

Venue Hire

Church of St Thomas the Martyr

Thomas Lane, Bristol, BS1 6JG

Thank you for considering the Church of St Thomas the Martyr as your event space.

In choosing this church as your venue you will be supporting the on-going conservation work of the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).

Offering a beautifully atmospheric and centrally located venue space, the Church of St Thomas the Martyr is ideal for a whole range of events.

In the past St Thomas' has held a capella and rock concerts, club nights and meetings. Please get in touch to discuss how you would like to use this fantastic historical space.



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Using St Thomas the Martyr for your event

Host your event at our unique venue, a 'hidden gem' in the heart of Bristol. The Church of St Thomas is perfect for music events, film locations, product launches, fashion shoots, performance-based events, talks, tours, weddings & blessings and more...

This breath-taking venue has been at the heart of many celebrations throughout the centuries. If you choose to hold your event here you will be in good company...George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), composer to George III, played our church organ when he visited Bristol.

St Thomas' is a Grade I listed building of significant historical importance to the history of Bristol. This elegant 18th century church was designed in 1789 by local architect and carver, James Allen. Allen retained the 15th century west tower of the old church.

It is a wonderful atmospheric space for events of all kinds and a thriving Romanian Orthodox Community worship regularly in the Church of St Thomas Martyr so the building has to be treated sensitively and shown the respect that you would a normal church.

Due to limited staff capacity, we only offer a 'dry hire' service. All aspects of the event are the responsibility of the hirer, from refreshments and décor to the cleaning up afterward - though support and advice is always available.

As the Church is an historic listed building all persons using the church for their own events must adhere to the details specified in this document.

It is a wonderful atmospheric space for events of all kinds. We look forward to holding your special event with us.

Facilities

Capacity

St Thomas's has a capacity of up to 300 people with all available doors open and subject to your risk assessment and staffing levels.

Facilities

We have a small kitchen area and two unisex toilets which are available to use during your event. Should you wish to hire portaloos for your event these may be located outside the church in the courtyard adjacent to the west door. There is a small lockable meeting room which can be used as a green room.

Accessibility

Please note that the historic fabric does not meet modern guidelines on accessibility.

There is no step free access into the building. Once inside the building there is one step up into the chancel area of the church and the kitchen / toilet area. The toilets have not been adapted for people with mobility difficulties. Please consider whether St Thomas' Church will meet the needs of your audience before booking.

Electricity Usage

The Church of St Thomas the Martyr benefits from 3-phase electricity supply and electrical sockets located throughout the building.

Heating

There is no heating in the Church of St Thomas the Martyr.

Cleaning Arrangements

In booking the Church of St Thomas the Martyr you are agreeing to leave the building as clean and tidy as it was when you arrived. Basic cleaning materials are located in the kitchen area.

We do not have the resources to hire cleaners for our historic churches, so depend on the kindness of our volunteers. There may be small amounts of dust and cobwebs when you arrive!

A broom and a dustpan and brush are provided for the floors to be swept. You will need to provide your own bin(s) and dispose of / recycle your own waste.

Access by Churches Conservation Trust Staff

It may be necessary for members of the Trust and its representatives to gain access to the church whilst your event is in occupation.

Access by the Public

If safe to do so, we encourage our users to allow visitors to the church while you set up. If this is not possible you may wish to consider how you will prevent curious passers-by from entering the venue while you are using the building.

Parking

There is no allocated parking space for the church of St Thomas the Martyr.

Please note that some items in the church belong to the Romanian Orthodox Community so please check with us first.

Preserving the Past for the Future

Hirers are required to safeguard the space throughout their hire. Damage or loss may result in additional charges. The following are some points you will need to consider while planning and managing your event:

The Floor

The floor is a mixture of stone and Victorian tiles. We ask you to help us protect the floor by following this guidance.

- Please do not drag any furniture, sound equipment or other items that you may be bringing into the church, even if they have castors. Always lift items clear from the ground and place them down carefully.
- Wear suitable footwear.
- Ensure that you sweep the floor well after your event, using the broom, dustpan, and brush provided to remove any loose stones, which may cause further damage.

Church Fittings

Please ask in advance if you wish to move any furnishings or fittings. This may not always be possible.

Candles

If you propose to use candles, please ask your CCT contact for our policy "Candles in Churches". In most cases candles will be permitted if they are supervised at all times and there is no risk of wax spillage.

Staging

Please discuss in advance with the church representative if you wish to erect scaffolding or staging. Due to the delicate nature of our buildings the Trust may need to consult its Architect. This may

incur a charge to you, which would be discussed with you in advance of your event. For example, on scaffolding, pole ends would need to be capped, a thick, soft material such as carpet under felt put under scaffold bases, and no fixings or loadings would be used.

Please also ensure that there is free and unobstructed access through all the aisles and to exit doors.

Temporary Electrical Installations/Lighting

We are happy to discuss electrical installations with you and request that adequate notice is given before your event takes place. As many Trust churches have valuable wall paintings, fragile materials, or furniture we may need to seek professional advice, incurring an additional charge which would be agreed with you in advance of your event.

For all temporary electrical installations, RCDs (local circuit disrupters) must be fitted for protection. We also request that any electrical appliances you may bring into the church have been annually tested.

Smoke Machines

Smoke machines using dry ice may be used with prior consent from the Conservation Project Manager. Under no circumstances can smoke machines using glycerol be used. Please note that there is a fire protection system in place which may be set off by smoke machines. Please discuss with us first before using.

Temporary Fixtures and Fittings

Due to the fragile nature of surfaces etc. we ask that you consult with the church representative on items you wish to display and avoid using screws or nails and Blu Tak. Only small strips of tape (not Gaffer tape) can be used to mark the concert set up on the church floor, to be removed at the end of your event. Cellos and basses should have appropriate floor protection for the spikes.

Health and Safety and Insurance

Preliminary Visits and Risk Assessment

A preliminary visit is essential to enable the organiser (or teacher in the case of school group visits) to complete the necessary risk assessment, including health and safety and access issues (e.g., vehicular and disabled access).

Please contact us to arrange your visit to ensure that the church is open to avoid a wasted journey.

As the church is a historic building it contains uneven flooring, narrow walkways and limited lighting. Please ask us for further information on common hazards in our buildings.

Fire Prevention

Please ensure you are familiar with fire safety arrangements and exit routes in the church. You should consider fire safety when completing your event risk assessment, which may require you to provide door stewards. Fire extinguishers are provided near to the exit to aid safe exit in the event of a fire. If you wish to read our Fire Risk Assessment when completing your own risk assessment, please ask your CCT contact.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed anywhere in a CCT church or churchyard.

Gas cylinders

The use of gas and gas cylinders is strictly prohibited.

Insurance

You will need to provide CCT staff with a copy of your own event public liability insurance prior to your event.

Accidental Damage to the Building or Contents

Please inform the Trust as quickly as possible so that the matter may be investigated, and appropriate reimbursement agreed.

First Aid

Event organisers have the responsibility to provide adequate first aid trained personnel for all events. You should provide your own first aid equipment.

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

The Act was given royal ascent on the 3 April 2025 giving organisations and the government 24 months to implement it. A good summary can be found at:

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2025/04/03/martyns-law-factsheet/>

CCT churches included in the legislation are those that can host 200+ people at anyone time based on the Fire Risk Assessment capacity of the church. These churches are in the “standard duty premises” category. There are basic actions you can implement to help reduce the risk of attack and improve your response if an attack happens:

1. As part of the opening up routine, walk around the outside of the church looking for any unusual activity e.g. unknown parked vehicles close to the building, people scoping / watching the building in key locations, unattended bags, rubbish, gas cylinders etc. Repeat a couple of times through the day. Walk around the inside of the church looking for any unusual items, in particular those that look to have been hidden from view. Repeat through the day.
2. Be vigilant for suspicious looking people visiting who may be scoping out the church to leave a device in the future. Approach people and ask if you can help them, it will potentially put them off as they don't want your attention and it shows that you are not a soft target. If you are concerned someone has been doing this ring the Anti-Terrorism Hotline at 0800 789 321.
3. When setting up for an event only allow those actively involved in the event set up into the church whilst this happens. Secure the building once set up is complete until attendees arrive to prevent a terrorist placing a device in the church. For complicated set ups give those involved coloured lanyards to make it easier to spot someone who shouldn't be there.
4. When attendees arrive for an event, position a person on the door to manage the entrance, you could refuse entry for those carrying large bags for example.
5. Understand the Run Hide Tell principle. This is a response to someone gaining entry with a weapon they intend to use on the public. If you become aware of an attacker inside the building:

RUN – get away from the situation as quickly as possible, do not attempt to tackle the attacker. If you can get away from the building then do so.

HIDE – if you can't run out of the building find cover and hide, preferably a small space that you can barricade from the inside and be as quiet as possible

TELL – call 999 and wait for the police

6. Ensure you have as a minimum a full first aid kit available. You may wish to upgrade your

provision to include “Bleed Control Kits” or purchase an additional “Public Access Trauma Kit”.

Further information

Sale of Alcohol

If the event is open to the public and you wish to provide alcoholic drinks, the event organizer is required to complete and submit a [Temporary Event Notice](#) (TEN) to Bristol City Council, copying it to the local police. This must be provided no later than 10 working days before the day on which the event is to start. Please provide a copy of the TEN once received to your CCT contact.

Keys

It may be possible to provide you with a set of keys for the church around the time of your event, but please ensure that you return them to the church representative after use as any cost relating to lost keys (such as changed locks) would need to be met by you.

Lost or Stolen Goods

Please take care of your belongings and do not leave anything of value where it can be clearly seen, as the Trust cannot be held responsible for items lost, damaged or stolen whilst using its churches.

Restricted Areas

In some churches it is necessary to have restricted areas, which will be pointed out to you. We ask that you ensure that anyone using the church is aware of this.

Volunteer Support

We normally assign one of our event volunteers to support your event by opening up and showing you where everything is and locking up after you finish. We do not normally provide stewards. Please discuss any requirements with us at the earliest opportunity.

Schools Visits

We do not currently have provision for formal education sessions delivered by the CCT at our Bristol churches. Schools are very welcome to visit by prior arrangement, and there is a range of informal learning materials around the nave which you are welcome to make use of.

Education information about the church can be made available before your visit by prior request. Please email learning@thecct.org.uk if you are looking for a specific resource or would like any more information regarding learning at the CCT.

School visits will be supported by CCT volunteers or staff, depending on availability. While all our volunteers have undergone a reference process during their applications, we do not undertake DBS checks for our volunteers. Schools are responsible for ensuring that suitable risk assessments and safeguarding measures are in place, and that students are accompanied by an adequate number of adults.

Both the nave and the crypt of St John the Baptist can be made available for school visits. This is a sensitive historical building, and we ask that you follow the following guidelines at all times:

- Brief your pupils about their visit.
- Ask them to respect other visitors and the fabric of the building.
- Remember that you are responsible for the behaviour of your group and must remain with them at all times.

Publicity and Promotion

Please acknowledge the Churches Conservation Trust in any publicity –brochures, programmes, notices, press releases etc. (see page 9 – Promoting your Event). As far as possible, drafts should be agreed in advance.

We also ask that you ensure that the Trust's own literature remains available and easily seen in the church and that you do.

Contact Information

We strongly advise a visit before making a booking. To arrange a viewing, check availability or make a booking for all enquiries please contact Beth Thomas, Business Support Officer (West Region) west@thecct.org.uk Tel: 0117 929 1766 www.visitchurches.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Trust greatly appreciates your co-operation on these essential points.

If you have any other queries not covered by the above, we will be pleased to discuss them.

Promoting your event

The Churches Conservation Trust is keen to help make your event a success! Please follow our guidelines when creating your promotional materials, as well as referring to our helpful hints on all aspects of promoting your event:

1. The Trust logo should appear on all posters, leaflets, programmes, flyers, catalogues, and invitations, and is available in JPG format by email from your CCT contact.
2. Please include the following wording in all promotional material:

In partnership with the Churches Conservation Trust

3. You may find it useful to refer to this checklist when preparing flyers and posters to ensure that you have included:
 - the ticket price (including the concessionary rate) and details of where tickets can be purchased.
 - the time and date of the event.
 - the Trust's website address – www.visitchurches.org.uk (as well as your own if applicable).
 - the event organiser's contact details.
4. All drafts of promotional and publicity material should be approved by the CCT representative before going to print.
5. Please be aware that the cost of promotion and publicity materials is the responsibility of the event organiser.

We may also place details of your event on our website and can ensure posters and flyers are displayed in the church where your event is taking place.



Plan of St Thomas the Martyr, Bristol

- Emergency call point ★
Fire Extinguisher ▼
First Aid Kit +

