

All Souls Church Premises: Policy for External Use

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1. Introduction	1
2. Church Mission and Purpose	2
3. Types of Permitted Use	2
4. Hire Restrictions	3
5. Application Process and Documentation	4
6. Safeguarding Requirements	4
7. Health, Safety and Security	4
8. Financial Terms	5
9. Legal Compliance	5
10. Monitoring and Review	5
11. Appeals Process	6

1. Introduction

1.1 The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of All Souls, Langham Place, is responsible for the hiring of church premises, including All Souls Church building, associated halls, St Paul's Robert Adam Street, St Peter's Vere Street, and other facilities within the parish estate.

1.2 This document sets out the policy of the PCC for hiring these premises, in whole or in part. The application form will specify the premises being hired.

1.3 There are standard Terms and Conditions of Hire that apply to all premises. Prospective hirers are required to complete and sign an application form, acknowledging acceptance of the Terms and Conditions. The application and Terms and Conditions together form the Hire Agreement.

1.4 The Events and Venue Hire Coordinator, in consultation with the Ministry Operations Manager, is authorised to make operational decisions regarding venue hire on behalf of the PCC, including processing applications, scheduling, and day-to-day management of bookings.

1.5 The Rector has final authority over decisions regarding which groups or activities may or may not use church premises, in accordance with Canon Law and the church's charitable purposes.

1.6 "The Hirer" must be a responsible adult and/or an organisation of good repute and must accept full responsibility for complying with the Hire Agreement.

2. Church Mission and Purpose

2.1 All Souls is committed to being "All for Jesus" - a Gospel-centred, values-driven church serving those who worship here, people who live and work in the parish, and seeking to introduce Jesus to those who don't know him yet.

2.2 The PCC recognises that church premises should primarily be used for activities that directly or indirectly further the church's charitable purposes of advancing the Christian faith.

2.3 The PCC also recognises that appropriate use of church premises for community activities and commercial hire can serve the church's mission by building bridges with the local community and generating income to support ministry.

3. Types of Permitted Use

3.1 Direct Furtherance of Charitable Purposes Activities that directly advance the Christian faith, including:

- Christian worship, teaching, and discipleship activities
- Evangelistic events and outreach ministries
- Activities by other Christian organisations with compatible beliefs and values
- Church-led community ministries (e.g., food banks, night shelters, drop-in centres for debt counselling, etc.)

3.2 Indirect Furtherance of Charitable Purposes Commercial hire to generate income for the church, provided:

- The activity does not conflict with the church's doctrinal position or values
- Full market rates are charged
- Proper consideration is given to tax and VAT implications
- The activity does not undermine the church's witness or mission

The information in this document is correct as of 20/04/2026.

For more information, contact pccsecretary@allsouls.org



4. Hire Restrictions

4.1 Doctrinal Grounds The PCC reserves the right to refuse requests for hire by groups or for activities which, in the opinion of the Rector, are contrary to the purposes, beliefs, or doctrinal position of All Souls or the Church of England as expressed in our statements of faith.

4.2 All Souls reserves the right to decline bookings for activities which, in its opinion, may cause offence on the grounds of religion or belief, to a significant number of the church's members or the wider Christian community.

4.3 Specific Restrictions

- Hiring for non-Christian ritual, worship, or spiritual activities is not permitted.
- Activities explicitly promoting views on marriage, sexuality, or other ethical issues contrary to the church's historical position will not be permitted
- Activities promoting other religions or belief systems that actively contradict Christian teaching will not be permitted
- No illegal activities or activities that would bring the church into disrepute
- Events or activities that promote, feature, or normalise nudity, sexually explicit imagery, or gambling will not be permitted.
- Events or activities that include smoking or alcohol consumption may be permitted where these are not the primary focus, but are incidental to the main purpose of the event or presented within the context of artistic expression.
- Events that encourage or promote extreme or polarising positions on political or public policy issues, or that are likely to create division within the church community or wider public, will not be permitted.

4.4 Decision-Making Process

- Initial enquiries are processed by the Events & Venue Hire Coordinator.
- Any booking requests that may involve doctrinal, ethical, or reputational considerations must be referred to the Director of Operations and Rector for decision
- The Rector may consult with the senior ministry team as appropriate
- All decisions will be documented with a clear rationale

4.5 Church Use Priority. Church activities will always take priority over external bookings. Reasonable efforts will be made not to cancel confirmed external bookings, but the church reserves the right to do so for essential ministry purposes.

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4.6 In respect of the use of our consecrated buildings, it may, additionally, be necessary, prior to any final decision, for specific diocesan guidance as to the use of buildings to be considered, the views of the Archdeacon to be sought and, in certain cases, the permission of a faculty to be applied for from the Diocesan Chancellor.

5. Application Process and Documentation

5.1 Clear Hiring Policy and promotional materials will clearly state the church's position that:

- Decisions are made based on the church's charitable purposes and doctrinal beliefs
- The church exercises its rights under charity law and Equality Act exemptions
- Applications may be declined based on the nature of the proposed activity rather than the personal characteristics of applicants

5.2 Required Documentation All hirers must provide:

- Completed booking form with full details of the proposed activity
- Acceptance of Terms and Conditions
- Safeguarding documentation where appropriate
- Any required licences or permits

5.3 Consistency The same hiring policy and decision-making process applies to all church premises to ensure consistent treatment of applications and legal protection under Equality Act exemptions.

6. Safeguarding Requirements

6.1 All hirers must comply with the church's Safeguarding Policy as set out in the booking documentation.

6.2 Any activities involving children or vulnerable adults require additional safeguarding checks and documentation.

6.3 Enhanced DBS checks may be required for activities involving unsupervised access to minors.

7. Health, Safety and Security

7.1 Event Management

- Hirers are responsible for ensuring their activities are conducted safely
- Emergency procedures and fire evacuation plans must be followed

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- First aid provision is the hirer's responsibility unless otherwise specifically arranged. First-aid equipment is not provided, except for access to a defibrillator.

7.2 Building Standards

- All activities must comply with building capacity limits and health and safety regulations
- No modifications to the building fabric without express permission
- Kitchen use requires specific approval and may incur additional charges

8. Financial Terms

8.1 Pricing

- Commercial rates will be charged for all bookings that do not directly further the church's charitable purposes
- Discounted or free use may be offered for activities that directly advance the church's mission
- All pricing decisions rest with the Ministry Operations Manager in consultation with the Director of Operations.

9. Legal Compliance

9.1 Equality Act 2010 The church operates within the exemptions provided under Schedule 23 of the Equality Act 2010 for religious organisations, making decisions based on the church's purposes and doctrines rather than the personal characteristics of potential hirers.

9.2 Charity Law. All use of church premises must be within the scope of the church's charitable purposes, either directly furthering those purposes or generating income to support them.

9.3 Other legal requirements: Hirers must adhere to all relevant legislation, including licensing, data protection, and health and safety regulations, and, where applicable, diocesan guidance.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the PCC to ensure it remains fit for purpose and legally compliant.

10.2 All decisions made under this policy will be documented to demonstrate consistent application and appropriate decision-making.

10.3 Any legal challenges or significant issues will be reviewed with appropriate legal counsel.

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11. Appeals Process

11.1 Any applicant who believes their booking has been unfairly declined may request a review of the decision through the Ministry Operations Manager.

11.2 The Rector's decision on matters of doctrine and church policy is final in line with Canon Law.

This policy operates in conjunction with the church's Safeguarding Policy and other relevant church policies.

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Page 6 of 6

