

In the Consistory Court of the Diocese of St Albans

### **Directions: Public Notice and Covid-19**

1. With the current government direction to stay at home and with the closure of places of worship, it is impracticable to comply with the conditions for public notice under the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015.
2. In these unprecedented times of public health emergency, the Court will aim to function flexibly and pragmatically.
3. For so long as the present restrictions on movement and the opening of church buildings are in place, the Court will not require the display of public notice to be carried out under Part 6, nor the lodging of a certificate of publication under r 6.5.
4. However in all cases the Court will expect petitioners to take reasonable steps to bring the works to the attention of parishioners generally (and not just churchgoers) by means of websites, WhatsApp or other social media platforms, including details of the proposed works and a contact email address at the registry together with a date by which objections should be made (being no less than 28 days from the start of the notification). Petitioners should lodge a note with the Registry indicating the steps they have taken and, at the end of the 28 day period, confirm in writing that they are not aware of any potential objections which have been or might have been triggered by the notice given of the works, or providing details of any objections received, as appropriate.
5. The nature and extent of alternative forms of notice will depend on the circumstances of the case, the scale of works and how controversial the proposals are likely to be.
6. The Court will seek where possible to deal with all petitions, particularly those which are uncontroversial, either by dispensing with public notice under r 6.7(2), or by disregarding the non-compliance under r 20.2.
7. Where it seems to the Court that the interests of justice require that further notice or other publicity is required, case-specific directions will be given.

The Worshipful Lyndsey de Mestre QC  
Chancellor

27 March 2020