

Good practice for safe meetings.

What we know about covid-19

We know now that infection occurs predominantly via breathing in the virus in an infected space. Transmission from infected items has been much less common and this has generally been minimised by the sanitation measures we have taken. Vaccination programs have greatly reduced the probability of a severe infection, but there are sections of society with lower vaccination rates and we need to remain aware of that. The virus pool across the world is significant and so new mutations with different properties are inevitable.

What actions have we taken

Airborne transmission

We have used two types of mitigation measures

1. Maintaining good air quality

With the help of CO₂ monitors we can check on the air quality in our rooms. Essentially every 400 ppm rise from the 'normal' outside concentration of 400 ppm indicates the presence of about 1% of stale air. Readings above 1000 ppm can indicate that the CO₂ level may start to affect people adversely; it also indicates warning level of 1.5% of stale air. Careful use of air flow through a room can maintain good air quality. The use of air purifiers does reduce the level of virus carriers, bacteria and allergens in the atmosphere. We know now how to ensure the air quality we provide is probably more safe than it was in the past.

2. Personal protection

Personal protection can be achieved by appropriate masks. Tight fitting masks such as this classed as FFP2 or N95 are the most effective. We should ensure that people who wear them are recognised to be improving all our safety and not made to feel different.

Contact transmission

The introduction of sanitising gels, sprays and wipes has greatly eased the way in which we can be hospitable in our activities.

What have we learnt

Our spaces

It is apparent that high-ceilinged spaces with their own forced single-pass air flow do maintain good air quality throughout the length of a service. Examples for this are the sanctuaries at United and Chandler's Ford. The steps taken for the sanctuary at Wesley to provide an air flow across the space have also provided such a situation.

Other churches have relied on windows and doors to provide the air flow. The air purifiers employed at Bishopstoke, Cadnam, Romsey and St Andrew's can temper the degree of air flow necessary.

Low air quality has been recorded especially in relatively low ceiled rooms with little or no ventilation. This is exacerbated in internal rooms which only receive second-hand air. Indeed some have probably been deleterious to health or attentiveness for years. Since we know now how to check these rooms, it seems wise that we do address these issues in our ongoing property plans.

John Evans
1 March 2022