

# Guidance notes to accompany the Additional Matters Order (AMO) for use of church assets, including hiring of a church or a church hall to third parties

## 1. Introduction

Our churches, church halls, parish rooms and churchyards are a valuable resource, often providing warm and welcoming spaces and as part of our ministry of hospitality as well as an important income generator for the parish.

This guidance document supports **Additional Matters Order (AMO) No.4 2025** and aims to help you prepare for income generation activities that you may wish to undertake in your church, church hall/parish room, churchyard, car park etc. where these buildings / facilities fall within faculty jurisdiction and you are hiring to a third party, i.e. someone that is not the incumbent or a named trustee on your PCC.

While this guidance is aimed at making your facilities available for third-party use, the same best practice principles can be applied when running "in-house" events as part of your own church mission and ministry activities or where your PCC has control over a hall or other asset that lies outside of faculty jurisdiction.

## 2. Permission for 'casual' or 'occasional' hire by a third-party

The PCC may make church buildings, and other assets, available for use by a third party where a written casual hire agreement is in place which clearly sets out the expectations and requirements for the hirer, including the duration and cost. The agreement should also include the Diocesan Model Safeguarding Provision, the current wording of which is [available at this link](#).

## Key points:

- No single user may hire the church for more than 48 hours in total duration per month.
- Third-party use of a church by one or more hirers may not exceed 120 hours per month in total.
- Exclusivity should not be granted – i.e. PCC approved/appointed personnel may continue to access the church / site / building during the hire.
  - *Where exclusivity is requested by the hirer, a licence may be required under Faculty.*
- Care should be taken to ensure third-party hire/use of a parish room doesn't become the primary function of the space, to avoid no longer qualifying for ecclesiastical exemption from VAT & CCL levy rebate on utility bills and/or council tax, business rate relief etc.
  - *Check with your local council or utility provider, but Government guidance suggests that if at least 60% of the total use is non-business charity use, then the whole supply can be treated as such and is excluded from the levy. [Source](#)*
- The church insurer should be informed before making the hall / room available for hire for the first time.
- A risk assessment should be undertaken for each new activity. If the church's insurer has an example, this should be used.

## Best Practice Examples

The following are examples where you are permitted to make your church, church buildings or facilities available to hire to third parties using the Additional Matters Order with a written agreement in place.

- **Parties (birthdays and other life events)**

- *Children's vs Adult parties – care should be taken in consideration of the type/age of parties, eg to avoid potentially disruptive behaviour or noise in your own setting and circumstances. It may be more appropriate to limit birthday parties to children up to the end of primary school age, for example.*
- **Rehearsal/Recording space for theatre groups, choirs or musicians**
  - *A rehearsal by an individual or group without an invited / ticketed audience, or where musicians wish to hire space to practice repertoire or make a recording.*
- **Music tuition**
  - *Including the use of organs, pianos or other instruments which belong to or form part of the fabric of the church by local schools, universities, colleges, Music Hubs or self-employed instrumental teachers on an ad-hoc basis.*
- **Exercise classes, workshops**
  - *Exercise sessions which are more spiritually focused should be checked with the Incumbent for appropriateness.*
- **Community Support Groups**
  - *Rainbows, Brownies, Scouts, U3A, Alcoholics Anonymous etc. who make use of the space for their activities. If any storage space is offered / given, eg to store toys, pens / paper etc, this must be specifically included in the written agreement to cover insurance, to ensure vacant possession when the agreement ends and to avoid potentially harmful substances being stored outside of the PCC's control.*
- **Church camping**

- *Also known as Champing inside the church itself or offering a parking space as an overnight stop or “aire” for a self-contained motorhome where the local authority permits.*
- **Working / meeting space for home-workers**
  - *Ad hoc use of a room, printers, WiFi etc for videoconferencing or business meetings.*
- **Parking space(s)**
  - *Where one or several spaces wholly under the PCCs control, but not the whole car park, are made available on a casual basis via a bookable service such as [JustPark.com](http://JustPark.com) or [YourParkingSpace.co.uk](http://YourParkingSpace.co.uk)*
- **Non-worship activities**
  - *For worship-based activities, please check Canon B43 instead for other Christian organisations; check further for other faiths; be clear about not discriminating in use for non-worship activity by other faith groups*

This list is not exhaustive. You may find a different activity that wishes to hire your facilities, and you should consider the appropriateness versus the similarity to the examples given above and check against section three of this guidance, which lists where additional permission is required.

### **3. Uses of a church building, hall, room or churchyard which require further permission**

The following are examples where you must seek additional permission before you can agree to a third-party hire of your church or other buildings and facilities which are under faculty jurisdiction.

- **Tenancy**

*Longer-term repeat hires or those who request exclusivity should be considered as a tenancy which will require the PCC to obtain professional advice leading to licence or lease under faculty and may also require input from the Diocesan Trusts & Estates team and to mitigate for any potential commercial security of tenure.*

- *Additional permission is also required for installation of third-party equipment, such as mobile phone, internet or radio transmitters; electric vehicle chargers made available to members of the public which are not wholly owned by the church; external pickup/drop off lockers etc.*

- **Ecumenical use and hosting other congregations**

- *Giving an invitation to another church to use a church building, or hall under faculty jurisdiction, for worship according to its own forms and practice of worship is part of the ministry of hospitality. There is separate guidance available if an approach is made to use your church. [See Ad Clerum 3e.5](#)*
- *Additional permissions may be required where physical changes may be required to accommodate third-party worship.*

- **Filming**

- *Filming regularly takes place in and around churches in our Diocese. There is a separate Additional Matters Order and guidance in place. [See AMO Order 4 2018](#)*

- **Churchyard**

- *Additional regulations cover activities taking place in and around our churchyards. See [Churchyard Regulations](#)*

- **Third party performances**

- *Such as a theatrical, comedy, art, music, fashion shows etc, which don't form part of the church's own fundraising or missional activities and a viewing audience is invited to attend – the incumbent (or Archdeacon in vacancy) should be consulted to confirm they are satisfied with the nature of the content in context.*
- *The PCC should verify the relevant performance-, intellectual-property rights and events licences are in place, as well as premises licences where alcohol is served.*

- **Storage**

- *Where third-party property is stored, whether short or long-term, a separate agreement and consultation with your insurers should be completed to confirm what is stored, access requirements and termination to obtain vacant possession of the storage space after the agreement ends. Substances which are potentially harmful and/or require controlled storage should not be accepted.*

- **Parking**

- *Additional permission may be required where the car park is in part or whole managed by a third-party management company or local ad-hoc / casual parking arrangements are made for exclusive use of certain bays with local businesses.*

There may be other third-party hiring activities which do not feature in this document that you are asked to consider. If you are in any doubt, please contact the DAC Team for support: [dac@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:dac@stalbans.anglican.org) or 01727 818138.

## 4. Preparing a church hall / room for hire by a third party

You may wish to undertake certain modifications to prepare your church or hall for third-party hire, to improve the available facilities for users and improve productivity for volunteers supporting with locking / unlocking.

Many modifications fall under the existing Minor Matters lists (Lists A & B), however this guidance aims to clarify the following items:

**Additional Matters Order 3.2025 includes the introduction / installation of WiFi extenders / mesh networking solutions to provide public internet access, subject to:**

- *The PCC has a business / non-domestic internet contract which allows public sharing.*
- *Creation of a secure private network for church devices and a separate, controllable public network which can be monitored, paused or turned off. Further guidance on safe creation of a public WiFi hotspot is available from the Diocese.*
- *Transmitters and any cable runs are placed in agreed locations approved by the DAC.*
- *PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) of these devices is included at the next inspection.*
- *[See AMO 2022 01 for further advice.](#)*

**Minor Matters B1.12 includes retrofit of electronic or “smart” door locks to facilitate access/entry for third parties:**

- *Permission is granted where the smart lock directly replaces an existing door lock without significantly altering the appearance or security rating.*
- *Electronic locks should be to approved British Standards and have controlled access with smart codes or RFID access keys which can be centrally deleted once shared to avoid abuse.*
- *You should consult with and inform your insurer of your preferred device make / model before proceeding.*

**Minor Matters A1.6 Introduction of smart / wireless controls for existing heating [A1.6(a)] or lighting installations [A1.6(c)]:**

- *Permission is granted where the device replaces a thermostat or switch with a smart / remotely controllable interface without significantly impacting the appearance or overall function of the existing system.*
- *Any electrical work which directly interfaces with existing electrical installations is carried out by an accredited installer.*
- *The works do not involve making additions to an electrical installation*
- *In the case of adaptation, the parochial church council's insurers are notified of the proposals*

**Additional Matters Order (AMO) No.2 2025 includes the introduction of wireless/Bluetooth sound systems to enable third-party users to play their own music / recordings during hire:**

- *Permission is granted where the wireless/Bluetooth sound system or speaker operates standalone from an existing sound reinforcement installation or allows for easy interface with an existing system without significantly altering its appearance*
- *The relevant certificates and performing rights licences are in place*
- *PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) of these devices is included at the next inspection*