

Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of All Saints' Sidmouth

Access and use of church premises Policy

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of All Saints' has a policy of having the church open during daylight hours for private prayer and reflection. However, that does not extend to the rest of the premises. In particular, the hall, lobby, lounge, kitchen and toilets are only available to church members and those attending services in the church or attending organised events in the hall or lounge.

From time to time, we find people other than those in the above categories, taking advantage of the facilities. Problems can occur when these people behave inappropriately, for example, by loitering on the premises, interrupting events or being abusive to other people.

On these occasions the PCC has a duty of care to those who are legitimately occupying the premises. However, we do not have people who can deal with this problem on site for most of the time, so we have issued this advice, so that those who face a problem of dealing with a stranger on site know how to react.

- 1. Do not put yourself or other members of your group at risk**
 - a. Put your own safety and wellbeing above the needs of any stranger
 - b. Do not leave valuables, mobile phones, keys etc in sight
 - c. Have your mobile phone to hand

- 2. Do not offer a stranger money, food or drink**
 - a. Do not allow them to help themselves to food or drink. If the individual is homeless, a drink is freely available from the Mustard Seed café.

- 3. Do not tolerate abusive behaviour, bad language or an argumentative individual**
 - a. Ask the individual to leave the premises
 - b. If they won't leave and pose an imminent threat to yourself or others, call the police on 999
 - c. If they do leave before you have phoned the police on 999 then call the local police on 101 to report an incident of abuse so that they can monitor individuals who may be a threat to others

- 4. Do try to ensure that any stranger is not a danger to themselves or others**
 - a. If you suspect the stranger is homeless or otherwise vulnerable and is amenable to receiving help, then speak to someone at Gateway by phoning Leslie Crawford on 07470 004877 or Ann Worthington on 07980 023202
 - b. If you are concerned about the safety of someone sleeping rough, then for 24x7 help from EDDC Streetlink call 0300 500 0914

This document will be issued to the leaders of those groups who hire the premises and to the leaders of All Saints' Church groups who use the hall for events.

This policy was last reviewed by All Saints' Church at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on 8 January 2019.