

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Omicron Variant

The Government has put in place temporary and precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 Omicron variant in the UK.

These new measures will come into effect as of 4am on Tuesday 30 November 2021, and will be reviewed after a period of 3 weeks. The temporary measures are:

- Face coverings are compulsory in shops and settings such as banks, post offices and hairdressers, as well as on public transport unless individuals are exempt from doing so.

**NB.** All hospitality settings and Places of Worship are currently exempt at this present moment.

### Places of Worship

Care has to be taken to ensure that our churches continue to be safe places to gather and to worship. Each church should continue to assess the local situation regarding the virus and adapt as necessary to the local conditions. This may mean that in areas of very high transmission, churches may have tighter measures than those in areas of lower transmission.

At present the Government has not mandated any new restrictions on people attending Places of Worship. However, to mitigate new COVID infections and reduce the risk of transmission we would reinforce the recommendations of 19th July 2021; these being:

- Sanitising hands on entry to church and before liturgies.
- Ventilating churches well (especially during and between services) remains important.
- Maintaining a good general standard of routine cleaning using normal cleaning detergents is sufficient for regular use.
  - Cleaning high frequency touch points in buildings after each act of worship.
  - Thoroughly cleaning the church once / twice weekly.

### Face Coverings

The Government's new mandatory guidance on the wearing of face coverings is related to specific building uses as set out above, this does not include Places of Worship specifically.

The Government guidance - **Coronavirus-how to stay safe and help prevent the spread** (Updated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021) states:

***"In indoor settings where a face covering is not required, the Government continues to expect and strongly recommend that you wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, where you may come into contact with other people you do not normally meet."***

For the safety of all visitors to our churches and to reduce the risk of transmission we would support the recommendation for the wearing of face coverings when attending our Churches.

Thank you for your continued assistance.