

Church Halls Lettings Policy, Procedure and Publications

For St Luke's Church, 46 Cell Barnes Lane, St Albans AL1 5QJ

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Signed:

Role:

Date:

Preface

This document brings together the various documents associated with the contractual arrangements with outside hall users. Its main purpose is to define the 'Policy' for the letting of the meeting rooms and halls.

Lettings Manager

Church Administrator

Emergency Contact

Church Caretaker

Contact details made available to all hall users (e.g. on a notice board)

Keys

An outside group can become keyholders when they make regular bookings of at least once a month, contact details of all keyholders to be held by the Churchwardens and/or Lettings Manager. Generally one key per group is recommended with some exceptions e.g. Little Stars. Church groups who wish to become keyholders need to gain permission from the Churchwarden/s.

Storage

Storage is allocated to groups by exception only – this will allow better management of storage space.

1 Policy

1.1 Statement

St Luke's Church meeting rooms & halls are used for Christian worship and activities, and for secular community-based activities. We use the facilities to help fulfil our vision by

- Living by God's Grace in our Christian Community
- Sharing God's Grace in God's World.

Through this, our vision for St Luke's and the community will be "Bringing God's Grace to Life".

1.2 Introduction

In fulfilling our statement, we endeavour to be diligent and professional in ensuring that the highest standards of safety, and care are maintained for all users of the church meeting rooms & halls. This document provides information to all parties on roles and responsibilities.

The remainder of this document consists of Appendices covering the various documents required e.g. booking forms. An explanation and the target audience prefix each Appendix.

2 Vetting Requests

This provides practical guidelines to the 'Lettings Manager' for vetting requests and should be considered in addition to the 'General Conditions of Hire'.

- 2.1 Is the proposed event suitable in nature/content and numbers attending to be held in the hall/church building?

Nothing shall be done on the premises in contravention of the law: especially laws relating to Alcohol, Drugs, Betting, Gambling or Lotteries and the hirer shall ensure that the requirements of the relevant legislation are strictly observed. In particular gambling for financial gain is not allowed.

- 2.2 Is the hall definitely available on the requested date and not already booked or required for church use – be aware that for example the lower hall is used when the church is being decorated for Christmas, Harvest, Easter and other special occasions.
- 2.3 Is someone from St Luke's available to unlock the hall at the requested time and show the hirers around making them aware of the fire exits, cloakrooms, kitchen facilities, location of tables and cleaning materials?
- 2.4 Is someone from St Luke's available to return before the hirers leave to check that the floors are clean, the kitchen is clean and tidy, all windows are shut, all tables have been cleaned, chairs have been correctly stacked, toilets have been flushed and taps and lights are turned off before the hirers leave and the building is locked?
- 2.5 The Church 'Worship Area' is available for hire only under exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Vicar and Churchwardens. A description of the nature of the event and a detailed plan for protection of the building and its contents, and for returning any chairs or other items that have been moved to their original positions, will be required.

Additional Notes for Friday, Saturday and Sunday Bookings

Bookings are **not** taken from non-members for parties or other events that are planned to finish **after 7pm on Friday or Saturday evenings**. Sunday bookings are only taken from church members or baptism parties.

Bookings by non-members for Fridays and Saturdays (daytime) will only ever be accepted if someone (eg vicar, caretaker or churchwarden) is available to open the hall and lock up afterwards; keys will not be loaned to the person booking the hall (the 'booker'). In addition to the booking fee, a cash deposit of £60 may be required before the event (decided at the Letting Manager's discretion). It will be returned at a later date if the hall has been left clean and tidy in accordance with the terms of the booking. A checklist will be provided to the person booking the hall (in the Guidance Notes) specifying how the hall should be left; failure to comply with the checklist or a late finish will result in forfeit of part or all of the deposit.

3 Pricing Policy

The rates are agreed by PCC from time to time against the pricing structure below. This structure follows the principles that:

- the halls are to be completely self-financing. Total income from use of the church halls should match that of day-to-day running costs plus a full maintenance program covering the decoration and replacement of kitchens, toilets & carpets
- the Fee Structure must be transparent and easy to administer
- to have the ability to support groups we have sympathy with but charge higher rates for those with the ability to pay or who have no link to the church/area.

3.1 The Rate Structure

There are two published bands:

- "**Standard**" rate for one-off bookings
- "**Regular**" bookings - only applicable to private/non-profit-making groups which have at least 10 bookings a year

Pricing shown in Appendix A.

3.2 Subsidised Funding

There may be certain groups we want to support as they are either affiliated with the church (uniform groups) or offer a valuable link with the local community and/or outreach opportunity. Because of this, these rates can be **subsidised**, reducing the fee as follows:

- "**Community**" rate applicable where the hall user receives a reduction from the Standard rate
- "**Subsidised**" rate where the hall user received a reduction from the Regular rate (or in exceptional circumstances, from the Subsidised rate).

These rates will not be publicised and only available after the suitability of a group to receive this reduced rate was decided upon by the Standing Committee. A completed questionnaire would be asked of any enquirer expressing concern about the published rates who appears to be a group we might want to subsidise.

Pricing shown in Appendix A. The Subsidy Questionnaire is shown in Appendix B.

4 Cancellation

We reserve the right to cancel any booking, for which we will give as much notice as possible. People/groups who wish to cancel a booking can do so up to the day before the booking, without any charges incurred. The Lettings Manager needs to be informed of any cancellations prior to the booking otherwise the booking will still be charged for.

5 Guidance Notes to Hirers

To be issued to each hirer. See Appendix C.

6 General Conditions of Hire

To be issued to each hirer. See Appendix D.

Appendix A Hall Booking Rates

The Rate Structure

There are two published bands:

- "Standard" rate for one-off bookings.
- "Regular / Community" rate for private/non-profit-making groups which have at least 10 bookings a year, and/or groups who are either affiliated with the church or offer a valuable link between the church and local community, regardless of the quantity of bookings they make each year

There is also the unpublished "Subsidised" rate which is at the discretion of the Standing Committee to offer to groups we want to support as they are either affiliated with the church (uniform groups) or offer a valuable link with the local community and/or outreach opportunity.

Rates as agreed by PCC from time to time.

Appendix B - Subsidy Questionnaire

Name of Organisation (if applicable):

(If affiliated to any association please give details)

Full name:

(Person responsible for the booking and hiring)

Address:

Postcode:

Contact information - Home tel:

(Please give what will be helpful for you)

Mobile:

Email:

Work tel:

Purpose of hire

(Organisations please list full range of activities planned)

Date(s) required

Start time*:

End time*:

In what way does the group offer a service which is sympathetic to the Vision of St Luke's Church?

Where does the group draw members/participants from (what proportion within the parish?)

What is the groups main aim?

What do participants contribute to the groups running costs?

What other costs do the group incur at each meeting?

What other sources of funding have/are the group considering?

What level of support are you requesting?

For what period of time do you need help?

Does the group have the following in place?

- Public Liability Insurance (provide copy)
- Child Protection Policy (provide copy)

Provide a written statement explaining how the group might benefit from any financial subsidy towards hall hire costs.

Appendix C

Guidance notes for Hirers of the Church Premises

Thank you for hiring our church premises. We are glad to be able to be of service to you. These guidance notes are provided to help ensure that your use of the premises goes smoothly, safely and securely both for you and for other users.

Please read these notes alongside the General Conditions of Hire that are provided with the booking application or confirmation.

Before you arrive

- Make sure that the booking time provides sufficient time for setting up and clearing away. If you plan to have an entertainer, disco or similar, they usually need a good deal of time to set up.
- Make sure that you are fully aware of the extent or limit of the catering facilities available in the kitchens. Make sure you bring any additional items you may require.
- Check for whatever access you need to electrical power points and that you have sufficient cables or extensions.

During the Hire of the premises

- Make sure that you are fully aware of the emergency exits, fire extinguisher points, access to telephones/mobiles etc in case of emergency;
- Make sure that you have considered any safety and fire risks;
- Make sure that there is proper adult supervision of children at all times while on the premises;

Before vacating the premises

Please check that :-

- ✓ **All taps, lights and cookers are off**
- ✓ **Toilets are flushed**
- ✓ **Windows are shut**
- ✓ **Tables are wiped clean**
- ✓ **Chairs and tables have been returned**
Please lift (and not drag) so as to preserve the flooring
- ✓ **Floors are clean and vacuumed (cleaner to be found in the boiler cupboard)**
- ✓ **The kitchen is clean and tidy and that anything used is washed, dried and put away**

Finally...

It is very helpful if each group leaves the premises clean and ready for the next user, as we do not currently employ a caretaker. If the hall is not left in a good condition for the next user we may make an additional charge, so please leave the premises as you would like to find them, taking your rubbish away with you.

If you have any problems or accidents while hiring the premises, please be sure to contact the Lettings Manager. We will be glad to help in any way we can.

Thank you very much.

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF HIRE

Effective 2025

1 – USE - The building and facilities are only to be used for the purpose as stated in the booking form, and within the date and times given. Any variations of these are to be agreed in advance. In making a booking the hirer accepts the facilities are fit for purpose. The hirer cannot sub-hire the hall(s) to another party. In making a booking, you acknowledge that no tenancy is intended to be created between the PCC and you and no relationship of landlord and tenant exists between us.

2 – SAFETY - You are obliged to familiarise yourself and all members of your party with the fire exit doors and posted evacuation procedures. These doors are clearly marked and illuminated, and must be kept clear of any furniture, material etc which could hinder orderly evacuation of the buildings. All external and internal doors must be kept clear and not be locked. In the event of a fire, the alarm will sound, please evacuate the building immediately in an orderly fashion, and assemble in the Vicarage garden, where you should check that everybody is present.

All accidents must be reported to the Lettings Manager so they can be entered in the Accident Logbook. Any faulty items of equipment, furniture, lighting or other facilities are to be reported to the Lettings Manager as soon as possible.

3 – INSURANCE - You must ensure the building is not damaged or defaced in any way during period of hire. It is your obligation to provide insurance cover against damage or loss to any equipment you may bring with you. Similarly you must provide insurance cover against any accident or harm caused to you, any member of your party or third party as a direct consequence of the activities for which you have hired the buildings/facilities. The Hirer (you) shall indemnify the PCC throughout the Hire Period against all losses arising directly or indirectly out of any act, omission or negligence of the Hirer or any persons at the Premises expressly or impliedly with their authority or the exercise or purported exercise of the rights granted to the Hirer by this agreement or any breach or non-observance by the Hirer of the obligations, conditions or other provisions of this agreement.

4 – COMPLIANCES - It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with all conditions and regulations by the Fire Authority, Local Authority, the Local Magistrate's court or otherwise, particularly for events which include dancing, music, stage plays or similar. Food prepared or served must comply with food health and hygiene legislation and regulations.

5 – SECURITY - The building is not staffed and therefore it is up to the hirer to be responsible for the security of those people for whom they have hired the facilities. The hirer is responsible for ensuring they are familiar with the security facilities. The PCC will arrange for any training in the use of the security facilities upon request or at time of hire.

6 – RESTRICTIONS

- ☐ Consumption of alcohol is only allowed with the expressed permission of the Church Wardens, in which case you must obtain any necessary licences under the Licensing Act 2003.
- ☐ Nothing shall be done on the premises in contravention of the law (especially laws relating to Alcohol, Drugs, Betting, Gambling or Lotteries) and the hirer shall ensure that the requirements of the relevant legislation are strictly observed. In particular gambling for personal financial gain is not allowed.
- ☐ Any advertising material that is to be distributed or displayed publicly should be shown to the Lettings Manager before being published/distributed.
- ☐ All electrical equipment brought in must comply with current legislation and be set up by a competent person who will be responsible for its use.
- ☐ No fixings (e.g. tacks, adhesive ...) to the building fabric are allowed except by prior permission of the Lettings Manager.
- ☐ No flames, or dangerous/inflammable things shall be brought or used in any part of the building.
- ☐ No animals (including birds) except well behaved dogs and guide dogs are allowed into the Premises, other than for a special event agreed to by the PCC.
- ☐ Nothing contrary to the beliefs and tenets of the Church of England
- ☐ Friday evening, Saturday evening and Sunday bookings are not taken except from electoral roll members or baptism families.

7 – CANCELLATION - We reserve the right to cancel any booking, for which we will give as much notice as possible. People/groups who wish to cancel a booking can do so up to the day before the booking without any charges incurred. The Lettings Manager needs to be informed of any cancellations prior to the booking otherwise the booking will still be charged for.

8 – SUPERVISION - You should be present for the period of hire, and supervise the behaviour of all persons using the premises. Should you require the building for use by children under the age of 18 years, it is your responsibility to ensure that there is appropriate and qualified supervision. Adult supervision should be in the ratios 1 adult to 3 children for 0 - 2's, 1 to 4 for 3's, 1 to 8 for 4's - 8's, 1 to 10 for 9's - 18's. A minimum of 2 adults is always required. At least 1 male and 1 female person should be present for mixed groups.

9 – HOUSEKEEPING - It is your responsibility to ensure that the buildings and facilities are left clean and tidy, and as they are found. Floors should be clean (vacuum cleaners provided), toilets flushed, tables wiped, chairs returned to where they were. Lights, taps, kitchen equipment used by the hirer(s) must be turned off and all windows closed before leaving.

Damage / breakages must be reported, for which St Luke's Church reserves the right to charge.

It is your responsibility to take any litter / rubbish away with you.

The finishing time shown on the authorised booking form must be strictly observed and any extra work found to be subsequently necessary by St Luke's Church e.g. for extra cleaning or locking up will incur further charges at the booking hourly rate. The Hirer shall ensure that the minimum of noise is made on arrival and departure.

10 – CHARGES - Our charges are banded according to use. Please complete the booking request form. For guideline pricing, please contact the Lettings Manager, Gill Kaser, on 01727 865399. Payment becomes due 14 days before hire by cash or cheque (payable to St. Luke's PCC) for single bookings or by return of post when an invoice is issued for regular bookings. When a cash deposit is taken, it will only be returned during office hours. A deposit will not be returned if the premises are not vacated by the agreed time or not left clean and tidy as they were found (see Housekeeping above).

Please send payments to: The Church Administrator, St Luke's Church, 46 Cell Barnes Lane, St Albans, Herts AL1 5QJ. A cash deposit may be required at the Lettings Manager's discretion with the booking application form