



The Friends of All Saints' Church, Shillington

Registered Charity Number 1060329

Campaigns and Political Activity Policy

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Introduction

- **legal requirement:** to be a charity an organisation must be established for charitable purposes only, which are for the public benefit. An organisation will not be charitable if its purposes are political
- campaigning and political activity can be legitimate and valuable activities for charities to undertake
- **legal requirement:** however, political campaigning, or political activity, as defined in this guidance, must be undertaken by a charity only in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purposes. Unlike other forms of campaigning, it must not be the continuing and sole activity of the charity.
- there may be situations where carrying out political activity is the best way for trustees to support the charity's purposes. A charity may choose to focus most, or all, of its resources on political activity for a period. The key issue for charity trustees is the need to ensure that this activity is not, and does not become, the reason for the charity's existence.
- charities can campaign for a change in the law, policy or decisions where such change would support the charity's purposes. Charities can also campaign to ensure that existing laws are observed.
- **legal requirement:** however, a charity cannot exist for a political purpose, which is any purpose directed at furthering the interests of any political party, or securing or opposing a change in the law, policy or decisions either in this country or abroad.
- **legal requirement:** in the political arena, a charity must stress its independence and ensure that any involvement it has with political parties is balanced. A charity must not give support or funding to a political party, nor to a candidate or politician.
- a charity may give its support to specific policies advocated by political parties if it would help achieve its charitable purposes. However, trustees must not allow the charity to be used as a vehicle for the expression of the political views of any individual trustee or staff member (in this context the Charity Commission means personal or party political views).
- **legal requirement:** as with any decision they make, when considering campaigning and political activity charity trustees must carefully weigh up the possible benefits against the costs and risks in deciding whether the campaign is likely to be an effective way of furthering or supporting the charity's purposes.
- **legal requirement:** when campaigning, charity trustees must comply not only with charity law, but other civil and criminal laws that may apply. Where applicable they should also comply with the Code of the Advertising Standards Authority
- a charity can campaign using emotive or controversial material, where this is lawful and justifiable in the context of the campaign. Such material must be factually accurate and have a legitimate evidence base
- the principles of charity campaigning and political activity are the same, whether the activity is carried out in the United Kingdom or overseas

Policy

Given the nature of our charitable aims and the scale of our activities, it is deemed highly unlikely that political campaigning would ever form part of our remit.

However, it is our policy that: -

- Any suggestion of political campaigning in support of a law or change to a law, for example, must be discussed by the Trustees and, if recommended, put to the full membership of the Friends before any action is taken.
- Similarly, any proposed public support of individual policies supported by specific political parties must be discussed by the Trustees and, if recommended, put to the full membership of the Friends before any action is taken.
- Individual Trustees may not make any statements in support of a specific political party in their capacity as a Trustee. If doing so as a private individual, they must make it clear that it is a personal view and not that of The Friends.
- Individual Trustees may campaign in support of a specific political party as a private individual. If they are recognised as a Trustee of the Friends, they must make it clear that their political views are strictly personal and not those of the Friends or its other Trustees that of The Friends.
- Communication issued by the Friends (including social media) should be free of any political bias

Further information

There is comprehensive guidance on what is and is not permissible, including restrictions during election campaigns, here: - [Campaigning and political activity guidance for charities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/campaigning-and-political-activity-guidance-for-charities)

Links to other policies

This policy is linked to the Friends' Conflicts of Interest and Social Media Policies, the latter of which deals in detail with the nature of posts and content created by the Friends.

Policy review

This Policy was agreed by the Committee of the Friends on 18 September 2024. It will be reviewed if any matters come to light requiring a change and/or triennially.

| Date of review | Note of charges | Signed by the Chair |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 18.09.2024 | First iteration | |
| 30.09.2027 | | |
| 20.09.2030 | | |