

## **Drug & Alcohol Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to explain the Cirencester Baptist Church (CBC) policy on the use of alcohol and the taking of drugs whilst in the church, on church related business or leading / taking part in any church related activity. It applies whether on church premises, hired premises or visiting at another location.

Illegal drug taking and the increasing level of alcohol consumption in society, in particular with young people, is a cause for genuine concern. In this policy, CBC outlines its commitment to a positive handling of those found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, whilst staying within the bounds of the law.

CBC is committed to protecting and safeguarding:

- Pastoral and ministry staff, administrators, support workers
- Church elders, deacons, leadership team members, youth and children's workers, visiting speakers and preachers
- Church members, regular attendees, friends and neighbours
- Other users of the church, attendees of church functions and visitors from overseas

For clarification on any part of this document, please contact one of the elders or a member of the leadership team.

### **2. Biblical Principles**

The Biblical teaching about alcohol is limited. The Bible is clear that drunkenness is to be avoided but gives no definite indication about the moderate use of alcohol.

There is no direct Biblical teaching about tobacco or any other drug except alcohol. General principles that apply to excessive alcohol use and all drug use, legal or illegal, include:

- The need to care for God's creation and acknowledge that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.
- The need for clarity of mind.
- 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.

### **3. Alcohol Policy**

Whilst CBC does not call for abstinence (in the case of alcohol) it recognises the effect consistent drinking and the taking of illegal substances can have on an individual's relationship with God, their health, work and personal relationships. CBC recognises these dangers.

CBC respects an individual's right to drink alcohol in a sociable and measured way, whilst staying within one's own limits, the confines of the law and being able to conduct oneself in a positive and worthy manner. However the following stipulations do apply:

- Alcoholic drinks will not be allowed at any event on church premises unless agreed beforehand by the elders.
- As standard practice, we would encourage the use of a wide range of attractive alcohol-free alternatives and only agree to the use of alcohol by exception.
- We will continue to use non-alcoholic wine for communion.
- We will foster links with support organisations in order to be able to provide pastoral care to those who may need it.

In order to be consistent, we will ensure that events outside the premises follow the same principles. Offsite events carry the following stipulations:

- Anyone representing CBC at functions or conferences, either within or outside of normal working hours, have a duty of care to act appropriately. Therefore they are expected to be moderate in drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving themselves or others.
- Where 'church events' are held in people's homes, organisers should consider carefully the situations, ages and attitudes of those present and take appropriate action.
- Anyone looking after young people and / or children on behalf of CBC must not drink alcohol whilst on duty, take young people or children to an establishment whose sole purpose is to sell alcohol, buy alcohol for young people, or encourage the consumption of alcohol.
- Staff and volunteers should take every opportunity to offer a good role model of Christian discipleship within the 'freedom' given to us. (1 Corinthians 10:23).

#### 4. Drugs Policy

CBC does not condone the use of illegal substances. The use of illegal substances, 'Party Drugs', 'Legal Highs', solvents and the misuse of prescription drugs is not permitted.

- The taking or supplying of illegal substances whilst at church or in one's own social time is not appropriate for Pastoral or ministry staff, elders, deacons, leadership team members, church members or anyone connected with CBC.
- A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence for employees and will be dealt with in accordance with the CBC's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.
- For any lay personnel, volunteers, church members or persons connected with CBC found to be under the influence of an illegal substance, a consultation will take place in accordance with biblical principles laid down in the CBC constitution.

In addition to the above, CBC are committed to providing support and pastoral care to those who have been/are affected by the use of illegal substances. Therefore:

- We will foster relationships with specialist support organisations outside of the church
- We will be aware of drug issues that arise in the community and be prepared to comment on or have an input into them.

#### 5. Positive Action

Staff, leaders and volunteers MUST take positive action if they find anyone:

- Supplying or attempting to supply illegal drugs on the premises that they are responsible for.
- Using illegal drugs on the premises for which they are responsible.
- Consuming alcohol, having alcohol on their person, or bringing alcohol onto the premises without prior permission (Failure to take action to stop any of the above could result in prosecution).
- You must inform your church leader or one of the elders of any incident within 12 hours and document it in the form of a report.
- Positive action may also include calling the police.

On coming across, or suspecting someone to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs the following decisions should be considered before taking further action:

- a. Is the individual, or could the individual endanger themselves or others?
- b. Are there adequate leaders/helpers to deal with this situation and create a safe environment for the other members?
- c. Is the team confident in handling the situation?

#### 6. Advice and Counselling

- We will seek to help those who suffer from the use of alcohol or other drugs, supporting them or referring them to other appropriate organisations.
- We encourage anyone with an alcohol or drug related problem to seek appropriate help immediately. The church will not sit in judgement, but rather aim to provide love, care and support.
- We will aim to deal constructively and sympathetically with an employee or volunteer's alcohol or drug related problem whenever possible, as long as the care and safety of staff, volunteers and members is not compromised in any way.
- We will offer prayer and support to those affected by the misuse of alcohol and drugs

Useful Links include:

[www.hopeuk.org](http://www.hopeuk.org)  
[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)  
[www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org](http://www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org)  
[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

In an emergency phone 999 and tell the crew everything we know.

## 7. Young People

Young people are at particular risk of experimenting (a teen brain is not always good at keeping itself safe) and then regularly using various substances.

- We will ensure that those who work with young people have the knowledge to provide both information and support.
- We will ensure that there are common procedures to be followed if illegal drugs are found on the premises or used at or near a youth event.
- We will consider what should happen if a young person comes to an event under the influence of any substance.
- Our Safeguarding policy and guidelines will be applied as appropriate where, for example, a young person needs counselling.

We acknowledge the need to assess each relevant circumstance and situation as it arises, and to consider the questions at the end of section 5 above, but in general terms:

Any young person who is believed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed entry into church premises. Where possible the leaders of the group or activity will take steps to ensure the young person is safe and/or not a danger to themselves or others outside of the premises and will contact parents/carers or relevant authorities where appropriate.

If a young person is found to be in possession of drugs or alcohol on church premises they will be asked to leave the premises immediately and the group leaders will consider whether it is necessary or appropriate to remove the alcohol or drugs from the young person and/or involve the police or other relevant authority. The leaders will also consider whether the young person will be allowed to attend future group sessions. In such circumstances the situation and any action or decisions taken will be recorded in writing

September 2022