



Gellionnen & Graig Unitarian Chapel

Disruptive Behaviour Policy

We at Gellionnen seek to be open, inclusive and welcoming. Our welcome is wide and we strive to maintain an atmosphere where people from all walks of life can find a spiritual home with us. We affirm that there is room in our congregation for many different beliefs and opinions.

Maintaining this inclusive welcome is paramount, and we take seriously the need to ensure that Gellionnen is a safe place to be for its members, friends and visitors.

The majority of problems can be resolved amicably, but where the actions of a person threaten to disrupt our chapel, there may be the need to make a more formal response.

If you have a concern about disruptive behaviour, please take it to the minister and/or any member of the chapel committee as soon as possible.

Examples of this may be:

1. Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child;
2. The disruption of chapel activities;
3. Diminishing appeal of the congregation to its potential and existing membership.

The following shall be the policy of Gellionnen & Graig Unitarian Chapel in dealing with these issues:

1. If an **immediate** response is required, this will be undertaken by the Minister and/or an Officer, and/or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such time that it may be safely resumed. If further assistance is required, the police may be called. Any time any of these actions are undertaken without the Minister or an Officer, then Minister or Chair of Committee should be notified verbally as

soon as possible; a report, detailing the problem and the action taken should be written and distributed to the Minister and the Committee within seven days.

2. Situations **not** requiring an immediate response will be referred to the Committee. The Committee will respond in terms of their own judgment, observing the following:

a) The Committee will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define 'acceptable' behaviour in advance.

b) Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided.

c) The Committee will collect all necessary information.

d) To aid in evaluating the problem, these points will be considered:

DANGEROUSNESS - Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property?

DISRUPTIVENESS - How much interference with chapel functions is going on?

OFFENSIVENESS - How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

e) To determine the necessary **response**, these points will be considered:

CAUSES - Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the chapel?

HISTORY - What is the extent, if any, of disruption caused in the past?

PROBABILITY OF CHANGE - How likely is it that the problem behaviour will diminish in the future?

f) The Committee will decide on the necessary **response** on a case by case basis. However, three levels of action/response are possible:

LEVEL ONE - The Minister and a member of the committee OR designated members of the Committee shall meet with the person or persons to communicate the concern. The Committee may also write to the person/s concerned outlining expectations of future behaviour.

LEVEL TWO - The individual(s) is excluded from specific chapel activities for a limited period of time, until conditions of return are prepared. Once conditions of return are agreed and signed by all parties, the individual may resume attendance.

LEVEL THREE - The individual is permanently excluded from chapel premises and all chapel activities. In the case of a member this will also include formal

cancellation of membership. Before this is carried out, the Committee will consult with the Minister. If it is agreed that the exclusion take place, a letter will be written and sent by the Committee to the individual outlining the exclusion, the individual's rights, and any possible recourse.

APPEALS PROCESS:

LEVEL ONE or LEVEL TWO actions taken may be appealed to the Committee and/or the Minister. The Committee, along with the Minister, will review the reasons for the appeal and come to a decision as to whether the action was justified.

It should be noted that, in the case of LEVEL TWO actions that if, following an unsuccessful appeal to the Committee, an agreement cannot then be reached, then the Committee *may* proceed to LEVEL THREE which would then give the person the further option to appeal to a General Meeting of members.

LEVEL THREE - In the case of non-members the decision of the Committee to exclude is final. However, excluded **members** have the right of appeal. The Committee shall set a reasonable time limit for an appeal to be made. If an appeal is received then the Committee shall convene an extraordinary general meeting of the members (called in accordance with the procedures for such meetings laid down in the Chapel Constitution). After presentation of the facts and the opportunity for the excluded member to speak, the only vote will be taken at this meeting shall be on the question: "shall the action of the Committee in this matter be upheld?". The decision of the majority of voting members at this meeting will be final.

Gellionnen & Graig Unitarian Chapel strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree the disruptive behaviour compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security.

Approved July 2021.