



## Covid restrictions and St. Lawrence Church

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Dear Church Family,

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July saw the government moving to Stage 4 of its roadmap to recovery from covid restrictions, but maybe it doesn't quite feel like 'Freedom Day'. There is still much uncertainty about rising infection rates, the capacity of the NHS to cope, and fears of what the winter might bring. As a church community we need to realise that there are now very few hard and fast, black and white rules to be followed, but instead we need to work together and see how the changes should be lived out in our context of a parish church in a market town in the Cotswolds. What is suitable for a church in the inner city or for a cathedral may not be suitable for us. Each church has to prayerfully consider the best way forward.

On Monday this week the Diocese of Gloucester acknowledged that every worshipping community is different, and we need to be gracious and understanding to each other, as we move forward together as a church:

*As we saw at the beginning of lockdown in March 2020, people respond in different ways due to their circumstances, personalities and experiences. There will be those who are longing simply to live as before with no physical distancing or face coverings and who will delight at being in a crowd once more. There will also be those who are anxious, not least those who are still not fully vaccinated, and those with particular personal and family health situations.*

We do need to be gracious and loving towards those who have different opinions from us- we are all in this together, moving at a pace which represents a broad consensus of opinion. The PCC have discussed what is the best way forward for us here in Lechlade and have made the following proposals:

### **From Sunday 25 July 2021**

*-The church building will be divided into two zones. The seating on the south side of the church (the side with the side chapel) will be for the exclusive use of those who would still like to wear face masks and practice social distancing. The rest of the church will have the pews moved back to their original positions to increase seating capacity. In that area, social distancing and masks will not be compulsory.*

*-Congregational singing will resume.*

*-Track and Trace information will no longer be collected, but you can still use the government app if you like.*

*-Pew collections will resume.*

*-The church building will be open each day of the week.*

*-Bibles will again be available in the pews.*

### **From September 2021**

*-The PCC will re-assess Holy Communion, whether or not we should resume taking the wine as well as the bread.*

*-The PCC will consider re-starting providing refreshments after the Sunday 10am service.*

We will continue to regularly monitor both the national and local situation and change our response to the covid threat accordingly. Let us be unified in our commitment to the mission of Christ in our local community and trust in Him who is Lord of all.

Yours in Christ's name,

**Revd Andrew Cinnamond** – Vicar, St. Lawrence, Lechlade