



ARARAT BAPTIST CHURCH
Engaging External Speakers
Policy and Procedures

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Approved by the Diaconate: 08.01.2026

Reviewed: xx/xx/xxxx

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Introduction:

From time-to-time Ararat Baptist Church engages external speakers to occupy the pulpit, provide teaching on a variety of subjects for the benefit of the congregation, or for any of the groups held under the auspices of the church.

This Policy and Procedural document aims to offer guidance for the engagement of such speakers in keeping with Charity Commission guidance. It applies to the engagement of an external speaker by any group organised in the name of Ararat Baptist Church.

The main objective of this Policy is to ensure that any external speaker engaged by the church should conduct themselves professionally, respectfully and to speak in full recognition of the Declaration of Principle of the Baptist Union (BUGB)

Policy Statement:

Ararat Baptist Church requires that any external speaker invited by the church to speak to any of its groups, does not break the law or breach the lawful rights of others. Whilst the law promotes and protects freedom of speech and debate, it also places reasonable limits on those freedoms:

- We require that all speakers have a polite and tolerant approach.
- Ararat is an inclusive church, and all speakers are required to be respectful, and not to discriminate against any of the protected characteristics as stipulated in the Equalities Act 2010
- There must be no incitement to break the law or hate speech.
- Speakers should align themselves with Ararat's purpose and support its mission and values.
- All events must comply with Ararat's Safeguarding Policy especially when children or adults at risk may be present.

Procedures:

1. Speaker Selection Process

Where an external speaker is required for a service or an event, anyone may suggest an appropriate individual. Ararat seeks to encourage diversity amongst its speakers and this should be considered in choosing a suitable speaker for an event

Suggested individuals will be considered by the Diaconate, or by the Events Committee, taking into account (their):

- Alignment with Ararat's purpose and mission
- Their knowledge and experience relating to the subject to be addressed.
- Their ability to inspire and engage an audience.
- Any public statements they have made and any known affiliations.
- Any potential reputational, legal or safeguarding risks to the Church

The final agreement to invite a specific speaker will be taken by the Diaconate, who will be accountable to the Church for its selection.

2. Invitation Protocol

Potential speakers will be approached by either email or letter. This should include details of the event, what Ararat requires, any expectations, payment (if considered to be appropriate) and any other relevant information.

Speakers should be prepared to answer questions concerning training in Safeguarding, DBS checks etc and to provide evidence of both, should this be considered necessary.

Speakers will be given background information about Ararat Baptist Church, its mission and values and the size and constituency of the audience, so that they may better align their talk to the needs of those present'.

3. Agreement and Confirmation

Should the speaker accept the invitation, this should be confirmed in writing on behalf of Ararat, and information sought from the speaker concerning any audiovisual or other requirements. The speaker's travel arrangements and any need for hospitality should be ascertained and subsequently arranged. The speaker should be equipped with the name and contact details of a specific individual (the Event Coordinator) with whom to liaise concerning the event.

4. Event day management

The Event Coordinator will liaise with the speaker to welcome them and to deal with any issues which might arise, last minute changes, requirements, etc.

In the unlikely event that the speaker deviates from the topic or engages in any discriminatory speech, or otherwise makes comments that appear to be in breach of Ararat's mission and purpose, a designated Trustee will have the right to pause the presentation in order to address these concerns privately and sensitively.

Record keeping:

The following information should be documented in the Minutes of the Diaconate and dated accordingly:

- Suggested names of potential external speakers
- Deliberations concerning the suitability of each.
- The name of the speaker to be approached in the first instance
- A comprehensive consideration of any potential risks associated with the selection of this individual.
- A brief review of the event and any adverse issues associated with the selection of speaker.
- Information pertaining to the speaker will be kept confidentially in accordance with Ararat's data retention schedule.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented upon approval by the diaconate and will be reviewed with a view to amendment or replacement, annually, as part of the Diaconate's Cycle of Business

DVW/12.25