

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

12th August 2021



Coronavirus guidance update

'Beyond Level 0'—from 9th August: Masks Still Needed in Church & Process for Making Changes

As of Monday 9th August all of Scotland is now in 'Beyond Level 0' with almost all legal COVID restrictions removed. This change is a result of the reduced levels of positive Covid tests in Scotland and the very successful programme of vaccination throughout the adult population. This situation is being monitored by the public health professionals and the government have made it clear that levels can always go back up if there is an issue.

Masks in Churches—legal requirement

As announced last week, for churches, the requirement to wear a face covering while in the church building remains. The present status for e.g. singing with a mask in the congregation but service leaders and music groups not having to wear coverings will be unchanged.

Other restrictions—advisory—no rush to change

The physical distancing requirement in church is no longer mandatory. When a church feels that it is ready to remove distancing measures, they can do so. There is no rush to do this (or ease other restrictions as discussed below). Please discuss in vestries/with the congregation and gauge when you feel confident with changes. Some matters, such as the common cup and physically sharing the peace are best left unchanged for the moment while we wait for more guidance.

Post-service Refreshments

The status of post-service refreshments has been limited by the requirement to wear face coverings and to follow the hospitality sector guidance. This latter guidance now allows the consumption of food and drink while not seated at tables, so the resumption of more 'normal' post-service refreshments is possible if a church community is ready for that step. Face coverings should still be worn when not eating or drinking.

Status of Government Guidance

The government (and SEC) details of mitigations for places of worship in the pandemic remain as 'good practice' advice on the various websites. The government guidance <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/> states that we are entering 'a period when people need to make personal judgements rather than rules set by government'. The status of the government advice is also, of 10th August, officially under review. The SEC Advisory Group will also continue to review guidance documents, pastoral guidance and FAQs.

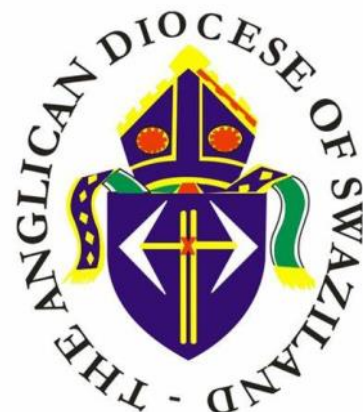
If you need any guidance or advice on planning around ongoing restrictions please contact the diocesan office at office@brechin.anglican.org

Companionship Diocese of Swaziland: Elective Assembly fails to elect a new Bishop

The Diocese of Swaziland Elective Assembly met last week to elect a new bishop. After many rounds of voting the candidates remained deadlocked with neither getting the 2/3 majority needed for election. The process in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa now calls on the provincial bishops to meet and decide on the appointment of the next bishop.

This will be a time of considerable anxiety in the diocese, so we will share election results as soon as we receive any news.

Please keep our companion diocese (especially as tension continues in eSwatini) in your prayers.



SEC Environmental Action

Grants for Renewable Energy Schemes: churches eligible to apply for costs of new heating systems to help achieve 'net zero'.

The Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) is offering grant funding, advice and support to community organisations that want to decarbonise their community buildings by installing low carbon or renewable technologies, such as heat pumps or solar panels.

Through a combination of grants and loans, CARES can fund up to 100% of the eligible project costs. This funding call will operate on a first-come basis.

Applicants must be constituted non-profit distributing community organisations, including organisations with charitable status, that are established and operating across a geographically defined community ('local community organisations') or faith groups.

Full information is on <https://www.localenergy.scot/funding/lets-do-net-zero-community-buildings/>

Please do explore this scheme as the SEC works towards our target of net zero carbon by 2030.

Diocesan Environmental Working Group

Watch this space for more news on support and help in the diocese for churches engaging with 'Net Zero Carbon' by 2030.

St. Paul's Cathedral Eco-group

Groups or individuals in the diocese are still very welcome to get in touch with the cathedral eco-group to share ideas - please email Julie the group convener at julie.curran7@btinternet.com

Online Worship for the SEC

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship online. A Sunday service, each from one of the Dioceses, will continue in the form of a service broadcast at 11am each Sunday. Some changes to the format of this worship are planned: watch for future notices.

This service has an option to hear the worship by telephone for those without internet access. There are more details and downloads of previous weeks' services at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

Brechin Provincial Online Worship

This coming week there are two Provincial services coming from the Diocese of Brechin:

Provincial worship for Sunday 15th August from St Laurence's Laurencekirk.

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin, leads a Celebration of the Eucharist from St Laurence's, Laurencekirk. You can download the order of service here: <https://bit.ly/SECPentecost12>. Bishop Andrew is joined by the Rev Canon Michael Turner, Pippa Simpson, Andrew Simpson and Cynthia Cartwright, from St Laurence's.



This service is a 1970 Grey Book eucharist, in a change of the regular format of the SEC Provincial services. The programme will be broadcast at 11am on the SEC Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/scottishepiscopalchurch> as well as the SEC channel on YouTube.

Provincial livestream on 16th August from St Paul's Cathedral Dundee

The Very Rev Dr Elizabeth Thomson, Provost of St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee, leads a special service for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The service will be streamed live from St Paul's on Monday 16 August at 7.30pm. The live stream will be available from 7.20pm. The service will be on the SEC Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/scottishepiscopalchurch>



News to share? Please send...

If you have any events, ideas with worship or anything else to report, please send copy to Elliott at office@brechin.anglican.org.