

St Matthew's Church

Lettings Policy

September 2007

Background

Facilities letting is a valuable resource to the mission of St Matthew's Church. It provides a means for Christian worship, witness and celebration, a source of income, and allows St Matthew's an important means to fulfil its role as a valued part of the community.

Any policy also needs to be consistent with current regulations relating to the prevention of discrimination in the provision of goods and services.

St Matthew's Church and Parish Centre exist in a very dense built environment and the St Matthews Parish Church Council place a very high priority on maintaining excellent community relations, especially with the immediate neighbours.

There is a need for a lettings policy to ensure that the facilities are managed within the law but also to fulfil the mission of St Matthew's Church and the need to be a good neighbour.

Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for staff to make decisions on lettings or refer decisions to a higher level if appropriate.

This policy relates to the St Matthew's Parish Centre and garden and to the St Matthew's Church building and garden.

Definitions

Members. Members are people on the electoral role of St Matthew's Church and who regularly attend Christian Worship at St Matthew's or St Luke's.

Parish The geographical boundaries of St Matthew's with St Luke's.

Parishioners Parishioners are people living within the Parish boundaries of St Matthew's Church with St Luke's.

District Church Council (DCC) and Parish Church Council (PCC).

The bodies that have legal responsibility for St Matthew's church and the St Matthew's Parish Centre.

Policy

1. **St Matthew's Church** and Church Garden (Garden to the south of the Church)
 - St Matthew's Church is a place of Christian worship for the people of the Parish. It is the policy of the PCC not to let St Matthew's church. The church may occasionally be made available for the purposes of Christian worship, teaching, celebration within the tenets of the Church of England's 39 articles.
 - When the church is offered to other organisations for their use, they may make a donation to cover costs but this is not a requirement of usage.
 - Decisions on making the Church available to other organisations, or groups will be made by the Parish Priest in Charge.
2. **St Matthew's Parish Centre** and Parish Centre Garden (at the rear of the Parish Centre)
 - The Parish Centre is available for public hire.
 - In accepting a booking, no discrimination will be made based on sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or religion (except when the event is promoting a faith other than the Christian faith).

- Activities for which the DCC accept responsibility (i.e. Church activities) will always have first call on the facilities. When there is excess capacity, Members will have first call on the facilities, then Parishioners and then people, groups or organisations from outside the Parish.
 - a. Members who hire the facilities must finish by 10.30pm (apart from clearing and cleaning activity). Members may only serve alcoholic drinks (free of charge) if they obtain the prior permission of the Centre Management. No alcohol is to be served to those aged under 18. Alcoholic drinks must not be sold.
 - b. Parishioners and other groups who hire the facilities must finish by 10.00pm (apart from clearing and cleaning activity). Alcoholic drinks must not be served.
 - c. All hirers must leave the facilities clean and tidy unless a prior arrangement is made for cleaning with the centre management.
- St Matthew's staff have the right to refuse a booking if in their reasonable opinion the event:
 - a. Is likely to disrupt the neighbours. In line with the requirement to be good neighbours, all hirers must be sensitive to the needs and wishes of those living nearby especially regarding the level of noise. It is very important for community relations that NO complaints are made either formally or informally.
 - b. Is illegal or promoting an activity that is illegal.
 - c. Is likely to bring the good name of St. Matthew's Church into disrepute.
 - d. Will be promoting faiths other than the Christian faith¹.
 - e. Will create demands upon the staff team that are beyond their contractual obligations.
- In the event of a dispute over a booking, the booking decision may be referred to the DCC executive (Vicar, Church Warden and Treasurer) whose decision will be final.
- permission from St Matthew's is required for the use of photography and/or inviting members of the press in a professional capacity. Permission will not be unnecessarily withheld.

Schedule of booking fees

ROOM				
	Per hour £	4 hour event £	Full Day £	Deposit
Meeting room/gallery	12	36	72	
Hall - day	14	42	110	20
Hall - evening	16	48		20
Kitchen	6	18	30	20
Church (donation suggested)	25	75	200	50

¹ The exception applies to an organisation and to persons acting on behalf of or under the auspices of an organisation which has any of the following purposes:

- practice, advance or teach the practice or principles of any religion.
- enable persons of the religion or belief to receive any benefit or engage in any activity, within the framework of the religion or belief.

This will cover a range of formal and informal groups.