

ST MARY-LE-TOWER IPSWICH - Step 4 Covid-19 Protocol Changes July 2021
Agreed by the PCC on 21st July 2021

AGREED PROTOCOLS

1. All may now sing in church. Alleluia!
2. People in the long nave pews will be asked to continue wear masks and to keep 1m social distancing. All the pews may be used.
3. People in the shorter pews in the side aisles and also in the chancel (including the choir) will have no restrictions requested of them.
4. People with medical exemption from wearing masks are expressly welcome to sit anywhere in church.
5. Everyone will be requested to wear masks when moving about the church, out of respect for others.
6. Communion will now be administered at nave altar but remain in one kind only. Everyone will be requested to wear masks and socially distance by 1m in a single line up in the centre aisle. The choir will be requested to do similarly in the chancel.
7. Everyone will continue to be requested to sanitise their hands on entry into the church.
8. Records of attendance will continue to be kept to assist Test and Trace.
9. These protocols will be reviewed on a monthly basis, particularly in relation to the local hospitalisation rate for Covid 19.

BACKGROUND

- A. HM Government decided that England should take a calculated risk with Step 4 on 19th July, on the basis that the overall risks of delaying this step are greater than not doing so. Individual political views apart, SMLT will in principle aim to follow and support Government policy.
- B. HM Government is nevertheless urging caution in order to flatten the peak of the third wave. The C of E is supporting this, and therefore SMLT will do so too.
- C. We recognise that there is a debate about the reliability of data the government is using, however in formulating SMLT policy we will not enter this debate as we lack the ability to analyse it. What really matters is the rate of hospitalisation, and at present there is a very large range in the projections. Our conclusion is that this further underlines the need for the precautionary principle at this stage.
- D. Polls are currently showing a significant majority for continuing restrictions in some form, which is likely to be reflected across the SMLT community.
- E. We have invested considerably in the idea of ensuring SMLT is seen as a safe place, and therefore making a full transition at this stage to embracing risk does not seem appropriate.
- F. There will nevertheless be those who want to be free of Covid restrictions and this includes how the choir is managed. It would also be good to end the divisiveness where SMLT has a different set of rules for the choir from the rest of the church.
- G. The church is a very large and naturally well ventilated space, and SMLT will play to this strength in the current circumstances.