

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

14th July 2021



Updated guidance on coronavirus

'Level 0' for all of the Diocesan areas from Monday 19th July: 1m distancing and all of Dundee can sing!

The SEC Advisory Group has issued guidance in the light of the First Minister's announcement that, from Monday 19 July, all areas of Scotland not already in level 0 will move to that level. This is a summary of that guidance for Brechin Diocese:

The major changes for churches are:

- Physical distancing requirement for indoor public places (including churches) is reduced from 2m to 1m. From 19th July you can change the seating arrangements (blanked pews, usable seats etc.) from 2m to 1m. This is potentially a major change in our practice since original re-opening last July and should allow capacity to increase significantly.
- The theoretical Physical Distancing Based Capacity (PDBC) figure should be recalculated and publicly displayed as before.
- Congregational singing, subject to the wearing of face masks, is permitted in level 0 (as well as level 1). Churches in Dundee City can, from the 19th, have congregational singing. You still must wear face coverings.

Any change from 2m to 1m distancing must be well communicated to the congregation, emphasising that all the other safety measures in church remain in place: it is safe to attend SEC churches in this pandemic. If any cleric/church leader is not sure how best to introduce these changes or if you are aware of major anxiety or concerns over this change given the ongoing prevalence of the virus, contact the Bishop via the office who will guide and support you through the process.

As a reminder, there are various other changes to life in Scotland at level 0. For information, the limits on household gatherings are as follows:

- Inside homes: 8 people from 4 households can meet without physical distancing;
- Public buildings: 10 people from 4 households can meet indoors subject to 1m distancing.
- Outdoors: 15 people from 15 households can meet outdoors. Physical distancing needs to be maintained between groups of 15 households, but within each 15 household group the requirement to physically distance is removed altogether. Children under 12 are excluded from those numbers.

Whilst the Government is implementing its programme for relaxing restrictions, it is doing so cautiously and is keen to protect the position of those who remain anxious and/or vulnerable. The SEC endorses that careful approach and encourages clergy and congregations similarly to bear in mind that, whilst an easing of restrictions will be welcomed by some, there will be those who are concerned at the perception of an increased level of exposure with reduced distancing. In that regard the Advisory Group reminds the Church of the exhortations contained in the Bishops' Pastoral Guidance:

"Please continue to be careful in all you do as you continue to resume the pastoral activities in the life of our churches and take advantage of the easing of restriction on our shared pastoral life. In Province, Diocese and Charges: please do all you can to protect all those in your care. We must support and encourage those who wish to move quickly as restrictions ease. We must support and care for those who remain anxious and wish to be even more careful than the Government guidance might allow. The pandemic has changed life for more than a year now: it will take a long time for life to return to a way of being together that is life-giving and in which all can be comfortable.

"Please take to heart the key message to be kind to yourselves and each other in the hard ongoing work to support and help our church life to grow and develop as, God-willing, the pandemic eases."

The Advisory Group has revised its FAQs to take account of the reduced physical distancing requirement. The new edition is available at: <https://>

www.scotland.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Version-9-July-2021-14.07.21.pdf

Finally, the Advisory Group has heard evidence of poor take-up of the opportunity offered by drop-in vaccination centres. Churches are in a good position to be able to remind those congregational members who have not yet been vaccinated (or who have only received one dose) of the desirability of vaccination and the availability of the drop-in centres. A list of vaccination centres, from which you can identify such centres in your locality, is available at: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/invitations-and-appointments/vaccine-drop-in-clinics>

A Joyful Weekend of New Ministries

The weekend of 10/11 July was filled with joyful new beginnings for the Diocese of Brechin. On Saturday 10th July Rev Martin Allwood was licensed as the Priest in Charge of Holy Rood Carnoustie and Holy Trinity Monifieth. Two services were held, one in each of those distinct communities. On Sunday 11th July, Fr David Gordon was licensed as the Priest in Charge of St Salvador's Dundee.



Martin & Colleen Allwood with SEC and ecumenical guests in Carnoustie

Martin & Colleen with Diocesan and home reps in the prayer garden at Monifieth



Fr David (with wife Ann and daughter Beth) after the Mass to celebrate the new ministry at St Salvador's Dundee

St. Paul's Cathedral Eco-group

The St. Paul's Cathedral Eco-group reconvened in May and has been meeting regularly since then. We are planning to mark the period leading up to the November United Nations international climate conference (COP26) both in worship and in inviting members of the Congregation to join us in a short challenge aimed at reducing our personal carbon footprints. Groups or individuals in the diocese are very welcome to get in touch and share ideas - please email Julie the group convener at julie.curran7@btinternet.com

Prayers for Southern Africa

Please pray for the situation in eSwatini where civil unrest and violence continue. Communications with our Companion Diocese of Swaziland have become intermittent and reports from the country are very worrying. Please pray that their government and other agencies in Southern Africa will work for peace and to protect the vulnerable.

This week we have heard that South Africa itself also needs our prayers as violence and unrest also breaks out in that country neighbouring eSwatini.

'Recovery and Renewal' Fund

Guidance notes have been sent out to vestry secretaries and clergy for the SEC 'Recovery and Renewal Fund' – a fund discussed at General Synod last year to help charges grow and recover from the pandemic. This fund will allow small grants to be made from GSO, via Diocesan Offices, in various categories to assist charges in recovering from the pandemic and in renewal/development e.g. improving digital communications. Each Diocese will take applications and triage/integrate them into a diocesan proposal. Applications will be made this August for review and payment in the autumn.

To assist, the Diocese will be holding a Zoom 'drop-in' session on Sunday, 25th July at 3pm, to clarify the scheme and provide guidance for possible applications. Contact clergy/vestry secretary or the diocesan office them for details.

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.