

St James Church and Church Hall, Thrapston

Premises Hire Policy

Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the policy of the Parochial Church Council of St James Thrapston (hereafter the PCC), in relation to the letting of the church building and church hall.
- 1.2 A Premises Hire Agreement (booking form), forms part of this document. It must be completed in respect of every booking, other than St James' own events. The person signing the Premises Hire Agreement shall be known as "the Hirer" and shall accept responsibility for due observance of this policy. The Hirer must be over 21 years of age and a responsible adult.
- 1.3 St James Church is an active Christian community; therefore, the premises are primarily to be used for hosting the church's own events and activities. Priority will always be given to church use of the premises, but the PCC also look positively on allowing the premises to act as a resource for the local community.

Hire Restrictions

- 2.1 The PCC will not accept bookings for uses that, in the opinion of the Rector or PCC, are either in conflict with the values of the Christian faith, contrary to the purposes and beliefs of the Church of England or may cause offence to a significant number of Christians. These uses include, but are not limited to, yoga, tai-chi, Halloween parties.
- 2.2 No acts of worship, other than Christian worship, are permitted on the premises.

Charges and Administration

- 3.1 Premises are hired by the hour and will be charged at the rates set annually on the 1st January by the PCC. The church and/or hall will only be available for the agreed hire period. Time required for setting up and clearing away must therefore be included in the hire period.
- 3.2 All booking forms must be completed and returned to the Churchwarden. A booking remains provisional until the booking has been confirmed in writing.
- 3.3 If the Hirer wishes to cancel the booking, the PCC may, at its absolute discretion, refund any fees paid, but shall be under no obligation to do so.
- 3.4 The PCC also reserves the right to cancel the booking if exceptional unforeseen circumstances arise and without a reason being stated. In the event of the PCC cancelling the booking, all fees paid by the Hirer shall be refunded.

- 3.5 Payment for one-off or irregular hire of the premises must be received fourteen days in advance of each period of hire. For regular users of the hall, an arrangement for monthly payments will be agreed at the time of booking.
- 3.6 The PCC reserves the right to request references from a new user before agreeing a booking.

Responsibilities of the PCC

- 4.1 The PCC will be responsible for providing facilities as agreed in good working order throughout the hire period.
- 4.2 During cold weather the buildings will be heated and the PCC will endeavour to achieve adequate temperatures, however, no guarantee can be made that household temperatures will be maintained.

General conditions of Hire

- 5.1 The Hirer will be responsible for the overall care of the premises and conduct of guests during the hire period and must remain on the premises throughout the period of hire.
- 5.2 A strict no smoking policy (including e-cigarettes) applies to all areas of the premises.
- 5.3 A copy of any advertising material must be submitted to the Rector or Churchwarden prior to display.
- 5.4 Whilst notice boards may be used for temporary display during events, nothing may be stuck to the walls, floors or ceilings.
- 5.5 The buildings are not licensed for the sale of alcohol. Therefore, whilst alcohol can be consumed in the premises if supervised and in moderation, it cannot be sold or included in the price of any ticket but only given for free to those of eligible age.
- 5.6 No gambling, lottery or sweepstake is permitted on the premises.
- 5.7 Booking for regular activities can be made but there is limited storage space available in the hall so resources and equipment must be removed at the end of each session unless an agreement has been reached with the Rector and PCC.
- 5.8 All events and activities are to finish by 10.30pm and the premises must be vacated entirely by 11.00pm.
- 5.9 All rubbish must be removed from the premises at the end of each hire and taken away by the Hirer. Church bins must not be used.
- 5.10 No animals may be brought into the premises without permission from the Rector or Churchwarden, with the exception of guide dogs. No animals are allowed in the kitchen under any circumstances.
- 5.11 The church hall contains a single male toilet and a single female toilet with disabled access fittings. These are available to all hall and church hire users.
- 5.12 There is no caretaker for the hall, so the Hirer must ensure that the floor, toilets and kitchen are clean and tidy before leaving.
- 5.13 Any breakages or damage caused by the hirer, or their guests, must be reported immediately in writing and may be subject to repair or replacement charges. The hirer will be held responsible for these charges.

- 5.14 Other than for one-off private events, such as children's parties etc. It is the responsibility of the Hirer to have in place whatever insurance they require to cover their liabilities (including Public Liability Insurance). Insurance effective by the PCC does not extend to a Hirer's liabilities. Proof of Public Liability Insurance will be required before a booking is confirmed.
- 5.15 The Hirer must comply with any legal requirement concerning music, singing and dancing licences, theatre licences and copyright. The Hirer shall be fully responsible for obtaining any such licences or any other permission required.

Catering and Equipment

- 6.1 The servery in the church and the kitchen in the hall can be made available for hirers to serve light refreshments. Requirement of these facilities must be made clear when booking. There is a fridge in both spaces, for use during the hire period. Hirers must bring their own tea/coffee/milk, tea towels and any other supplies, but church crockery and cutlery can be used on the condition that it is properly washed, dried and returned to storage. The Hirer must provide their own disposable cups or glasses.
- 6.2 The Hirer is responsible for the safe storage, handling and serving of food brought onto the premises. Regular Hirers who serve food must demonstrate compliance with relevant food safety and hygiene regulations.
- 6.3 Events with specific seating requirements must be agreed at the time of booking. The Hirer is responsible for setting up their own seating arrangements as well as returning chairs to their original position at the end of each hire.
- 6.4 Use of church folding tables must be agreed at the time of booking. All tables must be cleaned and returned to the storage trolley at the end of each hire.
- 6.5 Use of PCC owned equipment, such as the data projector, screen, public announcement system, sound-desk, audio loop, piano or organ must be agreed at the time of booking and may be subject to additional charges. The church organ and grand piano, in the church building are tuned regularly, but if additional tuning is required this should be indicated on the booking form and the Hirer will be responsible for the tuning fee.

Access and security

- 7.1 If keys are provided for the period of hire, then they must be kept safe at all times and returned to the Rector, Churchwarden or Booking Secretary at the end of the hire period. The keys shall not be copied nor given or lent to any third party. If keys are provided, it is the Hirer's responsibility to ensure that all facilities are in order upon opening up and that all fire doors and windows are closed, all doors locked and all lights and heaters switched off at the end of the hire period. The premises must not be left open and unattended by the Hirer during the period of the booking.
- 7.2 Regular users of the hall may be issued with keys but should only access the hall during their agreed times of hire. Opening and locking of the church building will be carried out by the Rector, a Churchwarden or member of the PCC. No keys will be issued for the church.
- 7.3 The right is reserved for a representative of the PCC or their appointed officer to enter any part of the building at any time.

Safety and Safeguarding

- 8.1 Whilst the PCC will take steps to ensure the premises are safe to use, it is the responsibility of the Hirer to conduct any required risk assessments and ensure the safe conduct of their activity during the period of hire.
- 8.2 First Aid boxes are provided for use in the following locations:
Church Hall - Wall mounted in the Church Hall kitchen.
Church Building - Wall mounted in the vestry
Any accident involving personal injury must be reported to the Church Warden or Booking Secretary within 24 hours, to be recorded in the Accident Book located in the Church Vestry or Church Hall Kitchen.
- 8.3 The Hirer must ensure that evacuation procedures are announced at the beginning of an event and that all exits, emergency exits and fire appliances are free from obstruction and available for use at all times during the period of hire. The Hirer is also responsible for calling the Fire Brigade to any outbreak of fire however slight and being able to account for all participants in the event of evacuation. Those evacuating the building should muster in the Bullring in order to be accounted for but must stay clear of any fire tender access. Events exceeding 100 people in the church building are to have door stewards to assist with evacuation, should the need arise.
- 8.4 For safety, the number of people within the buildings must not exceed:
Church Hall - 100 standing, 75 seated or 60 seated with tables
Church - 150 people
- 8.5 The Hirer is responsible for ensuring that all electrical appliances brought in for use in the buildings are in good working order and used in a safe manner.
- 8.6 Please note there is no landline telephone or Wi-Fi available in either the church or the hall. Therefore all telecommunications requirements, including those that might be needed for emergencies, must be provided by the Hirer.
- 8.7 The hirer is responsible for ensuring that all children and young people (under the age of 16) as well as vulnerable adults, are given safe and adequate supervision.
- 8.8 Regular Hirers must ensure that they have in place suitable safeguarding policies, procedures and training. Evidence of this will be required when booking. One-off hirers who do not have their own appropriate safeguarding policies must agree to abide by the policies of St James Thrapston. The Hirer is responsible for requesting a copy of this policy if required and complying with it.

Policy Agreed by the PCC of St James Thrapston at their meeting on 5th May 2021

