Thoughts and reasons on Brunswick Opening during current Lockdown

The decision to enable a restricted number of services to take place was not taken lightly and given serious thought. It was shaped by current government & national Church of England guidelines, and an updated risk assessment provided by Jess, which acknowledging the change in national circumstances, further tightened up our procedures. This resulted in assured greater distances between allowable pews, use of visors for the distributer of communion, and (though not in our current update as this is something we would not want to always rule out) the suspension of live music.

As the Church of England’s default position is that actual church worship should continue unless there are mitigating factors (& this privilege has had to be fought for this time around), we looked our monthly pattern of worship, deciding that our non - communion services might best be served through zoom alone as there was less of an advantage in being in the building - & it’s cold!), whilst an actual communion service (with the additional safety measures mentioned above in place) should still be on offer -  to those who are not able to access zoom, to those for who for whom it might be a benefit to their current state of mental health, and for those for whom receiving communion is as precious (if not more so) than accessing their local supermarket.

No announcements were made until it was clear that the building could be staffed safely, and that anyone there was required to be there, were happy & willing to be so. In addition, the tone of communication given out to the congregation, certainly contained a less than enthusiastic commendation to join us in person. As a result, the limited number who attended last Sunday (10 January) convinced me that we had it just about right;

1) - It was a small number (in this case 5 including Tim and myself) which felt as safe as it could have been.

2) - all present, expressed thanks for in different ways they were grateful that the service was available to them & that they were able to partake in this way (one had turned up the previous week when we were closed).

3) - As the one presiding, having an actual congregation together with our large virtual congregation, made it more meaningful than simply appearing to Tim & camera alone, and I had a sense that we were remembering and receiving all on behalf of us all.