



St Barnabas Church

Premises Letting Policy

1. Policy Statement

St Barnabas Swanland is committed to making its premises available for the benefit of the wider community. This policy outlines the principles, procedures, and conditions under which the Church premises may be hired or used by external individuals and organisations. Our aim is to balance community benefit with the need to protect the church's mission, values, property, and the safety and well-being of all users, particularly children and vulnerable adults.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear, transparent, and consistent framework for the letting of St Barnabas Church premises.
- Ensure that the use of premises aligns with the St Barnabas Church's charitable objects, mission, and values.
- Protect St Barnabas Church's property and financial interests.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements, including those related to safeguarding, health and safety, licensing, and equality.
- Promote good relationships with hirers and the wider community.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the hire or use of all St Barnabas Church premises, including but not limited to:

- Church Hall
- Lounge
- Meeting Room
- Kitchen facilities
- *(Note: The Church building ("Chapel") itself is generally reserved for worship and church-related activities. Any exceptional non-worship use of the Church building will require specific approval from the Vicar and Churchwardens, and potentially the PCC (Parochial Church Council), with strict conditions applied.)*

This policy applies to all individuals, groups, and organisations seeking to hire or use St Barnabas Church premises.



4. Principles of Letting

- **Support for Mission and Community:** Priority will be given to activities that support St Barnabas Church's mission, enhance community well-being, and offer social or educational benefit to the local area.
- **Compatibility:** The proposed use of the premises must be compatible with the Christian faith and St Barnabas Church's values. Activities that are contrary to, or in conflict with, the Christian faith or the doctrines of the Church of England will not be permitted.
- **Non-Discrimination (General):** St Barnabas Church will not unreasonably discriminate against any individual or group seeking to hire its premises on the grounds of protected characteristics, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- **Safeguarding:** The safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults are paramount. All hirers running activities involving children or vulnerable adults must demonstrate they have appropriate safeguarding policies (except for "one-off" children's parties) and procedures in place.
- **Legal Compliance:** All lettings will comply with relevant UK legislation, including but not limited to Health & Safety regulations, Licensing laws, Data Protection (GDPR), and Charity Commission guidance.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Lettings should contribute to the upkeep and maintenance of the premises and support St Barnabas Church's charitable activities, balancing affordability with sustainability.
- **Respect for Neighbours:** Hirers must ensure their activities do not cause undue disturbance or nuisance to local residents. For this reason, bookings will end no later than 9.30 pm, and the premises must be vacated at this time.

5. Permitted Uses (Examples)

With regard to the Principles of Letting (above), St Barnabas Church generally welcomes enquiries for the use of its premises for:

- Community group meetings and activities (e.g., Scouts, Guides, local clubs)
- Educational classes (e.g., language classes, art classes, exercise groups)
- Children's parties (non-alcohol related)
- Charity events and fundraising activities
- Rehearsals for amateur dramatics or music groups
- Community gatherings and events (e.g., coffee mornings, jumble sales)
- Appropriate private family functions (e.g., day-time parties, wedding receptions, family events following baptisms and funerals).
- Commercial and Business use, as long as they comply with the principles of letting (above).



6. Prohibited Uses

The following uses of St Barnabas Church premises are strictly prohibited:

- Activities that are illegal or promote illegal activities.
- Activities that are defamatory, discriminatory, or promote hatred against any group or individual (e.g., hate speech, racist gatherings, overtly political party campaigning).
- Gambling activities (other than small lotteries for charitable purposes, or as approved by the Church Wardens, where appropriate licences are in place).
- Activities involving the consumption of alcohol unless explicitly agreed in writing, subject to St Barnabas Church holding the appropriate Premises Licence, or the hirer obtaining a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) where required.
- Political campaigning or meetings for registered political parties.
- Activities that are overtly sexual or involve nudity.
- Activities that involve excessive noise or disturbance to neighbours, particularly at night.
- Storage of hazardous materials.
- Overnight stays (unless specifically approved and supervised for recognised church youth activities, e.g., sleepovers, subject to strict safeguarding and H&S protocols).
- Any activity deemed by the PCC or Vicar (or Church Wardens during times of vacancy) to be contrary to the Christian faith, St Barnabas Church's mission, or likely to bring St Barnabas Church into disrepute. The PCC reserves the right to refuse any booking without providing a reason, particularly where there are concerns about alignment with church values or potential reputational risk.

7. Booking Procedures

7.1. Initial Enquiry: Prospective hirers should contact St Barnabas Church Office to check availability and obtain a copy of the **Premises Letting Policy** and the **Conditions of Hire Agreement**.

7.2. Application: A completed **Application Form for Hire of Premises** must be submitted, detailing:

- Name of hirer/organisation
- Contact details
- Purpose and nature of the proposed activity
- Desired dates and times
- Number of attendees
- Specific requirements (e.g., kitchen use, equipment)
- For activities involving children or vulnerable adults, details of their safeguarding policies and DBS checks.



7.3. Provisional Booking & Approval:

- Upon receipt of a satisfactory application, St Barnabas Church office will check availability and, where appropriate, grant provisional approval.
- For more complex or sensitive bookings, approval may be required from the Churchwardens or the PCC.
- St Barnabas Church reserves the right to refuse any application without giving a reason, particularly if it conflicts with the principles outlined in section 4 or the prohibited uses in section 6.

7.4. Confirmation & Agreement:

- Once approved, a formal **Conditions of Hire Agreement** will be issued, which must be signed by the hirer and returned along with any required deposit.
- The booking is only confirmed upon receipt of the signed agreement and deposit.

8. Charges and Payments

- **Hire Charges:** A schedule of current hire charges will be made available upon enquiry. These charges are reviewed periodically by the PCC.
- **Deposits:** A returnable security deposit may be required to cover potential damage, excessive cleaning, or breach of conditions.
- **Payment Terms:** Hire fees are typically payable [e.g., in advance, within 7 days of invoice, etc.]. Full details will be provided in the Conditions of Hire Agreement.
- **Concessions:** The PCC may consider reduced rates or waivers for activities directly supporting St Barnabas Church's mission or for specific community groups, at its sole discretion.
- **Discounted rates:** These may be offered to local residents (i.e. those who reside within the Parish of Swanland) and non-profit and other charitable organisations. All new hirers will be offered the rates published at the time of booking. Long-term hirers may be offered to renew at their existing rates.

9. Safeguarding

- St Barnabas Church adheres to the Church of England's national safeguarding policies and practice guidance.
- Hirers are responsible for the safeguarding of all individuals attending their activities.
- For activities involving children or vulnerable adults, hirers must:
 - Provide a copy of their own safeguarding policy and procedures and confirm that all their staff/volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults have undergone appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and received safeguarding training. (Not required for "one-off" children's parties where parents are present.)
 - Ensure adequate adult supervision ratios are maintained.



- Be aware of and adhere to St Barnabas Church's own safeguarding procedures, including the reporting of concerns.
- St Barnabas Church reserves the right to request evidence of safeguarding compliance and may cancel a booking if satisfied that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are not in place.

10. Health and Safety

- St Barnabas Church is responsible for the overall health and safety of its premises.
- Hirers are responsible for the health and safety of their attendees and the activities they undertake.
- Hirers must:
 - Familiarise themselves with and adhere to St Barnabas Church's Health and Safety Guidelines and fire safety procedures (e.g., fire exits, assembly points, use of fire extinguishers).
 - Conduct their own risk assessment for their specific activity if required, and provide a copy to St Barnabas Church on request.
 - Report any accidents or incidents immediately to St Barnabas office and complete an incident report form.
 - Ensure all electrical equipment brought onto the premises is PAT tested.
 - Ensure gangways and fire exits are kept clear at all times.

11. Insurance

- St Barnabas Church holds Public Liability Insurance for its premises.
- Hirers are strongly advised to hold their own Public Liability Insurance, with a minimum cover of [e.g., £5 million], to cover their activities and any potential injury or damage caused by their negligence. Evidence of such insurance may be requested.
- St Barnabas Church accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to property brought onto the premises by hirers or their attendees.

12. Licensing

- **Music Licensing (PRS/PPL):** St Barnabas Church holds relevant licences (PRS for Music and PPL) for the public performance of copyrighted music. Hirers should confirm their specific needs regarding music use.
- **Alcohol:** If alcohol is to be sold or supplied at a profit, or if regulated entertainment is to be provided beyond certain small-scale limits, the hirer may need to obtain a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) from the Local Authority and provide a copy to St Barnabas Church.



- **Food Hygiene:** Hirers preparing or serving food must comply with all relevant food hygiene regulations.

13. Care of Premises and Equipment

- Hirers must leave the premises clean, tidy, and in the condition they were found.
- All rubbish must be bagged and removed from the premises, or disposed of in designated bins.
- Any damage to the premises or equipment must be reported immediately to St Barnabas Church office. The cost of repair or replacement for damage caused by the hirer or their attendees will be charged to the hirer.
- Smoking, vaping and any illegal drug use are strictly prohibited within the St Barnabas Church site.
- No decorations, signs, or notices may be affixed to walls, doors, or windows without prior written consent.

14. Security

- Hirers are responsible for the security of the premises during their period of hire.
- Access arrangements (e.g., key collection and return) will be agreed in advance.
- Hirers must ensure all windows and external doors are securely locked when leaving the premises.
- Any security concerns or incidents should be reported immediately.

15. Cancellation Policy

- **By Hirer:** Notice periods for cancellation and any associated cancellation charges will be specified in the Conditions of Hire Agreement.
- **By St Barnabas Church:** St Barnabas Church reserves the right to cancel a booking in exceptional circumstances (e.g., unforeseen church events, emergencies, essential maintenance, or breach of this policy/Conditions of Hire by the hirer). In such cases, St Barnabas Church will endeavour to give as much notice as possible and offer an alternative date or a full refund of any fees paid. St Barnabas Church will not be liable for any consequential loss suffered by the hirer due to cancellation.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the PCC at least every two years or earlier if there are changes in legislation, Church of England guidance, or St Barnabas Church practice.



Appendix A: Essential Documents for Hirers (to be provided separately)

1. **Conditions of Hire Agreement**
2. **Schedule of Hire Charges**
3. **Accident/Incident Report Form**
4. **Map showing fire exits, assembly points, first aid kits.**

Policy Approved by: St Barnabas Church PCC

Date of Approval: 18th May 2026

Next Review Date: May 2028 (Hire charges are reviewed at the end of every year.)