to ensure that views and opinions are fully considered in the [Risk Assessments](#) and [Action Plans](#). These might include the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Church membership & Ministers
- Property Secretary or Property Stewards
- Any other staff and volunteers (if the responsibility of the Managing Trustees)
- Those who care for the building, particularly those who clean it
- Local community, particularly those others who use the building and its facilities

i. Lease and Other Legal Obligations to Consider

It is essential that TMCP are consulted in relation to any impact on leases or legal obligations. Please contact TMCP if you have any queries relating to the lease or licence under which a Third Party uses the Church premises. Specific information relating to COVID-19 and its impact on leases and licences can be found on the TMCP website in their Lease COVID-19 FAQs ([FAQ 4 to FAQ 8](#) inclusive) and their Licence COVID-19 FAQs ([FAQ 1 to FAQ 3](#) inclusive).

Please note:

- If managing trustees want to allow a Third Party to use more of the Church building than is currently used under the current lease or licence (to allow for social distancing) then this would need to be documented very carefully. Please contact TMCP so that full guidance can be provided depending on the circumstances.
- Any requests from tenants for rent concessions in view of COVID-19 must be considered and documented very carefully. Please refer to the guidance in the [Non Residential Leases – requests from Tenants to a rent concession](#) article on the TMCP website.
- Please bear in mind that the ability to limit rights that a Third Party exercises over communal areas will depend upon whether they are using Methodist premises under a lease or a licence. In relation to leases, please refer to TMCP's Lease COVID-19 FAQs ([FAQ 7.1](#)). Managing Trustees have more flexibility with licences but will need to consider whether the terms of the licence require formal change. Please contact TMCP for guidance.

- Please consider any services provided to a Third Party under a lease, e.g. cleaning, very carefully bearing in mind not only the Government's guidance and guidance issued by the Methodist Church relating to COVID-19 but also their legal rights under the lease. Please refer to TMCP's Lease COVID-19 FAQs ([FAQ 7.1](#)).

ii. Insurance Matters

It is important that you consult your insurer on any matters relating to property insurance. Methodist Insurance has provided a comprehensive set of COVID-19 guidance on their website.

5. Main Considerations for Managing Trustees in Reopening parts of their Building

Managing Trustees need to be aware that controls within different users' 'separate environments' may be easier to manage with clear guidelines and controls. It is very important that in any planning and proposed changes that equal consideration is given to the interfaces between different occupiers/rooms/properties and within any communal/shared areas. This may be very different for church run shop project, as opposed to third party run shop units. It is essential that any critical areas of contact between building users are risk assessed, action plans are clear and practical, and then processes are managed and controlled very carefully so that clear plans and areas of responsibility are allocated to a particular user to a shared, agreed standard (e.g. cleaning regimes). For example, such areas might include for example:

- Entrance doorways
- Corridors
- Washroom and WC facilities
- Kitchens
- Halls/Larger Rooms
- Outside spaces

This situation is especially relevant if temporary accommodation changes are being made, beyond the arrangements set out and agreed under an existing lease or license agreement. It is important that if any changes are made, even temporary, to existing agreements then this is checked with TMCP – refer to their guidance set out in Section 4i above.

The following practical guidance is intended to assist managing trustees when they are considering everything from their risk assessment & discussions with those running the shop provision through to implementing changes to the property (in co-ordination with their shop provider if relevant). It is not intended as a definitive list, as each property should be assessed and changed accordingly to suit site and provider requirements.

Managing trustees should also be aware that they will have a greater responsibility for some of these considerations where this is a church run project, as opposed to one run by a third party. The points raised should therefore be carefully considered depending upon the specific situation:

i. Property Access, Limitations, Security & Means of Escape Matters

As part of the planning, safe means of access and egress for every building user is essential. This should be considered in the risk assessments and action plans, and the following points should be considered:

- Limit the number of key holders to the building to ensure control access.
- Ensure that if a church member is unlocking then they do not fall into 'at risk' categories.

- Limit access to the other parts of the building not opened; this will ensure management of any virus transfer and therefore implications on cleaning regimes.
- Ensure that everyone who accesses the building signs in and co-ordinate with the shop units the personnel on site to ensure that social distances can be maintained.
- Work with your shop staff or shop tenant to ensure that any access or areas in use do not have compromised fire escape routes or means of escape to external areas.
- Work with your shop staff or shop tenant to ensure that any access or building limitations do not compromise security for the open parts of the buildings or other parts of the building.

ii. Moving around the building

- Limit movement between different user group areas within the building(s) to maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- Limit the number of people who use lifts or stairs if possible/relevant.
- Reduce the number of people in high traffic areas, particularly if these are used more regularly by shop staff or customers as part of a temporary circulation regime.
- Mark areas using tape to help people keep to the advised social distance limits.
- Consider introducing temporary pedestrian walkways to allow people to maintain social distancing when moving around – this is particularly relevant in external areas for customers.

iii. Common areas

Agree how communal or common areas are used, such as kitchens, toilets or changing facilities. The following needs to be considered:

- Physically moving tables/chairs so they are the advised social distance limits.
- Staggering use times, or introducing a rota so that people are not using spaces at the same time – this should be more carefully considered depending upon the specific situation relevant to the Church building and how it is used.
- Where this is not possible, creating additional space for people to take their breaks in.
- Marking areas using tape to help people keep to the advised social distance limits.
- Using outside areas for breaks if the locations are suitable and it is safe to do so.

Where you cannot keep to the advised social distance limits, you need to think about how to keep common areas clean and prevent transmission by touching contaminated surfaces. You should think about:

- How frequently you need to clean the common areas.
- Identifying objects and surfaces that are touched regularly and decide how frequently you clean them.
- Setting clear guidance and line of responsibility for the use of kitchens, toilets or changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean.

iv. Cleaning and Hygiene

- Follow the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.
- Ensure that sufficient handwashing facilities are available that provide running water, soap and paper towels. Where a sink is not nearby, provide hand sanitiser in shared spaces – particularly in entrance areas.
- Use signs and posters to increase awareness of good handwashing technique.
- Provide regular reminders on avoiding touching your face and to cough/sneeze into your arm.

- Set clear guidance for the cleaning of toilets, showers and changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean.
- Set clear guidance on how to handle and store cleaning materials/products safely (COSHH Guidelines) and when cleaning procedures need to be followed.
- Clean surfaces such as doors, sinks, toilets, light switches, bannisters, more regularly than normal in areas under the church's responsibility.
- Ensure that bins are emptied throughout the day.
- Where possible, all spaces should be well ventilated using natural ventilation (opening windows).
- Prop doors open, where safe to do so (bearing in mind fire safety and safeguarding), to limit use of door handles and aid ventilation.
- Work together with other Churches or building users to ensure proportionate supplies of soap, anti-bacterial gel and cleaning products for all areas of the building are available.

v. Information and guidance

- Provide all users of the building with information on procedures & guidance that have been introduced. This could include signs or notices.
- Consider how you will pass information and guidance to people who don't have English as their first language and others who may struggle with written and verbal communication or have disabilities such as visual impairment.
- Holding conversations with any interested parties, listening to and acting on their concerns through recording and responding to these at the risk assessment stages and then reflection stages during implementation.

vi. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

- Ensure that PPE is available to church members/employees if risk assessments suggest this is necessary when visiting the property, please refer to the following link for more details.

6. Considerations once a Shop has Reopened

The type of shop units covered by this guidance will vary greatly and therefore guidance for Managing Trustees and their tenants in terms of running the premises once it is opened is not easy to define. It is therefore advisable initially to consult the Government guidance. This provides clear guidance which we suggest Managing Trustees make reference to, or ensure that their tenants are aware of and putting the necessary actions in place -

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) – Shops and Branches

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

If Managing Trustees have specific queries relating to their shop unit(s), then please contact the Connexional Property team at property@methodistchurch.org.uk.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

From Friday 24 July it is mandatory to wear face coverings in shops and when buying food and drink to take away from a café. It is not a requirement if sitting down to eat or drink in a café. For more information see – https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-coverings-mandatory-in-shops-supermarkets-shopping-centres-and-enclosed-transport-hubs-from-friday?utm_source=ba320275-7ee2-47f1-946b-c6924915346b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

