

## **Church Council Policy regarding the use of the Knox Church buildings by outside organisations**

This policy aims to clarify under what circumstances the building can be used by organisations not associated with Knox Church and to delegate decision-making responsibility from the Church Council to designated positions to enable the Church Council to remain focused on issues of mission, policy and strategy.

### **Principles**

1. The building is a resource for the community. Knox Church also needs the building for worship and related gatherings which ordinarily have priority over other uses.
2. The impact of secularization has meant that church buildings are largely inhospitable spaces for people most of whom have no experience of Church. For the sake of mission it is helpful to have people experiencing the building outside religious activities.
3. The building is a valuable and expensive resource gifted to the care of the Council and needs to be utilized as fully as possible in accord with the principles of stewardship and mission

Accordingly, the building should be made available to outside organisations whenever possible unless there are particular reasons for not doing so. Those reasons are stated below.

Where the proposed use:

1. Is not consistent with the Council's view of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Does not comply with legislative, regulatory or City Council bylaws and restrictions.
3. Carries a reasonable risk that the building and grounds will not be able to be restored to a suitable condition for Church use in a timely way and at reasonable cost.
4. Places unreasonable risk of damaging the reputation of Knox Church.
5. Is unsafe.
6. Does not comply with the Council's policy regarding the use of alcohol and smoking as outlined below.

### **Delegations**

Where people wish to hire the Church or church buildings for religious purposes, for example for worship including weddings or funerals, approval must first be gained from the Minister.

The Council delegates to the Office Secretary the responsibility for approving use of the building according to this Policy and for setting the rate of hire as agreed by the Deacons' Court. Where the Secretary is uncertain about whether the proposed use is permitted by this Policy, the Council delegates to any two of the Moderator, the Council Clerk and the Deacons' Court Chairperson the authority to make a final decision.

### **Alcohol**

The buildings and grounds are normally alcohol free. Approval for serving alcohol can be given according to the principles and circumstances outlined above and consistent with the Church's alcohol policy. That policy states, among other things, that the person or group wishing to serve alcohol must comply with all licensing requirements and is responsible for gaining relevant permits.

## **Use of the Gathering Area**

The Gathering Area is part of the Church and is also used for purposes other than worship. The Area can be used by Knox groups and bodies with which Knox is associated including the Student Christian Movement, the University/Polytechnic Combined Christian Groups, Inter-faith groups, ARocha, 350° Otago, Oil Free Otago, Presbyterian Support Otago, the Synod of Otago and Southland and associated bodies, the Southern Presbytery, the inner city ministers' group and associated bodies and ecumenical groups (for which the Church does not normally charge but may on occasion). The Council may make decisions on other bodies using the area on a case by case basis and advise the Deacons' Court, especially where a koha is expected.

## **Church Building**

Use of the Church, is at the discretion of the Minister in consultation with the Church Council. Any charge for the facilities will be determined in consultation with the Deacons' Court.

## **Process**

1. The Council will publicise that people from outside organisations who wish to hire the Church or the church buildings are first to approach the Secretary (03 477 0229) who will give information about availability and charges. Charges are set by the deacons' Court.
2. The Office Secretary will ascertain:
  - a. The purpose and nature of the event;
  - b. The person, company or organisation that will take responsibility for the event, its reputation and that it is a suitable body to assume responsibility;
  - c. Risks, risk management, liability and the adequacy of insurance;
  - d. Whether relevant permission by City Council or authorities has been obtained;
  - e. The times involved for set-up, rehearsal and tidy-up;
  - f. Any special requests.
3. Long-term use of the building that many involve consideration of the principles and circumstances outlined above, should be referred to the Church Council. Once Council approval is given, special rates for long-term use of church buildings shall be negotiated with the Chairperson of the Finance Committee or the Chairperson of the Deacons' Court.
4. The Church and the church buildings and grounds are smoke-free at all times