

Dear Clergy, Lay Readers, Vestry Secretaries and Diocesan Secretaries

A brief update from the Advisory Group on the following: –

1. In the email sent out on 17 November 2020, we reported that for Local Authority areas in level 4 of the Strategic Framework, the maximum permitted number for attendance at weddings was 15. Since then, we have been advised by the Scottish Government that that level has been increased back to 20 (the same maximum which applies for worship services). It remains the case that wedding receptions in level 4 areas are not permitted. We are revising our Phase 3 guidance to reflect this and it is now available on the provincial website at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Revised-Phase-3-Guidance-Version-7-20.11.20.pdf> We are not sending out with this email a marked up version of the change to the Guidance, because that is the only change which has been made.
2. The Advisory Group is aware that indications have been made in recent days from politicians about a possible loosening of social gathering rules around Christmas time. There is no indication that there will be any loosening of restrictions in relation to places of worship and we suggest that the planning of Christmas worship arrangements should continue to be made on the basis of the current guidance. There will be a number of provincial worship offerings over the Christmas period which will be broadcast in a similar way to regular Sunday morning online worship. We are aware that many churches will also be making their own arrangements to provide online worship.
3. We are aware that some churches, which had previously reopened for public worship, have decided for the time being to discontinue doing so, for a number of practical reasons – for example, if those who might attend, or assist, at worship in a supporting role, would otherwise require to cross a level 4 boundary, or because, with limited numbers of volunteers, people simply need a break. As the College of Bishops reminded the Church a number of weeks ago, this is a time to be kind to oneself and gentle with another. The decision to discontinue public worship, or to resume it again in the future, is one to be taken locally. The Bishops have indicated that, where a church previously reopened for public worship and was approved to do so, it is not necessary for the church to seek approval again from the Diocesan Bishop to reopen for a second time. However, when a congregation decides to discontinue public worship for the time being, or to resume it again later, the Diocesan Bishop should be notified of that fact and the advice set out in section C of the Phase 3 guidance about addressing preliminary matters prior to resumption of public worship should be observed.
4. Additions have been made to the FAQs on the website in relation to issues of travel, the crossing of Local Authority boundaries and carol singing. These are available on the provincial website at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/wp->

[content/uploads/Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-Phase-3-Version-6-20.11.20.pdf](#)

Kind regards

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