

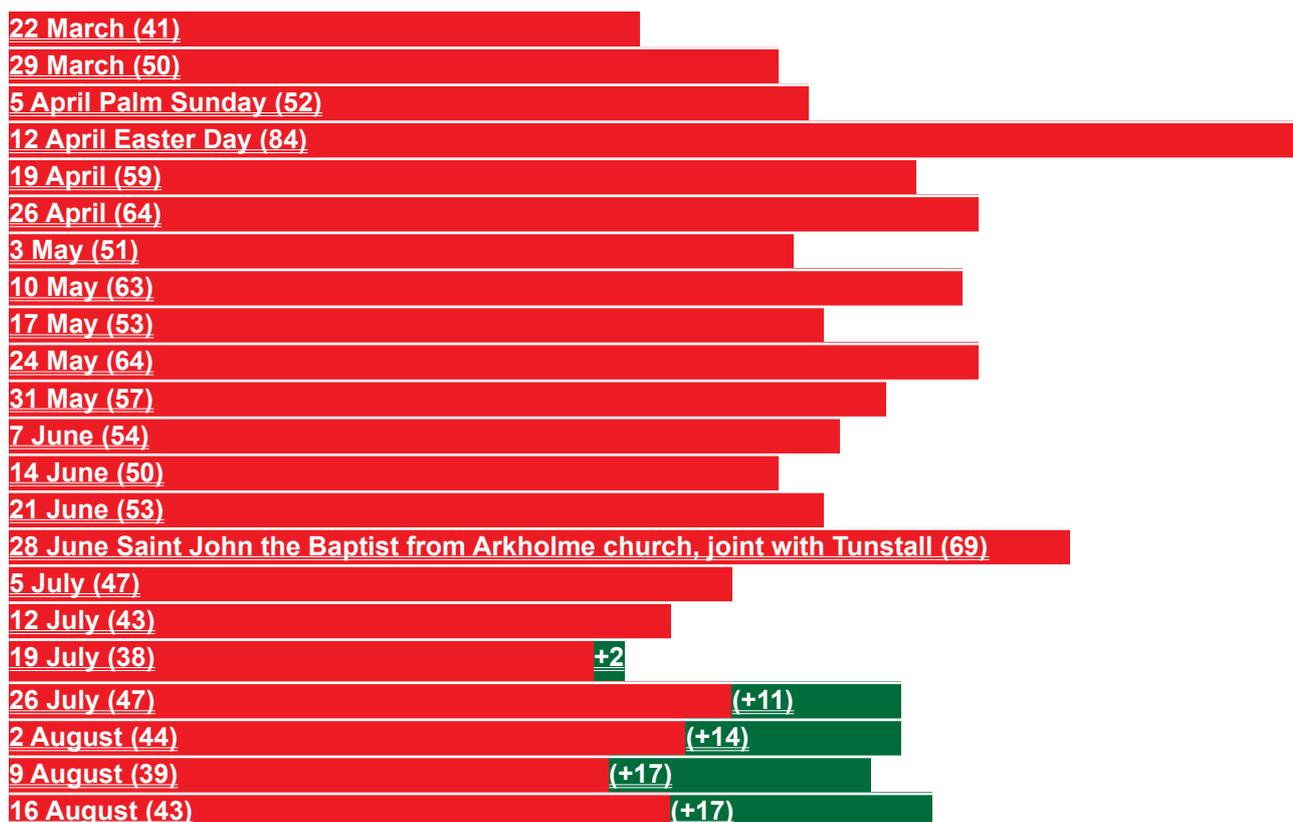
Easing the lockdown – fourth review, Monday 17 August

Reflections after four ‘hybrid’ / Stage Two Sundays (including one from Saint Mary’s garden)

Pre-recorded inserts are being included in the live broadcast *and* shown at the same time on a screen in church, creating a single ‘package’ of the same live and pre-recorded items, both for those in church, and for those at home; and allowing both those in church and those at home to take part in (by contributing to) that single ‘package’.

Four weeks into the easing of the lockdown, attendance continues to be split approximately 20% in church, and 80% online, with total numbers steady, at approximately 100% of pre-lockdown levels.

This is the complete record of attendance, online and in person, for our 22 online Sunday services to date:



Reflections on continuing Stage Two

The hybrid services are joyful occasions for those who gather in church, and continue to attract positive feedback from people participating online.

The pattern of attendance has been stable across the four weeks of hybrid services so far, and stable in its ratio of online attendance to in-person attendance. It looks as though this could be the ‘new normal’ for some time.

The gathering in the building has not been a gathering of the same people each Sunday; more than 20% of our regular attenders have attended at least one of the hybrid services in church.

A notable feature of the current pattern is the large attendance at the Wednesday service. Online participation in the Wednesday service is in single figures, but attendance in the building is regularly more than 10. These are higher figures than before lockdown.

The B4RN box has been ordered for Whittington church. It should be possible to run the ‘hybrid’ service from Whittington on the date set for the Whittington Patronal Festival United Benefice

Service, Sunday 27 September. This will provide an experience of Sunday worship in the northern parishes on which to reflect.

We are actively investigating the possibility of enabling live participation in the service from more than one church building, so that contributions to the 'package' can be made live from more than one building, as well as pre-recorded from home, with everyone in each building, and everyone at home, able to see all contributions. This may encourage attendance on both sides of the river. It will also create more seating. It may be possible to attempt this on Sunday 27 September.

General notes

Face coverings are now compulsory by law (with various exemptions).

Unless there are significant changes, the next review will be after the Whittington Patronal Festival.

Michael Hampson, 17 August 2020