

Closure of Churches

Following the instruction that the Prime Minister gave last night, there has been an inconsistent message from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the opening of churches. In the published guidelines, it states that “places of worship should remain open for solitary prayer.”

The instruction is very clear on the occasions when someone can leave home:

- Shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.*
- One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.*
- Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.*
- Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.*

None of these four specific reasons for leaving home concur with the visiting of a church for solitary prayer. In addition, keeping churches open could undermine the desire of the Government for people to remain at home, the very fact of them being open may draw people out of their homes, many of which would be the most vulnerable to infection.

*Prof. Jim McManus has spoken with a senior civil servant and it was quite clear they just had not thought through the issues of infection and security of churches and when he made these points clear, they were appalled and agreed they had a mistake. Keeping churches open sends an utterly inconsistent message and therefore they **must be closed** for the benefit of others and stopping infection.*