

How to Guide:

RELIGIOUS USE



CCT policy

The CCT's policy is to encourage use of the CCT church by the local parish where the parish would like to do so (and as long as such use would not impact negatively on the historic fabric which CCT has a duty to preserve). This can be a religious use or another use. However, everybody should inform the CCT contact of desired use and work with CCT on the planning of events.

The religious use of CCT churches must receive the support of the Diocesan Bishop and the incumbent and must conform to the policies of the Church of England and - in the case of weddings, to civil law. Where requests for religious use come from others, the CCT will always endeavour to follow the advice of the incumbent.

The law

Churches vested in the CCT remain consecrated buildings. Their use for worship is appropriate. As they have been withdrawn from regular worship by the Church of England their use is restricted by law. However, the Pastoral Measure 1983 (Section 44, paragraph 7) allows: use of a church or part of a church vested in the CCT for such worship (including worship by persons belonging to other Christian churches) as may be authorised by the Bishop after consulting the incumbent or priest in charge of the benefice in the area of which the church is situated. The maximum number of Sunday services is set at six per year.

Please note that playing or performing music and serving of alcohol during events is governed by legislation and the necessary licenses need to be in place. Please check with your CCT contact if you need further information.

Occasional services

Where the incumbent and the Bishop agree, CCT will normally permit any number of occasional services a year. These may be services arranged by the local parish church or by another recognised Christian Church.

'Occasional' may be interpreted as occasional to the normal activities of the worshipping church or occasional to the regular use of the CCT church. For example, a parish church may hold fairly regular outreach services at a CCT church but these would be "occasional" to the parish's main activities; likewise, a CCT

church used mainly as an arts centre may accommodate regular worship but this would be occasional to the use of the building.

If there is a clash of potential bookings between secular and religious use the final decision will rest with CCT, who will normally follow a policy of accepting the first booking made.

Where necessary building work is required on a church this will normally have to take precedence, but the policy is to be as helpful as possible.

Whenever CCT churches are used for services, we charge no hire fee but ask that a collection is taken to assist with running and maintenance costs. If the service is intended to support a local charity or the local parish church, the CCT contact may negotiate to share the collection going to such a purpose after expenses for the service have been deducted. The collection should be sent to the CCT contact. If no collection is held, a hire fee may apply.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals

The incumbent should have agreed a general policy regarding the use of the CCT church for such events with the Diocesan Bishop and informed the local CCT contact. If the policy is to favour such use in general terms, the incumbent will need to check the availability of the CCT's church before making any arrangements.

CCT recognises that it is appropriate for a Diocesan Bishop or the incumbent to decline the use of a CCT church for any such events if it is considered such use will be detrimental to the role of the parish church.

In recognition of the connection and commitment of volunteers, a discounted or waived fee for baptisms, weddings and funerals is possible, on agreement by the Head of Region. Ask your CCT contact if you'd like to apply to this opportunity.

Baptisms

Baptism is the sacrament of entry into the life of the Church. The CCT recognises that it will mostly be inappropriate in a CCT church since it will almost always take place in the building used by the local Christian community. However, on rare occasions when a baptism in a CCT church seems pastorally helpful to the parish church we charge a fee plus a % of the collection. The baptism must be recorded in the register of the parish church.

Weddings

When a wedding takes place in one of the CCT's churches it must be recorded in the register of the local parish church. A wedding in one of the CCT's churches requires a Special Licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Registrar. The issue of a Special Licence is subject to rules laid down by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A long-standing and continuing family connection with the church is usually needed.

Application for an Archbishop's Special Licence can be made only with the support of an Anglican priest (ideally from the incumbent) and after receiving the incumbent's agreement and confirmation that the registers can be made available at the time requested.

Ideally the incumbent will manage the application process to the Archbishop's Registry (1 The Sanctuary, Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3JT) for the couple and include the relevant assurances of support from the incumbent and the Diocesan Bishop, as well as confirmation from the CCT that the church is available.

A fee will be payable to the CCT, in addition to the usual fees payable to the officiating minister and the fee for the Archbishop's Special Licence. If the incumbent is conducting the ceremony, he/she may consider adding a fee to benefit the parish church.

A service of blessing following a civil marriage does not require an Archbishop's Special Licence, but does require the incumbent's permission, agreed with the Diocesan Bishop, and the availability of the church. There are no legal fees for this form of service, but the CCT will charge a fee.

CCT churches cannot be registered for Civil Weddings and Civil Partnerships.

Same sex marriage is not currently possible in a Church of England church, due to Church of England law.

Funerals

Funerals may take place in a CCT church if the incumbent agrees to this within a policy approved by the Diocesan Bishop and after the local CCT contact has been consulted to ensure no clash with other events or building works on the church.

Funeral services may also be held before the interment of a parishioner in a churchyard which is not vested in the CCT, on the same basis as above.

The parochial service fee goes to the CCT. Separately, the vicar could ask for a fee for officiating.

Burials

Some of the churchyards in which the CCT's churches stand have been legally closed for burials; others remain open. Of those that remain open, some are vested in the CCT, while many are not. The local CCT contact will be pleased to give advice about the status of particular churchyards.

Where churchyards vested in the CCT remain open for burials, permission will be given on the same basis as for baptisms, weddings and funerals. CCT will indicate the part of the churchyard in which an interment may be made.

Burials must be recorded in the register of the local parish church, and the usual fees for funerals and burials apply. The CCT receives the parochial fee for the funeral and also (where the churchyard is vested in the CCT) the fee for burial.