

Letter from Nadine Waldron, Diocesan Secretary

19 March 2020

Dear All,

Many of you have raised specific queries with me over the last few days. I hope the points below give initial guidance on what can and can't be done. I will work with Bishop Libby, whose letter and guidance you will already have received this morning, on extending the period of office of church officers and we will let you know what has been done later. This may be different for different groups of people, depending on when their present tenure ends. I would draw your attention to the following:

1. No PCC meetings are to take place until further notice. Business will have to be done via e-mail or telephone/internet conferencing.
2. APCMs will have to be postponed. The Bishop will be able to exercise powers to extend the tenure of office of churchwardens, deanery lay reps and PCC members once we have received clearer guidance from the national church. We will update you when that process has been agreed.
3. No services of public worship will take place, although the church should, if possible, be open for private prayer. There should be notices up to tell people they must observe social distancing. Do not arrange to have welcomers / greeters while your churches are open.
4. Because there will be no public services, banns of marriage cannot be read. The couple should be asked if they wish to postpone their wedding. If they do not, they will need to proceed by way of an alternative preliminary, such as Common or Special Licence or civil Superintendent Registrar's Certificate.
5. Any wedding which takes place should be a very small gathering of, preferably, only five people, i.e. the couple, the priest and the two witnesses. Social distancing should be observed. Care should be taken on touching each other. A service of blessing and renewal of vows with additional guests can be offered at a later date. We'll need to be flexible on fees and will be back in touch when we have heard further from the national church.

6. A funeral would need to be a committal only in the churchyard or a small service in church with very few in attendance and social distancing in operation with a memorial service offered at a later date, again with flexibility on fees.
7. Care must be taken on copyright if church services are streamed online and include copyright material. This may well not be covered by the [CCL](#) which refers to use of the material in church. Further guidance is expected from Church House Westminster on this.

I hope this deals with the basic points.

Let me know if there are other queries not covered above.

Best wishes,

Nadine Waldron
Diocesan Registrar