

The Ark, Isleham

Use of Premises and Booking Policy

1. General Principles

The Ark Church has been built for the advancement of God's kingdom, including outreach and the functioning of the church family, and we have a responsibility to ensure it is maintained and used in accordance with its primary purpose. Therefore any activities or events that take place should follow these principles. Any music used should also be in keeping with the church's values and not be offensive to God's purposes.

2. Booking rooms

2.1 The Ark is a large building but is still in the process of completion, and we have a small staff and group of volunteers who manage the building and the complex sound, lighting and computer equipment. Therefore this policy will need to be revised regularly to accommodate the changing capacity and availability.

2.2 Smaller group rooms can be booked individually and have either easy to use projectors or TV screens, which require only basic technical knowledge to use.

2.3 The auditorium has an easy to use lighting system but a complex sound and display system and needs a technician to manage this. If both sound and screen display are required this would necessitate a team of technicians. As the team are all volunteers this should be arranged separately with the Building Manager and volunteers should receive direct remuneration from the person booking the space.

2.4 The use of the Auditorium for Church family weddings and funerals is, as always, free of charge and a gift to our members .

2.5 Church Members who wish to use the building or a room for non regular events, or to start a new regular group (approved by the Elders) can request the use of a room/ rooms in the Ark.

2.6 Any request **must** be approved by and booked through the Building Manager using a booking form.

2.7 Booking forms can be obtained online, from the office or from the Building Manager. Requests can only be made with a booking form.

3. The Building Manager will consult as necessary with Elders, Church Council and the office to consider:

- The purpose for which the premises are to be used
- The suitability of the event
- Whether the use of the room/s would adversely affect church running (e.g. the availability for regular events)
- The potential for damage to the building
- Any insurance or other legal/safety restrictions, including any health and safety concerns

- The impact on the regular maintenance of the premises

3.1 If there are any concerns about the request, the Building Manager, after consultation, will make the final decision.

4. Bookings by non-members

4.1 In certain cases, requests to use the building may be made by non Church Members. In these cases, in addition to the above points, the Building Manager should consider:

- The availability of alternative premises
- Is the purpose for which the premises are to be used broadly consistent with the message of God's Love

4.2 If permission is granted to non Church Members, then as far as is practical, all aspects of this policy shall apply.

5. Charges

5.1 The church premises are not currently for hire so the use of rooms is not dependent on the payment of fees at the moment. However running costs for the private use of the building and by non-members should be considered and will need to be covered by the person booking the building/room.

5.2 The Elders and Church Council are considering a pricing structure for members and non-members for private use in the near future.

6. Use of building

6.1 Group leaders (and their guests) would be expected to ensure that the building is only used for the purpose indicated on their booking application, and to treat the building in a respectful manner.

6.2 Bookings for private parties are not as a rule approved but a birthday or anniversary celebration for a long standing member of the church may be approved at the discretion of the Elders.

6.3 All food should be consumed in the Atrium or Refectory unless alternative arrangements are agreed.

6.4 Users must leave the building in a clean and tidy state ready for the next users, including the removal of all rubbish from the site.

6.5 Users should be respectful of neighbours whilst entering and leaving the building.

6.6 Should a requester want to change any aspect of their use of the building a revised booking application must be made.

8. Priority for Use

8.1 Currently only Christian groups or non-profit organisations will be considered to book the use of the Ark premises

8.2 In principle regular church events will take priority however each application should be considered on its merits and a regular group may be asked to: relocate e.g. to another room or a home setting; or change the time or date of their meeting.

8.3 The priority of use for the main auditorium will be for the holding and recording of services, worship and other whole church events.

8.4 The Atrium will remain a common space and should not be restricted to the sole use of one group apart from weddings or funerals.

8.5 Events taking place on Saturday evenings will currently need to finish at 7pm with a locking up time of 8pm. The person/ group booking the room are responsible for the cleaning and removal of all rubbish from the site. This is to allow for the setting up of the church for Sunday morning services. Toilets will be cleaned by church staff.

9. How to book a room

9.1 A church member who has identified a need to use the church premises should make a written request using the booking form and return it to the Building Manager via the Church Office.

9.2 The Building Manager will consider the routine availability of the premises for regular users, not only at the time of use the premises, but also in adjacent time slots (to allow for setting up/clearing away etc).

9.3 The booking application form will include details of:

- Type of room/s being requested
- Purpose for which room/s are to be used
- Period for which room/s are to be used. Timings must be adhered to so that securing the building is not delayed.
- Number of people attending
- What church equipment (if any) may be used (such requests are subject to separate approvals as per Equipment Loan policy)
- Any media (films/TV/music) that may be used- this is required for Licensing purposes
- Use of refreshments
- Separate forms will be available for weddings and funerals

9.4 The Building Manager may approve or deny the request after consultation with Elders, Church Council and the office.

9.5 Each request will be considered separately. The approval or denial of a request does not automatically mean the approval or denial of other requests

9.5 Any violations/potential violations of this policy should be raised with **Church Council**, who will discuss with the requester the issues noted. If the requester and/or guests are found to not be complying with the church policies (for example, use of premises for purposes other than that stated, valid complaints about noise, damage to premises/equipment, use of rooms for which approval has not been given, leaving the premises in an untidy state), Church Council will determine what actions should be taken,

which may include a written request to address issues raised, suspension of approval, or withdrawing approval

9.6 Approval to use the premises may be suspended or withdrawn at anytime for operational issues e.g. need for premises for a more regular event, issues with housekeeping, maintenance, security etc

9.7 The Building Manager has the right to change or cancel the room allocated

10. Responsibility of Group Leader/ Host

10.1 Group leaders must have contact details for all attendees so that they can contact them in the event of a cancellation, and for health and safety purposes including fire risk.

10.2 The group leader is responsible for returning the room/s to the same condition as they were found in unless other arrangements are made with the Building Manager

11. Key Holders

11.1 The Building Manager will maintain a list of key holders

11.2 No copies of keys are to be made

11.3 Keys can only be used by the agreed key holder

12. Weddings

12.1 The Ark is available for weddings based on biblical principles for:

- church members
- The children of church members
- Ex-members of the church who are now part of a different church
- Couples who are in a pastoral relationship with the church (at the discretion of the Elders)

For children of members and ex-members of the church :

1. Preferably their own pastor will lead the service at the Ark
2. The Elders will be in open communication with their home church pastors either by phone, email or letter.

13 Wedding Receptions

13.1 Wedding receptions can take place in the Refectory and Atrium following a wedding however the sale of alcohol or a bar will **not** be allowed.

13.2 The wedding host can provide a glass of alcohol for a toast and to eat with the meal only.

13.3 Spirits are not to be consumed on the premises.

13.4 The host will have full responsibility to ensure that no misuse of alcohol takes place.

13.5 Saturday receptions will need to finish by 7pm with an hour allowed for cleaning before the premises are vacated.

14. Scope and Application

14.1 The policy applies to all church members and other Christians who book rooms.

14.2 Excluded from this policy are:

- The use of Church Equipment on the premises. If any specific equipment is to be used, this requires specific approval (See Equipment Loan Policy)

15. Policy Approval

15.1 This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly as more facilities in the Ark become available.

Reviewed by Church Council: February 2021, January 2022, February 2022, February 2024