

Statement from Bishop David regards churches 'opening' 19 May 2020

In relation to the 'next stages', set out in the Government's document last week, which references church buildings, it must be noted that the early July reference is very much a national planning indicator and not a decision.

'The next step will also take place when the assessment of risk warrants further adjustments to the remaining measures. The Government's current planning assumption is that this step will be no earlier than 4 July, subject to the five tests justifying some or all of the measures, and further detailed scientific advice, provided closer to the time, on how far we can go.' HM Government May 2020

This week, national CofE teams are working hard to provide guidance to help local church leadership and all of us in the CofE Birmingham family, with our careful planning and move to the slow journey of recovering.

The decisions about the timing of all actions will depend on further Government announcements. Following key Government decisions, I will also issue CofE Birmingham accompanying guidance and advice with regards to the local effects of step by step recovery.

In circumstances requiring clarification, please continue to consult the Archdeacons or your Area Dean, prior to making any significant changes with regards to matters connected with the opening of your church buildings.

As we look to move out of national lockdown, let us go cautiously with continued deep consideration for all who will be affected by our actions. Be assured of my continued prayers.

+David Birmingham