

ST MATTHEW'S, DARLEY ABBEY – FELLOWSHIP ROOM HIRE

Covid means that we need to re-think how we hire the Fellowship Room, how we manage bookings between 12 April (the date on which “indoor leisure facilities” can reopen) and 21 June (when legal limits are removed), and then in the future when Covid may still be a threat. The Parochial Church Council Standing Committee have agreed:

- that we need to ensure that our buildings are clean and safe,
- that the primary use of our buildings is for Church purposes,
- that the Fellowship Room and Church must be managed as one facility
- that the financial return we get from room hire covers the cost of hiring the room

The capacity of the Fellowship Room taking into account social distancing is 9. This is the maximum number that should be in the Fellowship Room until 21 June and should never be exceeded. Users must also comply with all the current regulations, for example, the wearing of face coverings and the use of hand sanitiser/washing hands.

Although the room is cleaned regularly, we are asking all hirers to clean during the 30 minutes before and after their session. This additional time will not be charged and we will provide the necessary cleaning materials. A separate cleaning checklist will be provided which will outline where needs to be cleaned. If there is an outbreak of Covid in a group using the Fellowship Room, this will mean that the whole site (including the Church) must be closed for cleaning, and vice versa – so Fellowship Room bookings and Church services will need to be cancelled. We will need to ensure there is at least 1 hour between bookings, and groups/individuals must not arrive early or stay late. Details of everyone attending groups must be taken for track and trace purposes.

In the past we have been able to accommodate different groups at the same time, and work round each other for access to the toilets, choir vestry, etc. This is no longer possible. There can only be one group on site at a time. Therefore, if the Church is being used, the Fellowship Room cannot be, and vice versa. While we will always try and work round existing bookings, a Church booking (wedding, funeral or any other event) will always take precedence.

Lunchtime weddings means that the Fellowship Room cannot be hired on Wednesday 29 December, Fridays 28 May, 6 August and 26 November, and Saturdays 29 May, 5 June and 17 July 2021. This list is correct at 17 March 2021 but additional dates and changes are likely. The Fellowship Room will not be available for hire on Sundays for the foreseeable future. It will not be available after 6pm on Fridays due to choir practice in the evening. The kitchen is not to be used and should only be accessed if the First Aid Box is needed. The room needs to be kept well ventilated and the one-way system should be adhered to.

Church members will be reminded that they must never enter the Fellowship Room, choir vestry or toilets when the Fellowship Room is in use by hirers. They are requested to check bookings with Caroline in the Office.

We are using the opportunity of re-opening and drafting new hire agreements to ensure that correct safeguarding policies are followed. The Model Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England is attached, and compliance will be required by all hirers. Note especially that any

group involving children and young people “will always have at least two leaders over the age of 18 years in any group of children and young people, no matter how small the group”.

We are also using this opportunity to ensure our costs are covered and align our hire charges with other halls in the area. From Easter 2020 the hire charge to all groups will be £10 per hour. Monthly invoices will be sent in advance.

We hope that those who have hired the Fellowship Room in the past will understand and accept these new requirements. If so, we welcome you and thank you for working with us. Please discuss your requirements with Caroline and arrange to sign a new hirer agreement. If not, we thank you for your past hire and wish you well in another venue. If you have keys for the Fellowship Room, please ensure that you return them to Caroline in the Office.

Peter Barham, Vicar, 17 March 2021
on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St Matthew's, Darley Abbey