

# HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## ETHICS POLICY

### Summary

Holy Trinity Church, Haddington is a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church and operates on broad Christian principles, emphasising informed conscience, scripture, experience, and prayer for moral guidance, alongside evolving stances on social issues as they arise in current society. We reflect a spectrum from liberal to conservative views within our church and also within the broader Episcopal Church, with formal procedures in place (through the Episcopal Canons) for complaints and with a framework for accountability.

In Holy Trinity Church we have a team of Trustees whose role it is to aid and assist the Rector in delivering the aims of the church and charity. We also have a much wider team of volunteers amongst the membership of the church and this policy sets out our approach to how we treat each other. Without our volunteers we could not function.

It is important that the Vestry members (Trustees) ensure that:

- the Rector, current Contextual Student and musicians are paid and treated fairly and on time. The Rector has an annual review facilitated by the Diocese and the Student is reviewed formally by the Scottish Episcopal Institute where he is training. The scale of pay for the musicians is in line with RSCM guidance.
- volunteers have opportunities to do meaningful work to support the church without it being sacrificial to them personally
- donors' generosity is appropriately acknowledged, and they are treated in line with the Code of Fundraising practice and GDPR
- there are clear role descriptors of volunteer roles within the church that are reviewed periodically

### B. Volunteers

We're grateful to the many individuals who contribute their time and talents to ensure the smooth running of the church. Examples are administration of the Trinity Centre, building maintenance, roles which are regularly rota-d, hospitality, numerous ministry projects and teaching. The church simply could not function without their generous and regular commitment.

We're cognisant and supportive of Volunteer Scotland's 10 guiding principles which ensure volunteering is a rewarding experience and never exploitative.

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/volunteer-practice/volunteer-charter#10-key-principles>

In summary, these stipulate that:

1. Volunteering is a free choice
2. There is no financial reward.
3. Structures are in place to support volunteers
4. The work environment is safe and healthy and free from harassment.
5. Volunteers should not be used instead of carry out the duties formerly carried out by paid workers
6. Volunteers should not be used instead of paid workers or undertake their duties during an industrial dispute
7. Volunteers should not be used to reduce contract costs

8. Volunteers should not be used to bypass minimum wage legislation
9. Volunteers and paid workers should be given the opportunity to contribute to the development and monitoring of volunteering policies
10. Volunteer roles should be designed around the needs of both the organisation and volunteers

## **Meeting the costs of volunteering resources**

As a church we recognise that our volunteers come from all walks of life and have different means, so we do not want them to be out of pocket. This is our commitment to ensure fairness and equity and remove any barriers to volunteering.

## **C. Key Ethical Areas & Stances**

**LGBTQI+ Inclusion:** The SEC has moved towards greater inclusion, with recent votes allowing for same-sex marriage, though this remains an area of decision for our Vestry and incumbent

**Divorce & Remarriage:** The church takes a compassionate approach, acknowledging complex situations.

**Ministry:** Discussions around ordination of women and LGBTQI+ clergy have evolved, leading to diverse views but more inclusive practices within Holy Trinity.

## **D. Donors and Funders**

### **Donors**

We want to ensure we thank appropriately the people who give money to support and enhance the life and work of the church. This means acknowledging their gifts, providing updates about our work and its impact, and being intentional in engaging, informing and asking.

Although we have paid accountants who manage the book keeping for us, we still have a Treasurer who is a volunteer. We ensure that:

1. Larger gifts (typically 10 times the average) are appropriately acknowledged and receipted
2. The church collectively understands the impact of giving and support and that this is explained periodically at the AGM or through sermons
3. We are sensitive to the fact that not everyone is in a position to give
4. That we are appreciative of people making provision in their Will to support the work of the church in the years ahead
5. That Gift Aid claims are made regularly to boost the value of donations by 25% (basic rate taxpayers)

### **Respectful treatment of donors**

We are respectful of people's privacy. We collect, use, store and delete their personal data in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code> and UK GDPR legislation.

### **Funders**

When we do receive grants from funding organisations, e.g. for specific project work or building renovation, we:

1. Acknowledge grants appropriately
2. Comply with their terms and conditions
3. Use funds only for the purposes given
4. Record 'unrestricted' and 'restricted' purpose grants in our accounting systems and accounts
5. Provide reports by the specified deadlines to funders as required with deadlines diarised
6. Invite key funders to visit the church and see the work they funded
7. Include a list of funding organisations/agencies in our Annual Report and Accounts which is publicly available on our website and OSCR's

### **Declining financial support in certain circumstances**

In certain circumstances, we might decline funding e.g. where we know it came from investment in products known to cause serious harm to life. Similarly, we might decline financial support where association with an organisation is likely to cause reputational harm to the church. This is at the discretion of our Vestry who are the church's charity trustees responsible for its governance.