



BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Dog Policy for Weddings / Civil Ceremonies in the Town Hall / Corn Exchange

1. Purpose

We recognise that the presence of a loved dog can sometimes enhance the enjoyment of a special occasion. This policy therefore outlines the terms and conditions for allowing dogs in the Town Hall / Corn Exchange when the venue is hired in its entirety for weddings / civil ceremonies. The Town Council is committed to ensuring a safe, comfortable, and inclusive environment for all users, including those who wish to bring their dogs.

It should be noted that assistance dogs (e.g., guide dogs for the visually impaired, hearing dogs, etc.) are permitted at all times, regardless of the venue hire conditions. These dogs are exempt from the deposit requirement and other conditions outlined in this policy.

In the UK, it is against the law to own certain types of dog and they are therefore not permitted entry to the venue. The list can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/control-dog-public/banned-dogs>

2. General Policy

Dogs are permitted within the Town Hall / Corn Exchange only under the following conditions:

- The venue is hired in its entirety, meaning all public and private areas of the venue are exclusively used by the hirer and their guests.
- The hirer must ensure that their dog(s) comply with all the terms set out in this policy.
- A standard cleaning charge of £50 is added to the booking charge for the entire venue.

3. Conditions of Dog Attendance

- **Prior Notification:** The hirer must inform the council at the time of booking that they intend to bring a dog(s) onto the premises. This allows the venue to prepare appropriately.
- **Maximum Number of Dogs:** The hirer may bring up to five dogs to the venue.
- **Dog Behaviour:** The hirer is responsible for ensuring that the dog(s) are well-behaved at all times. Dogs must be kept under control and should not disrupt the event or pose a risk to the safety and comfort of others.
- **Lead Requirement:** Dogs must remain on a short lead while inside the venue.
- **Supervision:** The hirer must ensure that dogs are supervised at all times while on the premises.
- **Cleaning and Waste Disposal:** The hirer is responsible for cleaning up after their dog(s) and disposing of any waste off site.
- **Health and Safety:** Dogs must be in good health, vaccinated, and free from any contagious conditions.
- **Noise Considerations:** If the dog(s) cause excessive noise (e.g. persistent barking), the hirer must take immediate action to address the issue. The council reserves the right to ask the hirer to remove the dog(s) if noise becomes disruptive.

4. Damage Deposit

A refundable deposit of £200 will be required from the hirer to cover any damage caused by the dog(s) to the venue or property. The deposit will be refunded in full, provided there is no damage.

- **Assessment:** After the event, the venue will be inspected for any damage or additional cleaning costs above the standard cleaning charge of £50 added to the booking charge for dogs. If damage is found or extra cleaning is required due to the presence of the dog(s), the cost will be deducted from the deposit.
- **Refund:** The remaining deposit will be refunded within 10 days following the event, assuming there is no damage or additional costs incurred.

5. Exclusions

- **Certain Areas:** Dogs are not permitted in areas designated as food preparation or service areas, or any other areas where dogs could pose a risk to health and safety.

6. Council Liability

The hirer acknowledges and accepts that the council will not be held responsible for any harm, injury, or illness that may occur to any dog(s) on the premises during the event. This includes, but is not limited to, the ingestion of foreign objects (e.g., food remnants or other potential hazards) and it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure their dog(s) are supervised and kept safe throughout the event.

7. Responsibility of the Hirer

- **Liability:** The hirer is responsible for any damage caused by their dog(s) to the venue, other attendees, or property. Any costs incurred as a result of damage or cleaning required will be charged to the hirer.
- **Insurance:** The hirer is encouraged to ensure they have adequate insurance coverage to protect against any incidents involving their dog(s) during the event.

8. Health & Safety Compliance

- **Risk Assessment:** The hirer must assess the risk related to the presence of dogs at the event, especially if any special conditions are involved (e.g., large gatherings, events with food).
- **Emergency Protocols:** In case of an emergency involving the dog(s), the hirer must ensure that they have access to contact details for animal services or veterinarians and take necessary steps for immediate assistance if required.

9. Enforcement

The council reserves the right to take appropriate action if the terms of this policy are not adhered to, including:

- Asking the hirer to remove the dog(s) from the venue.
- Withholding or retaining the security deposit in case of damage, excessive cleaning required, or disruption.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and may be updated or amended based on feedback, changing regulations, or council considerations.

Conclusion

By agreeing to this policy, the hirer acknowledges their responsibility for the well-being of their dog(s), the safety of the venue, and compliance with all outlined conditions. The Town Council aims to provide a welcoming and safe environment for all users, and this policy ensures that dogs can be included responsibly when the venue is hired in its entirety for weddings / civil ceremonies.

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