



# **ARARAT BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Policy on:**

## **Political Considerations & Campaigning**

**Created: 30/12/2025**

**Approved by Diaconate: 22.01.2026**

**Reviewed: xx/xx/xxxx**

**Reviewed: xx/xx/xxxx**

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## **Introduction:**

The Charity Commission uses the term 'political activity' to describe activities or campaigning to change or influence policies or decisions taken by:

- national, devolved, local or overseas government.
- public bodies including international organisations such as the UN and World Bank, and national or local organisations such as regulators or NHS Trusts

Charities may take part in political activity that supports their purpose and is in their best interests.

There may be situations where carrying out political activity is the best way for the diaconate to support their charity's purpose. However, political activity must not become the reason for the charity's existence.

Charities must remain independent and must not give their support to a political party.

## **Ararat's Purpose and Activities as found in the Church's Constitution**

The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.

In fulfilling the Purpose, the Church will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others that will vary from time to time with activities being initiated, expanded or closed as appropriate.

The Activities may include, but are not restricted to:

- Regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching.
- Baptism as defined in the Union's Declaration of Principle
- The Communion of the Lord's Supper which shall normally be observed at least once a month.
- Evangelism and mission, locally regionally and internationally
- The teaching, encouragement, welcome and inclusion of young people
- Nurture and growth of Christian disciples
- Education and training for Christian and community service
- Giving and encouraging pastoral care
- Supporting and encouraging charitable social action in the UK and abroad
- Encouraging relationships with, and supporting Baptists and other Christians

## **The Bible and Politics**

The Bible provides a framework for understanding the role of government and the responsibilities of believers in political matters.

**Key principles include:**

- **God's Sovereignty:** All rulers and governing structures are under God's control, as seen in Genesis 1:1 and Colossians 1:16.
- **Respect for Authority:** Believers are instructed to submit to legitimate authorities, as stated in Romans 13:1-2.
- **Justice and Equity:** The Bible encourages believers to advocate for justice and equity, as in Micah 6:8.

It is clear therefore, that Christians must consider Politics as part of the purpose of the Church, taking into account the law as summarised by the Charity Commission.

**As a church community Ararat WILL therefore:**

- Engage in political campaigning only in order to support its purposes as stated on Page 1 of this document, and in keeping with the Biblical principles outlined above.
- Remain independent and neutral, and will not promote, or be seen to be promoting any political party or candidate.
- Support or be seen to support only those policies, of any party which further the purposes of the Church.
- Engage in political activity only when it is in the best interests of the church and its purpose to do so.

**As a church community Ararat WILL NOT therefore:**

- Promote or be seen to promote any political party or political candidate even if that person is a member of the Church.
- Engage in political campaigning when it is not related to any of the Church's purposes and is not in Ararat's best interests to do so.

The accountability and responsibility for ensuring that Ararat's political interest and activity operates in keeping with Ararat's purpose and activities, and is in the best interests of the Church rests with the church's diaconate (Charity Trustees)

**Specific Political Scenarios****Parliamentary or other political election processes**

- Ararat will remain neutral, and independent, not supporting or appearing to support any particular candidate or political party.

- Hustings may be held on Ararat Church premises, but care must be taken to ensure that all parties standing in the election are invited to participate.
- Individual candidates should be treated fairly and given equal time to promote their policies.
- Ararat will ensure that any chairperson provided maintains a position of neutrality.
- Ararat can and will not be held responsible for any personal views expressed by those attending a hustings meeting – their views can not be interpreted as those of the Church.

### **Hiring of rooms within the Church Centre for Political Meetings**

Ararat has within its premises a number of rooms which may be hired by members of the community for a variety of purposes. A broad range of groups hire space within the centre, currently including group meetings of several mainline Political Parties. Given the Charity Commission's emphasis on maintaining neutrality and not allowing for any appearance of bias, the Diaconate have considered the possibility of various political groups/parties, with more extreme views requesting to hire space within the centre. This has not been an issue historically, but forthwith any political organisations which are banned or deemed illegal by UK Law will not be allowed to hire space within Ararat's premises.

To mitigate the risks posed to the church from political demonstrations, adverse publicity or unwelcome media interest, Ararat will prepare a document to be signed by political groups wishing to hire rooms on our premises. The document can be seen in Appendix 1

This change in policy will be explained to the current political groups hiring space within the centre. They will be requested to sign this document in order to continue with their hire agreements. All new political groups hiring space within the Church centre will complete the document as part of their hire agreement.

### **Hiring space within the Church Centre for use as a Polling Station**

As is the case with other public buildings Ararat has historically been used as a Polling Station for both local and national elections. Elections will allow for voting for any of the political parties fielding candidates at the election and does not therefore create any appearance of bias.

Ararat will remain entirely neutral during this process and will neither allow individual parties to canvas support on its premises, nor to post campaign posters or leave materials supporting the cause of any political group, either on the election day or at any other time.

### **Political activity by Members or Attendees at Ararat Baptist Church**

Certain members and friends of the Church may be involved in political activity through their employment, or in their roles as Councillors where they may have an allegiance to a political party. Ararat will make clear that the political views of individuals within the congregation are their own personal views and not those of the Church. Such individuals must make explicit in any written or verbal communications in the form of political campaigning/canvassing, that the views expressed are their own and those of the political party they represent, and NOT those of the Church. Ararat will not allow such individuals to campaign or canvas votes on the Church's premises.

### **Campaigning and political activity which supports Christian principles and Ararat's purposes.**

The Bible is a 'political' book, and the Christian faith requires beliefs and actions which may be perceived to be politically motivated. Examples might include:

- Writing to Councillors or the MP to support a particular campaign, or to express views on an Act before parliament
- Support for asylum seekers and refugees
- Writing letters of support to those detained unjustly in the UK or other countries.
- Joining the fight for justice on behalf of the oppressed
- Championing the cause of the underdog
- Caring for our planet and related eco/green issues

All such activity is in keeping with Ararat's purpose and activities as set out in the Church's constitution and should therefore be encouraged. Ararat will seek to ensure that such activity is a measured response to the world's needs and remains just a component part of our worship.

### **Implementing this Policy:**

This Policy will be made available to all members and friends of Ararat through digital distribution and to the general public by placing it with our other policies on the Church's website.

This Policy will be reviewed annually as part of Ararat's Cycle of Business when amendments may be made or the Policy replaced with an updated version.

**DVW/12.25**

**To be completed by Political organisations wishing to hire space within the church for meetings of a political nature:**

- The venue for the meeting, (Ararat Baptist Church) must not be publicly advertised. Any advertising should state that the venue for the meeting is available by contacting the event coordinator.
- No campaigning should take place on church premises.
- Ararat may not be used as a meeting point for any political demonstration.
- Posters, banners and any other such materials may be displayed only in the space that has been hired, and out of sight of other groups attending the church. They must be removed at the end of the meeting.
- No party-political posters or leaflets may be left on church premises for members of the church or the public to collect.
- We will not hire space for meetings to any recognised extremist groups or those which are banned or illegal.
- We do not allow members of the press, radio, television or other public media groups to attend political meetings.
- When used as a polling centre, no campaigning amongst members of the public attending the premises is allowed

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| <b>Name of event coordinator:</b>  |  |
| <b>Date and time of Hire:</b>  |  |
| <b>Type of meeting:</b>  |  |
| <b>Attendance numbers expected (approx.)</b>   |  |
| <b>I agree to the terms of the Hire Agreement and to comply with the Terms and Conditions pertaining to Political Group Meetings</b> |  |
| <b>Signature</b>   |  |
| <b>Date</b>  |  |