

The Plurality of the Parishes of Keele & Silverdale  
**Response to the Government's Move to Step 4 of its 'Roadmap'**

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This document is offered to you as an explanation of the path our two Parish Church communities will take in response to the Government's actions on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021. I commend it to your careful reading. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. The basis of this present document is the recent Church of England paper, Opening and managing church buildings in step 4 of the Roadmap out of Lockdown (published on the Church of England website, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 – referred to here as OMCB) (Fr Peter Jones, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021)

*1: the present covid-19 situation*

- **New covid-19 cases are rising each day on an unprecedented scale.** The death rate, at present, is not at all as high as it was this time last year; but it is rising. **The danger of covid-19 isn't limited to the real risk of death, neither is it only the elderly or those with existing health problems that are at risk.** The virus can leave its victims with serious and often life-limiting conditions. **The virus has not 'gone away'.**
- The **vaccines currently available limit the likelihood that, if you do 'get' covid-19, you will be seriously harmed by it.** Like even the best of our medications, these vaccinations are not 100% reliable.
- It remains the case that **vaccination alone can't be the only way the virus is controlled (or 'managed').** **Good hand hygiene (preferably with at least 70% alcohol hand-sanitiser), social distancing, the wearing of face masks, and good ventilation remain crucial.**

*2: the legal requirements and us*

- **It is no longer a requirement of law that we wear face coverings, or use hand-sanitiser, or maintain social distancing. However, the Government 'expects and recommends' that we do so.**
- There is no longer any legal restriction on the number of people attending public worship.
- The document OMCB makes it clear that the **'responsibility for making decisions about how to proceed [with our response to Step 4] lies with the Incumbent. This applies to acts of worship, to events run by the PCC or church community, and to decision on whether to ... allow other events to proceed. Incumbents should feel empowered to make locally appropriate decisions, including taking different approaches to different types of services and events.'** (OMCB p.3)

### *3. So, for the time being ...*

- In the light of pastoral need, there is now **no limit (at present) on the number of people who may attend public acts of worship at our places of worship.** However, people are requested to do what they can to maintain social distancing.
- To this end, **one side of the church will continue to be taped off for those who prefer to maintain the 2 metre social distancing. Please respect this.** For those who are satisfied that it is safe not to socially distance, the other side of the church building will be clear of tape.
- **The Government ‘expects and recommends’ that people continue to wear face coverings, even though it has removed the legal obligation that we do so.** Consequently, although you are no longer under a legal requirement to wear face coverings, **I ask that you do so whilst you are in the church building. I shall do so myself out of concern and respect for you.**
- **We shall continue to provide hand-sanitiser on entry to the building and hope that you use it.**
- We’re no longer under legal obligation to use the NHS track and trace list. However, we shall continue to ask people to do so.
- We will continue in not singing during worship.
- We shall continue to receive Holy Communion in one kind only.
- We shall continue not to share the peace.
- For the time being, we are unable to offer toilet facilities.
- For the time being, we shall not be providing refreshments after worship.
- It is important to note that, until further notice, the church building will be open only for public worship, cleaning, and maintenance, and for PCC meetings.

### *4. Review of this document*

This document is provisional and may be amended. It will be reviewed by me with the intention of providing an update for both parishes before the second Sunday of September, 2021.

Fr Peter Jones 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021