



## **Guidance for bringing your dog to church**

**Welcome to St Martin's church.**

**We are pleased to have you and your dog as part of our congregation.**

Well-behaved dogs are welcome under the close supervision of their owners. We recognise that for some people, having their pet with them provides comfort, companionship and reassurance and supports their emotional needs. This may not be obvious to others and although their dogs are not registered as Assistance Dogs, the comfort and emotional support they offer are just as important.

However, the church is a living, working church where many come for peace and calmness, and owners are asked to appreciate the needs of those praying and worshipping in the building.

We also recognise that not everyone is comfortable with dogs; some are nervous of dogs, and some are allergic. To help all feel safe and welcome, dogs must be kept on short leads and owners must ensure that their dogs do not go up to others, especially children. Dogs should remain on the floor or their owner's lap and not sit on the seats.

If dogs make any noise (such as barking or howling) or their behaviour is distracting or distressing other worshippers, owners must remove them from the building promptly.

Dogs must not be taken up to communion rail during services of Holy Communion. At most communion services, our churchwardens or other members of the church family will mind dogs whilst their owners receive communion.

Owners must clear up promptly after their dog has defaecated (pooed) anywhere on our grounds. If their dog has defaecated or urinated (peed) inside the building the owner must immediately undertake appropriate cleaning and let a member of our welcome team know.

All dogs are admitted at the discretion of the Vicar and Churchwardens who reserve the right to ask owners and their dogs to leave if this policy is not followed.

Thank you for following these guidelines at St Martin's Church.

