

Safety considerations for two small groups of non-professional singers to sing in the Chancel of St. Nicolas' Church Taplow during a service of worship

Singing by a small group of non-professional singers started during a service of public worship in St. Nicolas' Church Taplow on Sunday 23rd August 2020. This singing took place under the guidelines shown in Appendix 1, which were circulated to all singers and are stored, signed and dated, in the church's logbook.

Revised guidelines from the Royal School of Church Music issued on Thursday 24th September 2020 allow for more than one group of 6 singers to sing during a service of worship in a place of worship.

<http://www.rscm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FAQs-re-Resumption-of-Singing-3.pdf>

This note records the safety measures, in addition to those in Appendix 1 of this document and the measures outlined in the Risk Assessment for Public Worship to be found at <http://st-nicolas-taplow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Risk-Assessment-for-St.-Nicolas-Church-Taplow-for-Public-Worship-1.pdf>, that will be implemented to ensure safe singing by two small groups of non-professional singers in the Chancel of St. Nicolas' Church Taplow.

- No more than 6 singers will be in either of the groups of singers.
- There will be no mingling before, during or after the service of worship between the two groups of singers.
- After taking Communion, should that be a singer's practice, each singer will proceed directly to the area in which they will sing.
- Those singing from behind the High Altar will go via The Lady Chapel.
- Those singing from in front of the steps to the High Altar will go via the Organ Loft.
- To avoid mingling, no singer will enter the area in which the other half of the Choir will be singing.
- There will be no other people in the Chancel while singing is undertaken.

The Royal School of Church Music now states that visors are not specifically necessary or helpful so it is recommended that

- All singers wear their face masks until they are in position to sing.
- Those singing behind the High Altar replace their face mask with a visor to sing.
- Those singing in front of the steps to the High Altar may remove their face mask to sing.
- The conductor replaces their face mask with a visor prior to the singing starting.

Appendix 1

Safety considerations for a small group of non-professional singers to sing in St. Nicolas' Church Taplow during a service of worship

Dear all,

The UK Government (1) and the Church of England (2) have now given permission for a small group of non-professional singers to sing, under appropriately safe conditions, during a service of worship.

The following safety measures have been defined for this activity in St. Nicolas' Church Taplow.

- No precise definition of "small" has been given in either of (1) or (2), but following the defined "rule" to performing arts guidance (3) and thus to guidance for meeting people from outside your household (4), I conclude that a group of 6 singers is acceptable.
- We will sing from in front of the altar rail in front of the high altar. This area will be cleaned and sanitised before and after singing.
- We will be socially distanced (2 metres) and will face forwards.
- At no time will any of us look sideways.
- It is envisaged that there will be no other people in the chancel for the short time we are singing to ensure there is at least 5 metres between us and any other people.
- With these precautions above, we can follow the Church of England guidelines (2) to sing without a face covering as we are assisting in worship with our singing and suitable physical distancing precautions are in place. You are of course free to wear your face covering if that is your preference or wear one of the visors provided.

Phil

1.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

2.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/COVID%2019%20advice%20on%20conducting%20public%20worship%20v2.2.pdf>

3.

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

4.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>