**Acceptable Use of Church Facilities Policy**

While encouraging the use of its facilities, the Congregational Committee recognises that this must be regulated if the buildings, their furniture, fittings and equipment are to be preserved in a good state. This is important if everyone is to fully benefit from their use of the facilities.

The Congregational Committee has therefore adopted a Policy for the Acceptable Use of Church Facilities with which **ALL** users are obliged to comply.

It is assumed that any person making a booking has fully read the Policy and is, thereby, accepting the requirements and conditions contained within it on behalf of the organisation or individual provider for whom the booking has been made.

Any infringement of this Policy may result in withdrawal of permission to use the facilities either temporarily or permanently.

**1. GENERAL REGULATIONS**

**1.1** Alcoholic beverages may not be sold or consumed within any part of the facilities or grounds.

**1.2** Smoking is not permitted inside any part of the facilities.

**1.3** All groups or organisations involving children should note that Newtownbreda Church enforces “Taking Care”, the Child Protection Policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ([**www.presbyterianireland.org/takingcare**](https://web.archive.org/web/20220213142405/http:/newtownbreda.org/www.presbyterianireland.org/takingcare))‎. The required AccessNI/POCVA checks for leaders and adult helpers must be complete and current documentation made available for scrutiny.

**1.4** Gambling or games of chance involving money are not permitted within any part of the facilities or grounds. This includes raffles, sweepstakes, ballots, lotteries and tombola.

**1.5** Any group or organisation intending to use the facilities should undertake a risk assessment and, if requested, a copy should be made available to the Congregational Committee or its representative.

**1.6** Any groups, organisations or individuals, not directly connected to the Congregation of Newtownbreda, must provide their own insurance where their specific activities do not fall within the cover provided by the Church’s public liability insurance. This is likely to include most activities centred on physical movement or exercise where an injury could be sustained.

**1.7** The Congregational Committee may amend these regulations at any time and without prior notice.

**2. USING THE FACILITIES**

**2.1**Any group or organisation using the facilities must designate a person who will be responsible for ensuring that:-

the regulations are complied with by other members of that group or organisation;

that equipment, furniture and fabric is properly cared for;

when the property is vacated at the end of the meeting, all windows are closed and secured, all lights switched off, all plugs removed and all external doors locked.

In the case of youth organisations the person responsible for the above will be the Leader-in-Charge or his/her deputy.

**2.2** Designated persons must familiarise themselves with the fire and emergency regulations pertaining to the facilities, the emergency signal and the assembly points to be used in the event of an emergency evacuation. They will also be responsible for ensuring that members attending any meeting or event are informed of the nature of the emergency signal and the location of the emergency exits and assembly points.

**2.3** All equipment and furniture used in the course of a meeting must be returned to its normal place of storage by the person, group or organisation that last used it.

**2.4**After use, the facilities, including stores, must be left in a clean, tidy and safe condition.  
All users are asked to adhere to our ECO policy and ensure that all litter is collected and placed in the waste bins provided for that purpose.

**2.5** **All users of the Church Halls are asked to refrain from attaching wall fixings e.g. Blu Tac, Sellotape, Command Strips, sticky labels or anything else which could deface the wall surface.**

**3. USE OF CAR PARK**

**3.1** Anyone using the car park does so at his or her own risk. The Congregational Committee will not accept any responsibility for any loss of, or damage to, any vehicle or its contents while it is parked in the Church car park.

**3.2** Vehicles must be parked in the marked parking bays and must not obstruct the entrances to the car park.

**3.3 SAFETY**

**VEHICLES MUST NOT BE DRIVEN IN THE CAR PARK AT MORE THAN 5 MILES PER HOUR. DRIVERS MUST WATCH OUT FOR CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY.**

**4. USE OF EQUIPMENT**

All breakages, damages or loss of equipment must be logged by emailing the Halls Convenor at [bookings@newtownbreda.org](mailto:bookings@newtownbreda.org) within 24 hours. The person, group or organisation involved may be required to pay all or part of the cost of repairing or replacing lost or damaged equipment, reasonable wear and tear excepted.

**5. FIRE PRECAUTIONS**

It is a requirement that all users of the facilities be familiar with the routine to be followed in the event of a fire. Users fall into two groups.

**Regular users**- those who use facilities on a daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

**Occasional users** - those who use facilities on an irregular basis or for one-off events involving guests or for which tickets have been sold to a wider audience.

The plan is the same for both groups.

**Regular Users**

Regular users should note the following points:

Room bookings made on an annual basis carry the caveat that they may be subject to change if something unforeseen should arise requesting the use of that room. A minimum notice of two months will be required.

A request for an ad hoc booking should be directed to the Halls Convenor who will contact the organisation/person concerned to discuss how the arrangement might be facilitated.

The Halls Convenor will endeavour to accommodate all parties concerned. However it should be noted that this may not always be possible.

All group members must be made familiar with the fire alarm system, the emergency exits, the assembly point and what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation. This is especially important for new members and guests of an organisation.

Some method of accounting for group members and guests must be employed so that designated persons can quickly establish if everyone has vacated the buildings.

Every group or organisation using the facilities must conduct an annual fire drill. This should be logged on the risk assessment and signed and dated by the designated person.

The safety of the group members is the responsibility of the designated person.

**Occasional Users**

For groups meeting on an occasional basis or for a one-off event, the designated person (or his or her deputy) should, at the start of the event, inform those present:

how to warn others of a fire

where emergency exits and assembly points are located, and how to get to there.

For one-off events using St John’s Hall that involve larger numbers of people such as entertainments, meetings, conferences etc:-

the designated person (or his or her deputy) should appoint in advance at least 4 persons to serve as fire wardens in the event of an evacuation.

**6. SECURITY**

All users of the facilities are required to strictly observe the security arrangements.

**Entering and Leaving the Premises:**

* key holders are responsible for opening and locking the premises as required. The procedures involved are explained in their individual **Key Holders’ Information** document.
* other individuals or designated persons of groups or organisations using the premises are required to make appropriate arrangements in advance for entering and leaving the premises.
* individuals or organisations must not leave the buildings without ensuring that either a key holder still is present or that alternative arrangements for locking the premises have been put in place. Before departing, the designated person must check:
* whether or not their organisation is the last to leave and that anyone remaining on the premises has been informed that you are leaving;
* that no one is still in the toilets or cloakrooms;
* that all windows, security shutters and internal fire doors have been closed;
* **that all exterior doors are securely locked as you depart, whether or not you are the last to leave.**
* where the last person to leave is not a key holder, that individual must lock the exterior (and porch) doors from the inside before exiting through the car park fire escape door, making sure that it closes properly behind them.

**While on the Premises:**

* it is crucial for everyone’s safety to remember at all times that if exterior doors are left unlocked and unsupervised, anyone can enter the buildings.
* the designated person for any group or organisation must arrange for adequate supervision of the exterior doors as their members enter and leave the premises.**At all other times the doors must be kept locked.**
* arrangements should be put in place for persons arriving late to contact someone in that group or organisation by mobile phone, with the number for the appointed person being displayed on a notice at the entrance.
* persons unknown to you should not be granted access unless a reason for their presence can be clearly established and they are accompanied to the appropriate part of the facilities.