**Diocesan Messages: Covid-19**

**Tuesday 1 December 2020**

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| **01** | **Covid-19 Winter Plan**  On 23 November 2020 the Government’s Covid-19 Winter Plan was published.  It confirms that places of worship will be permitted to reopen for public worship when the current national lockdown ends.  The full document is available via this link:  <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/937529/COVID-19_Winter_Plan.pdf>  The Government intend that all areas of our Diocese will be placed in Tier 3 – Local Covid Alert Level: Very High from 2 December 2020. (This is subject to securing parliamentary approval on 1 December 2020)  Please note that all advice contained within the cascade messages assume that   1. parliamentary approval will be secured and all parts of the diocese will move to Tier 3 from 2 December 2020 2. the restrictions that applied within Tier 3 immediately prior to the national lockdown will be unchanged. |
| **02** | **Resumption of Public Worship**  **From 2 December 2020 public worship is permitted as an organised gathering provided any person attending is:**   * **alone or** * **part of a group all from the same household or two linked households;** * **and must not join any other group or mingle with any person from another group.**   **non-household groups of 6 are not permitted** |
| **03** | **Funerals**  Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people.  Linked ceremonial events (for example burial of ashes) can also continue with up to 15 people in attendance.  Anyone working is not counted in the 15 or 30.  Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.  Further information is provided within an FAQ on the diocesan website. |
| **04** | **Weddings from 2 December 2020**  Weddings are permitted in places of worship, providing certain public health criteria are met.  Weddings must have no more than 15 people in attendance. The number includes the bride and groom. Physical distancing should be strictly adhered to.  Anyone working (eg: the officiant, a verger/churchwarden, an organist) is not included as part of the numerical limit.  “MUST” means this is enforceable by law.  Those observing the wedding, who should wear face coverings consistent with the requirements for any other public space. The bride, groom and the officiant are not required to wear a face covering.  Further information is provided within an FAQ on the diocesan website. |
| **05** | **Baptisms from 2 December 2020**  Baptisms can go ahead providing appropriate steps are taken to minimise risk.  If the baptism takes place as part of communal worship, there is no numerical cap – but the maximum number of attendees must not exceed the number that the building can safely accommodate whilst remaining covid-19 secure.  The Government recognises that communal worship comes in all shapes and sizes with some regular services as well as some additional services that mark important milestones in the faith calendar – with this in mind if a church arranges an additional service (that other members of the church are free to attend) for a baptism to take place then attendance is not subject to the rule of six.  The Church of England state that “If a family chooses to have their Baptism as a private ceremony, then it must be capped at six people (excluding those working at the event)”.  What this means is that if a family seek to arrange a baptism that is outside of the routine pattern of worship offered by the church at a time that accommodates their specific requirements this would be subject to the rule of six.  Further information is provided within an FAQ on the diocesan website. |
| **06** | **Recording church attendance for schools admissions purposes** On 24 November 2020 Deborah Smith issued a letter to all clergy, outlining the current position and giving advice. It can be accessed via this link  <https://cofemanchester.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2020/09/Letter_to_Clergy_from_Deborah_Smith_Variation_to_Admission_Arrangements_.._.pdf> |
| **07** | **Christmas**  Advice and guidance about Christmas is beginning to emerge, but is currently incomplete. As it becomes available it will be reflected on the diocesan website.  The latest advice from the Church of England is as follows:   1. **Carol Singing and Carol Services**   **Carol singing outdoors**: Congregations can sing carols outdoors as part of a service as long as individuals, households or bubbles maintain 2m distancing and other good public health hygiene practices are in place.  **Door-to-door carol singing** is permitted but you must abide by the relevant gathering limits, stay at least 2m away from the threshold of any property, maintain physical distancing between singers and follow the Performing Arts guidance.  **Carol singing indoors**: It is permitted for a choir to sing indoors, but where there are any performances or services in an indoor setting, the audience or congregation should not join in.  Further information is provided within an FAQ on the diocesan website.   1. **Nativity Plays**   Nativity Plays can be performed as part of worship. These can go ahead following the guidance for a supervised activity for under 18’s.  Further information is provided within an FAQ on the diocesan website. |
| **08** | **Christmas Bubbles**  The government have confirmed that “Christmas Bubbles” that can be formed from 23 – 27 December 2020 will be permitted to meet places of worship.  Full information about forming Christmas Bubbles is available via this link:  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family |
| **09** | **Sunday 27 December**  Bishop David has expressly stated that during the period 23-27 December 2020 clergy must be given the chance to take the opportunity presented by the “Christmas Bubble “concession made by the government.  This is very important for the wellbeing of clergy, and to positively support clergy to be able to spend time with their loved ones in a manner that the current restrictions will permit.  With this in mind Bishop David has confirmed that on Sunday 27 December 2020 it is perfectly appropriate for any licensed clergy who may need to travel in order to be with family or friends in that Christmas bubble period to make the most of that opportunity and not to have to conduct public worship in their church buildings.  Clergy may wish to draw their parishes attention to the fact that the 10.30am Cathedral Eucharist that morning will be livestreamed on the Cathedral Facebook page. The President and Preacher will be the Bishop of Middleton. |
| **10** | **Coronavirus Webpages**  The latest and most detailed information is published on the diocesan website. The content is reviewed at least daily – and updated as quickly as possible when new information becomes available.  Everyone is encouraged to check the website regularly. This week, as we emerge from the national lockdown and more detail is released about Christmas, it is expected that a significant number of updates to the website will be made. |

**Diocesan Messages (non Covid-19)**

**Tuesday 1 December 2020**

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| **1** | **Area Dean Recruitment**  The recruitment for new Area Deans has commenced this week.  Further information and the application pack can be accessed via this link:  <https://www.manchester.anglican.org/vacancies/area-dean-seven-posts.php>    The closing date for applications is 3 January 2021. |
| **2** | **Diocesan Website**  The new diocesan website is now live at [www.manchester.anglican.org](https://manchesterdiocese.cmail20.com/t/r-l-juiulkyd-kddjddduij-d/).  Particular attention is drawn to the new diocesan directory, which is intended to be a very helpful resource to clergy and parishes across our diocese:  https://www.manchester.anglican.org/about-us/diocesan-directory/ |