

DRUGS & ALCOHOL POLICY

**Church: St. Mary Magdalene with Sale West
Community Church**

Ashton on Mersey

**Address: 44 MOSS LANE
SALE
M33 6GD**

(Version 2)

Date: September 2023

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1. DEFINITIONS

The following terms will be used within this document

St Mary Magdalene with Sale West Community Church will be referred to as 'The Church'.

The term 'church buildings' refers to the church itself and the associated buildings meeting rooms etc. It also encompasses the Sale West community rooms used for church services or other church activities.

The term 'premises' refer to the buildings and associated land owned by the church i.e. the car park.

The term 'Drugs' will refer to any illegal substances, party drugs, legal highs, solvent abuse or the abuse of prescription drugs.

2. THE NATIONAL SITUATION

Within the UK 2.8 million people may be regarded as alcohol dependant and 33,000 die every year from alcohol related harm. (120,000 die each year from tobacco related causes). Millions of people suffer from adverse health, criminal activities, accidental injury or violence resulting from consumption of these substances. Illegal substances also lead to health harm, criminal activity and nearly 3,000 deaths each year.

All of us are affected by the use of both legal and illegal drugs. As well as adverse personal experience, our society has to pay for the police, judicial, health and welfare services needed to address these issues.

It is vital that as Christians we should help those who are hurting and work to prevent harm before it occurs.

3. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

There is no direct Biblical teaching about tobacco or any other drug except alcohol. The Bible is clear that drunkenness is to be avoided but leaves no definite indication about the moderate use of alcohol. It is likely that the Jewish culture and relatively weak wines of Bible times resulted in a low level of alcohol related harm, particularly when compared to the situation today.

General principles that apply to all drug use, legal or illegal, include:

- The need to care for Creation and acknowledge that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.
- The need for clarity of mind (1 Peter 4:7)
- The need to care for others, including by example.
- Helping those who are hurting.
- Obeying the law of the land
- Being in the world but not of it.

4. BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Church does not condone the use of illegal substances, party drugs, legal highs, solvent abuse or the misuse of prescription drugs as such using or supplying such substances is prohibited within the premises.

The use of tobacco is prohibited inside the building.

The use of e-cigarettes (vaping) is prohibited inside the building.

The use of alcohol on church premises is allowed at events provided that this is in moderation. Alcoholic wine will be used for communion but a non-alcoholic option will also be provided.

5. ALCOHOL POLICY

Within our church there are those who adopt an alcohol free lifestyle and those who drink in moderation. We acknowledge this difference and accept that on a personal level this must remain an issue of individual choice. There may also be members of the church who find themselves dependant on alcohol on a day to day basis. We should endeavour to treat these people with respect and offer what practical help we can. A list of organisations to refer people to should be available in the church office.

Events on Church Premises:

Alcoholic drinks are allowed at events on our premises; however the organisers of such events must carefully consider the situation, age and attitudes of people present and take the appropriate action. This action may be a no alcohol policy or alcohol allowed and where alcohol is allowed planning for the event should include steps to take if a person is found to be intoxicated. We have also opted to continue to use traditional alcoholic wine mixed with water for communion and to also provide a non-alcoholic alternative.

Events Outside Church Premises:

In order to be consistent, we will ensure that we take care such that events outside the premises maintain this corporate concern.

Where 'church events' are held in people's homes they should consider carefully the situations, ages and attitudes of those present.

Where a church is participating in an event held elsewhere the same considerations should apply alongside those imposed by the organisers of the event.

6. DRUGS POLICY

As stated previously the church does not condone the use of drugs.

It should be noted that the supply or possession of drugs is a criminal offence as is allowing or suffering a person to supply or possess drugs on the premises. It is therefore not acceptable to turn a blind eye to this sort of activity.

Taking or supplying of drugs by the church leadership, staff, volunteers or general membership is not appropriate and where discovered should be dealt with as described below -

Leadership and staff – dealt with using procedures defined in the Employee Handbook. Offered appropriate counselling, pastoral care and referred to appropriate organisations. Where criminal activity is involved it will be necessary to involve the police.

Volunteers – Determine with the group organiser if the volunteering should be terminated. Offered appropriate counselling, pastoral care and referred to appropriate organisations. Where criminal activity is involved it will be necessary to involve the police.

General Membership - Offered appropriate counselling, pastoral care and referred to appropriate organisations. Where criminal activity is involved it will be necessary to involve the police.

In all cases prayer can also be offered.

Other Person – If it is found that any other person is involved in the taking or supplying drugs on church premises then this is a criminal activity and the police should be contacted.

If it is found that any other person is taking drugs on the premise then appropriate counselling can be offered but the police should also be contacted.

7. YOUTH

The above alcohol and drugs policies also apply to the youth and children's area of church life. Younger people are increasingly experimenting with and becoming involved in the drug culture and as a church we must always be on the lookout for signs that would indicate involvement in either alcohol or drug use.

The Youth and Childrens workers should be aware of signs to watch for. They should include the issues surrounding the use of alcohol and drugs within their programs.

The safeguarding policy will determine what action will be taken if a child is found to be involved in alcohol or drugs.

The welfare of the child is of paramount importance within the context of alcohol or drug abuse whether this involves the child or a family member.

There will be no alcohol permitted at youth events whether on or off the premises.

If alcohol is found on the premises during a youth event then this will be confiscated and disposed of.

If drugs or drug taking equipment is found during a youth event then this will be disposed of as described below in the “Confiscation of Drugs” section.

In either case there should be an attempt made to determine who brought the alcohol or drugs onto the premises and if identified then the safeguarding policy should be invoked.

If a young person comes to an event under the influence of alcohol or drugs then the safeguarding policy should be invoked.

8. POSITIVE ACTIONS

Leaders, staff and volunteers must take positive action if any of the following are discovered

- The supplying or attempting to supply drugs on the premises or at church events off the premises.
- The use of drugs on the premises or at church events off the Premises.
- Excessive use of alcohol on the premises or at church events off the Premises.

Positive action may include, police involvement, asking a person to leave, offering advice on counselling or appropriate organisations to help the person. Where youth or children are involved it could also include invoking the safeguarding policy and involvement of parents /carers.

Where someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs it must be determined -

- If they are a danger to themselves and/or others.
- If there are sufficient leaders/helpers to deal with the situation and provide a safe environment for everyone.

- If the team is confident in handling the situation.
- If medical help may be appropriate.

9. CONFISCATION OF DRUGS

If drugs are found on the premises or taken from a person then the following actions should be taken.

The drugs should be placed in a sealed bag and the police contacted. The date, time and location found should be recorded. The bag should then be placed in a safe place. The police should provide information as to how the drugs are to be disposed of, this may involve them or the council collecting them for disposal.

If discarded syringes are found on the premises these should be treated with extreme caution. These should be handled as little as possible and only if wearing suitable gloves. It is imperative that the needle is not touched. If a sharps box is available any discarded syringes should be placed in this. If there is no sharps box then a secure box should be used which would not allow contact with the syringe.

10. EDUCATION

Drug issues affect all parts of society so we will encourage all church organisations to include the subject in their programme. Appropriate resources will also be made available to the church community.

11. COMMUNITY

We will be aware of drug issues that arise in the community.

12. COUNSELLING

We seek to help those who suffer from the abuse of alcohol or other drugs, supporting them or referring them to other appropriate organisations. We will try and ensure that, should a drug or alcohol related situation arise, there will be someone available to deal with it and that a list of useful phone numbers will be kept in the office. Where appropriate, we will offer prayer.

13. SOURCES OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The below is a list of agencies and charities offering help with alcohol and/or drug problems, they are by no means to only agencies and charities which offer these services.

Alcohol Dependency

Drinkline

Helpline : 0800 917 8282

Drinkline is a free, confidential helpline for people who are concerned about their own drinking, or someone else's

NHS Choices Website - <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Alcohol-misuse/Pages/introduction.aspx>

National Health Service advice page

Drinkaware

<http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>

Drinkaware works to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK

Wearewithyou

<http://wearewithyou.org.uk>

With You is a charity providing free, confidential support to people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health.

Al-Anon

<http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk>

Provides support to anyone whose life is, or has been affected by someone else's drinking regardless of whether that person is still drinking or not.

Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

AA is an organisation of men and women who share their experience with each other hoping to solve their problems and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Drug Dependence

NHS Choices Website

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/drugs/Pages/Drugtreatment.aspx>

National Health Service advice page

Wearewithyou

<http://wearewithyou.org.uk>

With You is a charity providing free, confidential support to people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health.

Talk to Frank

<http://talktofrank.com/>

National drugs awareness site for young people and parents/carers

Narcotics Anonymous

Helpline : 0300 999 1212

<http://ukna.org>

N.A, is a non-profit fellowship of recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. Membership is open to anyone with a drug problem seeking help, regardless of what drug or combination of drugs have been used, and irrespective of age, sex, religion, race, creed or class. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs.

14. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comment
1	June 2012	Initial version ?
2	February 2023	Re-written based on Developing a Drug Policy (hopeuk.org) and Woodford Baptist Church : Drug and Alcohol Policy
	July 2023	Further amendments following comments at PCC, to clarify actions to be taken.