



The Parish of Horndon, Orsett and Bulphan

Church Premises Lettings Policy

Approved by the Parochial Church Council: 25th September 2026

Review date: September 2031

1. Purpose

The Parish of Horndon, Orsett and Bulphan seeks to make appropriate use of its buildings for the benefit of the Church and the wider community.

The PCC may permit its premises to be hired on a one-off basis or regular basis for meetings, community activities, social events and other appropriate purposes, subject to the availability and suitability of the premises.

All lettings must be consistent with the Christian ethos of the Parish and must not compromise the worship, ministry, mission, safeguarding responsibilities or reputation of the Church.

2. Premises covered by this policy

This policy applies to one-off hires of any parish premises made available for external use, including:

- a) St Peter & St Paul Church, Horndon-on-the-Hill
- b) St Giles and All Saints Church, Orsett
- c) St Mary the Virgin Church, Bulphan
- d) The Parish Room, Bulphan
- e) Any other premises controlled by the PCC and approved for hire.

The person responsible for accepting bookings shall confirm which facilities are included in each individual hire.

3. One-off hires

A one-off hire is a booking for a specific event or activity, normally lasting no more than one day or occasion.

Examples may include:

- a) Community meetings
- b) Local society or club meetings
- c) Talks, lectures or presentations
- d) Small social gatherings
- e) Charity or fundraising events
- f) Rehearsals
- g) Educational or cultural activities
- h) Family or community events

The PCC reserves the right to refuse any booking where the proposed use is considered unsuitable for the premises or inconsistent with the purposes, values or responsibilities of the Parish.

4. Application and booking

All hires must be requested through the parish's designated booking contact.

The hirer must provide:

- a) Name and contact details of the person responsible for the booking
- b) Name of the organisation, if applicable
- c) Date and times required
- d) Nature and purpose of the activity
- e) Estimated number of people attending
- f) Details of any children, young people or vulnerable adults who will be involved
- g) Any special requirements, including furniture, equipment, kitchen facilities or accessibility requirements
- h) Details of any catering, entertainment or other activities that may require additional consideration.

The PCC or its authorised representative must approve the booking before the premises are used.

5. Refusal of bookings

The PCC reserves the right to refuse a booking.

Reasons may include:

- a) Unsuitability of the activity
- b) Safeguarding concerns
- c) Health and safety concerns
- d) Lack of appropriate insurance
- e) Inadequate licensing or permissions
- f) Risk of damage to the premises
- g) Excessive noise or nuisance
- h) Conflict with church activities
- i) Conflict with the Christian ethos or charitable purposes of the Parish
- j) Previous failure to comply with the conditions of hire.

The PCC will seek to apply this policy fairly and consistently.

6. Hiring agreement

Every one-off hire must be covered by a written **Hire Agreement**, signed or otherwise accepted by the hirer before the event.

The Hire Agreement will set out the specific conditions applying to that booking, including:

- a) Date and times of hire
- b) Areas of the premises that may be used
- c) Hire charge and any deposit
- d) Cleaning arrangements
- e) Keyholding and access arrangements
- f) Safeguarding requirements where applicable
- g) Health and safety requirements
- h) Responsibility for damage or loss
- i) Insurance requirements
- j) Cancellation arrangements.

The hirer is responsible for ensuring that all members of their group and all persons attending the event comply with the terms of the Hire Agreement.

7. Appropriate use of the premises

The premises must be used only for the purpose stated in the booking application.

The following are not permitted without the prior written approval of the PCC:

- a) Activities likely to cause damage to the building, furnishings or equipment
- b) Activities creating unreasonable noise or nuisance
- c) Activities involving dangerous materials or equipment
- d) Events involving animals, except where specifically agreed
- e) Sale of goods or services
- f) Sale or supply of alcohol
- g) Gambling or betting
- h) Activities requiring a licence or other statutory permission where that permission has not been obtained.

The PCC may impose additional conditions where the nature of an event requires them.

8. Church and religious use

- a) Where the premises are part of a church building, the sacred character of the building must be respected.
- b) The PCC may decline or restrict activities which, in its reasonable judgement, are incompatible with the use of the building as a place of Christian worship.
- c) The hirer must not move, remove, alter or interfere with crosses, communion vessels, memorials, furnishings, liturgical items or other church property without prior permission.
- d) Where an event takes place close to an area used for worship, the hirer must comply with any reasonable requirements of the PCC concerning access, noise and the protection of church activities.

9. Safeguarding

- a) The Parish is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- b) Where a proposed hire involves children, young people or vulnerable adults, the hirer must provide appropriate safeguarding information and comply with any additional safeguarding conditions imposed by the PCC.
- c) Where the hirer's organisation has its own safeguarding policy, the PCC will require a copy before confirming the booking.
- d) Where appropriate, the PCC will use the Church of England's model safeguarding provisions for the hire of church premises.
- e) The hirer remains responsible for safeguarding those attending their event and for ensuring that their staff and volunteers are appropriately recruited, trained and supervised.
- f) Any safeguarding concern arising during a hire must be reported promptly to the appropriate person and, where necessary, to the statutory authorities.

10. Health and safety

The hirer is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure the safety of everyone attending the event.

The hirer must:

- a) Keep entrances, exits, corridors and fire exits clear
- b) No smoking or vaping is allowed
- c) Comply with the premises' fire safety arrangements
- d) Follow any instructions provided by the PCC
- e) Report accidents, incidents or hazards to the parish representative
- f) Not exceed the permitted capacity of the premises
- g) Not interfere with fire alarms, extinguishers or other safety equipment
- h) Ensure that activities are appropriately risk assessed where necessary.

The PCC reserves the right to require a risk assessment for particular activities.

11. Fire safety and emergency evacuation

- a) The hirer must familiarise themselves with the fire exits, emergency procedures and assembly arrangements before the event begins.
- b) The hirer must ensure that attendees can leave the premises safely in an emergency.
- c) No fire exit may be blocked or locked while people are present.
- d) Candles, naked flames, cooking equipment or other sources of heat may only be used with the prior approval of the PCC and subject to appropriate precautions.

12. Insurance and liability

- a) The PCC will maintain appropriate insurance for the premises.
- b) The hirer is responsible for ensuring that they have appropriate insurance for their activities where this is reasonably required.
- c) Where the hirer is an organisation, the PCC may request evidence of public liability insurance before confirming the booking.
- d) The hirer is responsible for loss or damage caused to the premises, fixtures, fittings or equipment as a result of the hire, other than reasonable wear and tear.
- e) The hirer is also responsible for the actions of people attending their event.

13. Alcohol and licensing

- a) No alcohol may be sold or supplied as part of a hire without prior agreement from the PCC.
- b) Where an activity requires a premises licence, temporary event notice, music licence, food registration or other statutory permission, the hirer is responsible for obtaining the appropriate permission unless the PCC has expressly agreed otherwise.
- c) The hirer must comply with all applicable licensing conditions and legal requirements.

14. Catering and kitchens

- a) Where kitchen facilities are provided, they must be used responsibly and in accordance with any instructions given by the PCC.
- b) As a Fairtrade Church - the use of disposable paper plates, plastic plates, throw-away cups and other single-use catering items should be avoided wherever reasonably practicable. Where disposable items are genuinely necessary, hirers are encouraged to choose reusable, recyclable or compostable alternatives and to minimise the amount of waste produced.
- c) The hirer is responsible for ensuring that food is prepared, stored and served safely.
- d) The kitchen and all equipment must be left clean and tidy after use.
- e) No cooking equipment may be brought onto the premises without prior agreement.

15. Furniture and equipment

- a) Furniture and equipment may only be used for the purposes agreed as part of the booking.
- b) The hirer must not remove furniture or equipment from the premises without permission.
- c) Any furniture moved during the hire must be returned to its original position unless otherwise agreed.
- d) The hirer must report any damage or malfunction promptly.

16. Noise and consideration for neighbours

- a) Hirers must conduct their activities with reasonable consideration for neighbouring properties and the local community.
- b) Doors and windows should be kept closed where necessary to reduce noise.
- c) Any music, amplified sound or entertainment must be kept at a reasonable level.
- d) The PCC may impose specific restrictions on the timing or volume of events.

17. Access, keys and security

- a) A PCC representative will agree access arrangements with the hirer before the event.
- b) Where keys are issued, they must not be copied or passed to another person.
- c) The hirer is responsible for securing the premises at the end of the hire, where this responsibility has been agreed.
- d) All lights, heating, electrical equipment and appliances must be switched off as instructed.
- e) The premises must be left secure and in a clean and orderly condition.

18. Cleaning and waste

The premises must be left in the condition in which they were found.

The hirer is responsible for:

- a) Clearing away rubbish
- b) Using the correct bins i.e. recycle, general or food waste bins
- c) Wiping tables and surfaces
- d) Cleaning kitchen facilities used
- e) Cleaning up spillages
- f) Returning furniture and equipment
- g) Removing decorations and personal belongings.

The PCC may make an additional charge where additional cleaning is required.

19. Decorations and displays

- a) No nails, screws, staples, adhesive tape or other fixings may be used on walls, doors, furniture or other parts of the building without permission.
- b) Any decorations must be agreed in advance and must not create a fire, safety or damage risk.
- c) All decorations must be removed at the end of the hire.

20. Accessibility and equality

- a) The Parish aims to make its premises welcoming and accessible to all.
- b) Hirers must not unlawfully discriminate against anyone attending their event.
- c) The PCC will consider reasonable accessibility requirements in relation to individual bookings, subject to the physical characteristics and limitations of the premises.

21. Cancellation

The PCC may cancel a booking where:

- a) The premises are required for an unforeseen church purpose
- b) The premises become unsafe or unavailable
- c) The proposed activity changes materially from that originally agreed
- d) The hirer fails to comply with the Hire Agreement
- e) The PCC becomes aware of circumstances which make the proposed hire inappropriate.

Where the PCC cancels a booking for reasons within its control, any hire fee already paid will normally be refunded.

The PCC will not normally be responsible for any consequential costs incurred by the hirer.

23. Complaints and incidents

- a) Any complaint concerning a hire should be reported to the parish booking contact or relevant churchwarden as soon as reasonably possible.
- b) Any serious accident, safeguarding concern, damage to the premises or other significant incident must be reported to the PCC or its nominated representative without delay.
- c) The PCC will deal with complaints and incidents in accordance with its appropriate parish procedures.

24. Data protection

- a) Personal information provided by hirers will be used only for legitimate purposes connected with administering the booking, managing the premises, safeguarding and fulfilling legal or insurance requirements.
- b) Information will be stored and retained in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

25. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed every five years by the PCC or earlier to reflect changes in legislation, Church of England guidance, insurance requirements or parish practice.

The PCC may introduce additional conditions for individual hires where the circumstances require them.



The Parish of Horndon, Orsett and Bulphan

Church premises lettings policy

Hirer's Declaration

I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the Parish of Horndon, Orsett and Bulphan One-Off Hire of Church Premises Policy and the specific conditions contained in the Hire Agreement.

I confirm that the information provided in connection with the booking is accurate and that I will ensure that the premises are used only for the agreed purpose.

Name of hirer: _____

Organisation (if applicable): _____

Date of hire: _____

Premises: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____