

General Trustees
Church of Scotland

11th August 2026

Re: Temporary Closure of Hillside Parish Church, Montrose– Extensive Black moulds, dampness and the risk of airborne particles within the internal accessible areas.

To whom this may concern,

Following a review of the reported black mould, dampness and the identified risk of airborne spores and moulds-based particles directly within the interior of the church premises.

I am writing to formally advise that Hillside Parish Church, Montrose is recommended be placed under temporary closure with immediate effect, pending the identification of the root cause, removal and remedial works associated with the hazards and risks presented to the congregation, visitors and church service users by the reported moulds and dampness within the property .

This action is required because your Presbytery Buildings officer has identified hazards and risks which are considered to pose a significant threat to building users.

Black mould (*Stachybotrys chartarum*) poses serious health risks, including respiratory problems, allergic reactions, and immune system complications, especially for vulnerable populations and we have a specific duty to suitably consider our church user demographic and the likelihood of harm.

What is Black Mould?

Black mould is a type of fungus that thrives in **damp, dark, and poorly ventilated areas**, such as basements, bathrooms, behind walls, and ceilings with water damage .

It grows on **organic materials** like wood, drywall, paper, and insulation, producing **spores, mycotoxins, and microbial volatile organic compounds (mVOCs)** that can contaminate indoor air and cause health issues when inhaled.

For these reasons, temporary closure is considered a proportionate and necessary control measure until the following actions have been completed:

A competent contractor is employed to identify the source of water ingress, dampness and mould formations.

The necessary works have been completed to remediate the source which may include the treatment or removal and replacement of any wood, plasterboard, plastered finishes and any further areas of concern highlighted by your presbytery buildings officer.

Access to the premises during the closure period should be restricted to authorised personnel and competent contractors only.

Where any electrical installations including, wiring, lighting or other affected circuits, or relevant distribution systems are considered to be affected by any ongoing water ingress, heightened dampness or mould conditions these should be isolated by a competent person and checked by a qualified electrician prior to re-connection.

All access arrangements should be controlled to ensure that no unnecessary occupation or operational activity takes place until the safety measures have been successfully completed.

The premises may be considered for reopening once your presbytery has been satisfied with the completion of the required remedial works, and the kirk Session is satisfied that the statutory Health and Safety obligations have been met.

Please treat this matter as urgent and arrange for the necessary inspection, remedial works, and confirmation documentation to be completed at the earliest opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

Mo D'Souli Health, Safety, Risk and Compliance Manager

