

BEESTON FREE CHURCH NOTTINGHAM  
CONSTITUTION

We certify this to be the Constitution adopted by the members of Beeston Free Church Nottingham at a general meeting of the members held on the 2nd of July 2014 and approved by the Charity Commission on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

Chairman: .....Secretary: .....

As amended at a general meeting of the members and approved by the Charity Commission on the dates set out below:

**Date of Members  
Meeting**

**Date of Charity  
Commission  
Approval**

**Signature of Chair**

**Signature of  
Secretary**

## **1. Name**

- 1.1 The name of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (“the Church”) is Beeston Free Church Nottingham.

## **2. National location of principal office**

- 2.1 The Church must have a principal office in England or Wales. The principal office of the Church is in England.
- 2.2 The principle office of the Church is at Salthouse Lane, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 2FY

## **3. Purposes**

- 3.1 The purposes of the Church are:
- 3.1.1 the advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith primarily but not exclusively within Beeston, Nottinghamshire and the surrounding neighbourhood; and
  - 3.1.2 such other charitable purposes as shall, in the opinion of the charity trustees further the work of the Church.
- 3.2 Nothing in this constitution shall authorise an application of the property of the Church for the purposes which are not charitable in accordance with section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and section 2 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

## **4. Powers**

- 4.1 The Church has power to do anything which is calculated to further its purposes or is conducive or incidental to doing so. Without limitation, this includes the powers set out in the non-exhaustive list below:
- 4.1.1 borrow money and to charge the whole or any part of its property as security for the repayment of the money borrowed. The Church must comply as appropriate with sections 124 and 125 of the Charities Act 2011 if it wishes to mortgage land;
  - 4.1.2 buy, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and to maintain and equip it for use;
  - 4.1.3 sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any part of the property belonging to the Church with or without payment, provided that, in the exercise of such power, the Church complies as appropriate with sections 117 and 119-123 of the Charities Act 2011;

- 4.1.4 employ and remunerate such staff as are necessary for carrying out the work of the Church. The Church may employ or remunerate a charity trustee only to the extent that it is permitted to do so by clause 6 (Benefits and payments to charity trustees and connected persons) and provided it complies with the conditions of those clauses;
- 4.1.5 deposit or invest funds, employ a professional fund-manager, and arrange for the investments or other property of the Church to be held in the name of a nominee, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as the trustees of a trust are permitted to do by the Trustee Act 2000.

## **5. Application of income and property**

- 5.1 The income and property of the Church must be applied solely towards the promotion of the purposes of the Church.
  - 5.1.1 A charity trustee is entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the Church or may pay out of such property reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the Church.
  - 5.1.2 A charity trustee may benefit from trustee indemnity insurance cover purchased at the Church's expense in accordance with, and subject to the conditions in, section 189 of the Charities Act 2011.
- 5.2 None of the income or property of the Church may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the Church. This does not prevent a member who is not also a charity trustee receiving:
  - 5.2.1 benefit from the Church as a beneficiary of the Church;
  - 5.2.2 reasonable and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the Church.
- 5.3 Nothing in this clause shall prevent a charity trustee or connected person receiving any benefit or payment which is authorised by clause 6.

## **6. Benefits and payments to charity trustees and connected persons**

- 6.1 Any office holder appointed in accordance with the Church Rules and any employee of the Church may receive reasonable compensation for carrying out their duties as office holders and/or employees notwithstanding that they are or may be a charity trustee of the Church or a connected person to a charity trustee.
- 6.2 Any office holder or employee receiving benefit pursuant to clause 6.1 (or any charity trustee where the office holder or employee directly receiving benefit pursuant to clause 6.1 is a connected person in relation to him/her) must be absent from the part of any meeting at which the terms of stipend or (where applicable) employment of the office holder or employee in question or the performance of his or her duties or (where applicable) any matter in connection with his or her employment is being discussed or determined and must not vote on

any such matter. However, in relation to discussions concerning the performance of his or her duties the office holder or employee in question shall have the opportunity to address the meeting and respond to any points of concern that are raised.

- 6.3 In addition to the provisions of clause 6.1 any charity trustee or a connected person of a charity trustee may receive reasonable and proper remuneration for goods or services provided to the Church provided that:-
- 6.3.1 the goods or services shall actually be required by the Church;
  - 6.3.2 the charity trustee shall have fully disclosed to the other charity trustees the interest which he or she may have in and any benefit which he or she may derive either directly or indirectly from the supply of goods or services;
  - 6.3.3 the charity trustee or connected person shall not be present at or take part in any discussion relating to nor vote upon any matter connected with the supply of such goods or services; and
  - 6.3.4 the arrangements shall be approved by a majority of the other charity trustees who must be satisfied that it is to the advantage of the Church to employ or contract with the charity trustee or connected person in question rather than someone who has no connection with the Church.
- 6.4 At no time may a majority of charity trustees benefit directly or indirectly from payments made under clause 6.1 or clause 6.3. Where a payment to a connected person would represent an indirect benefit to the charity trustee and such payment would cause the number of charity trustees benefiting under clause 6.1 or clause 6.3 to be a majority of the charity trustees then the prior written consent of the Charity Commission to the proposed payment must be obtained.
- 6.5 Any other payments to a charity trustee or connected person or arrangements involving the acquisition by a charity trustee or connected person for his or her own benefit of property belonging to the Church require the prior written approval of the Charity Commission unless authorised under statute from time to time.
- 6.6 For the avoidance of doubt nothing in this clause shall prevent reimbursement to the charity trustees or connected person of reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses incurred in carrying out their duties and the reimbursement of the costs of purchases made on behalf of the Church, where such purchases have the prior authorisation of the charity trustees.

## **7. Conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty**

A charity trustee must:

- 7.1 declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which he or she has in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the Church or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the Church which has not previously been declared; and
- 7.2 absent himself or herself from any discussions of the charity trustees in which it is possible that a conflict of interest will arise between his or her duty to act solely in

the interests of the Church and any personal interest (including but not limited to any financial interest).

Any charity trustee absenting himself or herself from any discussions in accordance with this clause must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum in any decision of the charity trustees on the matter.

## **8. Liability of members to contribute to the assets of the Church if it is wound up**

If the Church is wound up, the members of the Church have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

## **9. Membership of the Church**

### **9.1 Admission of new members**

#### 9.1.1 Eligibility

Membership of the Church is open to anyone who professes the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith adopted by the church, has satisfied such other requirements as have been specified in the Church Rules and who in his or her application for membership has indicated his or her agreement to become a member and to accept the duty of members set out in clause 9.3.

Corporate bodies may not be members of the Church. A member must be an individual.

#### 9.1.2 Admission procedure

The charity trustees shall follow the procedure for the admission of members as set in the Church Rules and must ensure that an accurate register of members is maintained at all times.

### **9.2 Transfer of membership**

Membership of the Church cannot be transferred to anyone else.

### **9.3 Duty of members**

It is the duty of each member of the Church to exercise his or her powers as a member of the Church in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the Church.

### **9.4 Termination of membership**

#### 9.4.1 Membership of the Church comes to an end if :

9.4.1.1 the member dies;

9.4.1.2 the member sends a notice of resignation to the charity trustees; or

9.4.1.3 a person's membership is terminated in accordance with the provisions for Church discipline set out in the Church Rules.

9.4.2 The provisions for Church discipline contained in the Church Rules shall include provisions setting out that no resolution to remove a person ("P") from membership shall be effective unless:

9.4.2.1 prior to making any decision on whether to recommend to the members that P should be removed from membership, or (if applicable) prior to making any decision to remove P from membership by a resolution of the charity trustees, the charity trustees have, at a duly constituted meeting of the charity trustees ("the Meeting"), consider whether or not P should be removed from membership and have taken into account the representations referred to below;

9.4.2.2 the charity trustees have given P 21 clear days' notice of the Meeting, informing P of the reasons why his or her removal from membership is being considered, inviting P to make representations to the charity trustees (prior to or at the Meeting) as to why he or she should not be removed from membership; and

9.4.2.3 the charity trustees have allowed P or P's representative to make those representations in person at the Meeting if P so chooses.

## **9.5 Informal or associate (non-voting) membership**

9.5.1 The Church Rules may contain provisions for associate or other classes of non-voting membership, and may set out the rights and obligations of any such members, and the conditions for admission to, and termination of membership of any such class of members.

9.5.2 Other references in this constitution to "members" and "membership" do not apply to non-voting members, and non-voting members do not qualify as members for any purpose under the Charities Acts, General Regulations or Dissolution Regulations.

## **10 Members' decisions**

### **10.1 General provisions**

All decisions of the members of the Church shall be taken by vote at a general meeting as provided in clause 10.2.

### **10.2 Taking ordinary decisions by vote**

Subject to clause 10.3, any decision of the members of the Church may be taken by means of a resolution at a general meeting. Such a resolution may be passed by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting.

### **10.3 Decisions that must be taken in a particular way**

- 10.3.1 Any decision to amend this constitution must be taken in accordance with clause 27 of this constitution (Amendment of Constitution).
- 10.3.2 Any decision to wind up or dissolve the Church must be taken in accordance with clause 28 of this constitution (Voluntary winding up or dissolution). Any decision to amalgamate or transfer the undertaking of the Church to one or more other Churches must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011.
- 10.3.3 Where the Standing Orders or Church Rules cover specific decisions of the members of the Church, the Standing Orders or Church Rules may provide that such decisions shall require a majority that is greater than a simple majority of votes cast.

## **11 General meetings of members**

### **11.1 Types of general meeting**

- 11.1.1 There must be an annual general meeting (AGM) of the members of the Church. The first AGM must be held within 18 months of the registration of the Church, and subsequent AGMs must be held at intervals of not more than 15 months. The AGM must receive the annual statement of accounts (duly audited or examined where applicable) and the trustees' annual report.
- 11.1.2 Other general meetings of the members of the Church may be held at any time.
- 11.1.3 All general meetings must be held in accordance with this clause 11.

### **11.2 Calling general meetings**

- 11.2.1 The charity trustees:
- 11.2.1.1 must call the annual general meeting of the members of the Church in accordance with clause 11.1.1 and identify it as such in the notice of the meeting; and
  - 11.2.1.2 may call any other general meeting of the members at any time.
- 11.2.2 The charity trustees must, within 21 days, call a general meeting of the members of the Church if :
- 11.2.2.1 they receive a request to do so from at least 10% of the members of the Church; and
  - 11.2.2.2 the request states the general nature of the business to be dealt with at the meeting, and is authenticated by the member(s) making the request.
- 11.2.3 If, at the time of any such request, there has not been any general meeting of the members of the Church for more than 12 months, then clause 11.2.1.1 shall have effect as if 5% were substituted for 10%.



- 11.2.4 Any such request may include particulars of a resolution that may properly be proposed, and is intended to be proposed, at the meeting, in which case, subject to clause 11.2.5, the charity trustees must include those particulars in the notice calling the meeting.
- 11.2.5 A resolution may only properly be proposed if it is lawful, and is not defamatory, frivolous or vexatious.
- 11.2.6 Any general meeting called by the charity trustees at the request of the members of the Church must be held within 28 days from the date on which it is called.
- 11.2.7 If the charity trustees fail to comply with this obligation to call a general meeting at the request of its members, then the members who requested the meeting may themselves call a general meeting.
- 11.2.8 A general meeting called in this way must be held not more than 3 months after the date when the members first requested the meeting.
- 11.2.9 The Church must reimburse any reasonable expenses incurred by the members calling a general meeting by reason of the failure of the charity trustees to duly call the meeting, but the Church shall be entitled to be indemnified by the charity trustees who were responsible for such failure.

### **11.3 Notice of general meetings**

- 11.3.1 The charity trustees, or, as the case may be, the relevant members of the Church, must give at least 14 clear days notice of any general meeting to all of the members and to any charity trustee of the Church who is not a member.
- 11.3.2 If it is agreed by not less than 90% of all members of the Church, any resolution may be proposed and passed at the meeting even though the requirements of clause 11.3.1 have not been met. This sub-clause does not apply where a specified period of notice is strictly required by another clause in this constitution, by the Charities Act 2011 or by the General Regulations.
- 11.3.3 The notice of any general meeting must:
- 11.3.3.1 state the time and date of the meeting;
  - 11.3.3.2 give the address at which the meeting is to take place;
  - 11.3.3.3 give particulars of any resolution which is to be moved at the meeting, and of the general nature of any other business to be dealt with at the meeting;
  - 11.3.3.4 if a proposal to alter the constitution of the Church is to be considered at the meeting, include the text of the proposed alteration;
  - 11.3.3.5 include details of persons standing for election or re-election by the members of the Church as a charity trustee; and

11.3.3.6 include, with the notice for the AGM, the annual statement of accounts and trustees' annual report.

11.3.4 Proof that an envelope containing a notice was properly addressed, prepaid and posted; or that an electronic form of notice was properly addressed and sent, shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. Notice shall be deemed to be given 48 hours after it was posted or sent.

11.3.5 The proceedings of a meeting shall not be invalidated because a member who was entitled to receive notice of the meeting did not receive it because of accidental omission by the Church.

#### **11.4 Chairing of general meetings**

11.4.1 The appointment of one of the trustees to be the Chair of the General Meeting shall be recommended by the charity trustees to the Church Members at the Annual General Meeting and will be appointed if elected by the church members.

11.4.2 The person appointed as chair may not be a person who receives any benefit from church income or property (including any benefits deemed to be received through a connected person) save for the benefits set out in clauses 5.1.1 and 5.12

11.4.3 The church members present at a meeting must elect one of their number to chair that meeting if the chairman is not present, does not wish to act or the office of chairman is vacant.

#### **11.5 Quorum at general meetings**

11.5.1 No business may be transacted at any general meeting of the members of the Church unless a quorum is present when the meeting starts.

11.5.2 Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 40% of or 5 members.

11.5.3 If the meeting has been called by or at the request of the members and a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the starting time specified in the notice of the meeting, the meeting is closed.

#### **11.6 Voting at general meetings**

11.6.1 Any decision other than one falling within clause 10.3 (Decisions that must be taken in a particular way) shall be taken by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting. Every member has one vote.

11.6.2 A poll shall be taken on each resolution where two or more members request that a poll is held in accordance with clause 11.6.4, and on each resolution for which the chair directs that there should be a poll. Every poll shall be taken at the meeting at which the resolution subject to the poll was put to the vote.

- 11.6.3 Polls do not need to be in writing. Polls may be conducted by counting the number hands raised for and against a resolution or by any other means which allows the number of votes cast for or against the resolution to be recorded.
- 11.6.4 All decisions not requiring a poll shall be decided by a show of hands, i.e. a vote in which members raise their hands to vote for or against the resolution, but the actual number of votes are not counted because it is clear from the show of hands whether or not the resolution has been carried. If any Church member requests that the votes cast on a show of hands be counted, a poll shall be carried out in accordance with clause 11.6.3 if at least one other member seconds the request.
- 11.6.5 A secret ballot may be held at a general meeting on any resolution at the request of the charity trustees, the chair of the meeting or of 20% of the Church members present at the meeting. Members will be issued with a separate ballot paper for each resolution subject to a secret ballot. The chair will appoint two members to collect and count the ballot papers in such a manner that preserves the anonymity of the votes cast. The members counting the votes shall be permitted to vote. No further business shall be conducted until the votes have been counted and reported to the chair of the meeting who will then announce the result of the ballot. There shall be a recount by two other members appointed by the chair in respect of any resolution subject to a secret ballot where, on the first count, the number of votes cast in favour of the resolution is less than ten percentage points higher than the percentage threshold required for the resolution to be passed. A maximum of one recount may be carried out in respect of each resolution that is subject to a secret ballot. In every secret ballot, the number of votes cast for and against the resolution shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 11.6.6 A secret ballot may also take place at other times and/or over an extended period, at the request of the charity trustees or the chair of the meeting. If such a ballot is to take place a summary of any discussion at the meeting must be recorded and circulated to Church members with the proposal and voting arrangements.
- 11.6.7 Any objection to the qualification of any voter must be raised at the meeting at which the vote is cast and the decision of the chair of the meeting shall be final.

## 11.7 **Adjournment of meetings**

The chair may with the consent of a meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting) adjourn the meeting to another time and/or place. No business may be transacted at an adjourned meeting except business which could properly have been transacted at the original meeting.

## 12 Charity trustees

### 12.1 Functions and duties of charity trustees

- 12.1.1 The charity trustees shall have the general control and management of the administration of the Church and may for that purpose exercise all the powers of the Church subject to the provisions contained in this constitution and the Church Rules.
- 12.1.2 When exercising any power in controlling or managing the administration of the Church each of the charity trustees must exercise his or her powers in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the Church and must use the level of care and skill that is reasonable in the circumstances, taking in account any special knowledge or experience that he or she has or claims to have ("the duty of care").
- 12.1.3 No charity trustee and no-one exercising any powers or responsibilities that have been delegated by the charity trustees shall be liable for any act or failure to act unless, in acting or failing to act, he or she has failed to discharge the duty of care.

### 12.2 Eligibility for trusteeship

- 12.2.1 Every charity trustee must be a natural person.
- 12.2.2 No one may be appointed as a charity trustee:
  - 12.2.2.1 if he or she is under the age of 16 years; or
  - 12.2.2.2 if he or she would automatically cease to hold office under the provisions of clause 14.1.6.
- 12.2.3 No one is entitled to act as a charity trustee whether on appointment or on any re-appointment until he or she has expressly acknowledged, in whatever way the charity trustees decide, his or her acceptance of the office of charity trustee.
- 12.2.4 At least one of the trustees of the Church must be 18 years of age or over. If there is no trustee aged at least 18 years, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.

### 12.3 Number of charity trustees

- 12.3.1 There must be at least three charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.
- 12.3.2 There is no maximum number of charity trustees that may be appointed to the Church.

## 12.4 **Appointment of charity trustees**

12.4.1 Subject to the provisions of this clause and clause 12.2, the charity trustees of the Church are the persons appointed to the offices set out below in accordance with the Church Rules.

- Minister
- Elder
- Deacon
- Treasurer
- Church Secretary

12.4.2 The names of the first charity trustees of the Church are: –

Craig Langstaff, Nicholas Jackman, George Hawkins, Lindsay Robinson, Jonathan Chambers, Daniel Goddard, Philip Robinson, Edward Watts, Peter Woodroffe, Richard Graham, Stuart Barlow, David Gilkerson, Grace Aldis, Rachel Mills

Any person who has been appointed to one of the offices set out 12.2.1 who ceases to be eligible to be a charity trustee may, by resolution of the members of the Church, continue to hold that office without being a charity trustee, provided that such person ceases to be involved in the general control and management of the administration of the Church.

12.4.3 Where the number of people filling the offices specified in Rule 2.6.1 is less than three the charity trustees shall call a general meeting and members of the Church shall elect as many acting charity trustees as required to ensure that the number of charity trustees is greater than three and to ensure that the provisions of clause 6 (Benefits and payments to charity trustees and connected persons) are followed. An acting charity trustee has the same responsibilities and powers as a charity trustee. However, an acting charity trustee shall cease to be a charity trustee as soon as the number of people filling the offices specified in clause 12.2.1 reaches three unless his or her retirement would cause the provisions of clause 6 to be breached. Further, every person who is appointed as an acting charity trustee shall cease to hold office as a charity trustee 6 months after he or she is appointed, but may be reappointed by the members of the Church if required to ensure that there is always a minimum of three charity trustees.

## 13 **Information for new charity trustees**

13.1 The charity trustees will make available to each new charity trustee, on or before his or her first appointment:

- 13.1.1 a copy of this constitution and any amendments made to it; and

- 13.1.2 a copy of the Church's latest trustees' annual report and statement of accounts.

#### **14 Retirement and removal of charity trustees**

- 14.1 A charity trustee ceases to hold office if he or she:
- 14.1.1 retires by notifying the Church in writing (but only if enough charity trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation takes effect to form a quorum for meetings);
  - 14.1.2 is absent without the permission of the charity trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated;
  - 14.1.3 dies;
  - 14.1.4 becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
  - 14.1.5 ceases, in accordance with the Church Rules, to hold the office specified at clause 12.4.1 that makes him or her a charity trustee; or
  - 14.1.6 is disqualified from acting as a charity trustee by virtue of section 178-180 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision), unless such disqualification is waived by the Charity Commission pursuant to Section 181 of the Charities Act 2011.

#### **15 Reappointment of charity trustees**

- 15.1 Any person who retires as a charity trustee by giving notice to the Church is eligible for reappointment.

#### **16 Delegation by charity trustees**

- 16.1 The charity trustees may delegate day-to-day matters to individuals or committees, including powers to commit the Church to a course of action. The power of delegation in this clause 16.1 does not authorise the delegation of matters affecting the general control and management of the administration of the Church. The charity trustees shall from time to time review the arrangements which they have made for the delegation of their powers under this sub-clause.
- 16.2 Subject to clause 16.4, the charity trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions relating to the general control and management of the administration of the Church to a committee or committees, and, if they do, they must determine the terms and conditions on which the delegation is made. The charity trustees may at any time alter those terms and conditions, or revoke the delegation.
- 16.3 The powers in this clause are in addition to the power of delegation in the General Regulations and any other power of delegation available to the charity trustees.
- 16.4 The power at clause 16.2 is subject to the following requirements –

- 16.4.1 a committee may consist of two or more persons, but at least one member of each committee must be a charity trustee who has been appointed in accordance with clause 12.4 prior to the establishment of the committee;
- 16.4.2 the acts and proceedings of any committee must be brought to the attention of the charity trustees as a whole as soon as is reasonably practicable; and
- 16.4.3 the charity trustees shall from time to time review the arrangements which they have made for the delegation of their powers.

## **17 Taking of decisions by charity trustees**

- 17.1 Subject to clause 17.4 the charity trustees must exercise their powers jointly, at properly convened meetings.
- 17.2 Subject to clause 17.4, any matter requiring a decision of the charity trustees shall require a simple majority of those present and voting at a properly convened meeting.
- 17.3 In the event of an equality of votes the resolution shall not be passed.
- 17.4 The charity trustees may, in standing orders, provide that certain decisions may be taken by resolution, in writing or electronic form, agreed by all of the charity trustees who would be permitted to vote on such resolution at a meeting of the charity trustees, which may comprise either a single document or several documents containing the text of the resolution in like form to each of which one or more charity trustees has signified their agreement.

## **18 Meetings and proceedings of charity trustees**

### **18.1 Calling meetings**

- 18.1.1 The charity trustees must hold at least 4 meetings in each 12 month period.
- 18.1.2 Meetings shall require at least 10 days' notice unless all of the charity trustees agree to a meeting being convened on shorter notice.
- 18.1.3 The chairman or any 2 of the charity trustees may call a meeting at any time.

### **18.2 Chairing of meetings**

- 18.2.1 The person elected as Chair of the General Meeting under clause 11.4.1 shall, if present at the trustees meeting and willing to act, preside as chair of the meeting.
- 18.2.2 The Charity Trustees present at a meeting must elect one of their number to chair that meeting if the chairman is not present, does not wish to act or the

office of chairman is vacant.

### 18.3 **Quorum**

No business may be transacted at a meeting of the charity trustees unless there are present at least one-half of the charity trustees for the time being or three charity trustees, whichever shall be the greater. A charity trustee shall not be counted in the quorum present when any decision is made about a matter upon which he or she is not entitled to vote.

### 18.4 **Recording Of Meetings**

The Charity Trustees must keep proper written minutes of their meetings.

### 18.5 **Participation in meetings by electronic means**

18.5.1 A meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants in accordance with the Church's IT policy.

18.5.2 Any charity trustee participating at a meeting by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants shall qualify as being present at the meeting.

18.5.3 Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

## 19 **Saving provisions**

19.1 Subject to clause 19.2, all decisions of the charity trustees, or of a committee of charity trustees, shall be valid notwithstanding the participation in any vote of a charity trustee:

19.1.1 who was disqualified from holding office;

19.1.2 who had previously retired or who had been obliged by the constitution to vacate office;

19.1.3 who was not entitled to vote on the matter, whether by reason of a conflict of interest or otherwise;

if, without the vote of that charity trustee and that charity trustee being counted in the quorum, the decision has been made by a majority of the charity trustees at a quorate meeting.

19.2 Clause 19.1 does not permit a charity trustee to keep any benefit that may be conferred upon him or her by a resolution of the charity trustees or of a committee of charity trustees if, but for clause 19.1, the resolution would have been void, or if the charity trustee has not complied with clause 7 (Conflicts of interest).



## **20 Execution of documents**

- 20.1 The Church shall execute documents and deeds by signature.
- 20.2 A document is validly executed by signature if it is signed by at least two of the charity trustees or in such other manner as set out from time to time in standing orders made pursuant to clause 25.
- 20.3 A document is validly executed as a deed if it is signed by at least two of the charity trustees and the document makes clear on its face that it is intended by the persons making it to be a deed.

## **21 Use of electronic communications**

### 21.1 General

- 21.1.1 The Church will comply with the requirements of the Communications Provisions in the General Regulations and in particular:

- 21.1.1.1 the requirement to provide within 21 days to any member on request a hard copy of any document or information sent to the member otherwise than in hard copy form;
- 21.1.1.2 any requirements to provide information to the Commission in a particular form or manner.

### 21.2 To the Church

- 21.2.1 Any member or charity trustee of the Church may communicate electronically with the Church to an address specified by the Church for the purpose, so long as the communication is authenticated in a manner which is satisfactory to the Church.

### 21.3 By the Church

- 21.3.1 Any member or charity trustee of the Church, by providing the Church with his or her email address or similar, is taken to have agreed to receive communications from the Church in electronic form at that address, unless the member has indicated to the Church his or her unwillingness to receive such communications in that form.
- 21.3.2 The charity trustees must send communications in hardcopy form to any member or charity trustee who has not consented to receive communications in electronic form.

## **22 Keeping of Registers**

The Church must comply with its obligations under the General Regulations in relation to the keeping of, and provision of access to, registers of its members and charity trustees.

## **23 Minutes**

- 23.1 The charity trustees must keep minutes of all:

- 23.1.1 appointments of officers made by the charity trustees;
- 23.1.2 proceedings at general meetings of the Church;
- 23.1.3 meetings of the charity trustees and committees of charity trustees including:
  - 23.1.3.1 the names of the trustees present at the meeting;
  - 23.1.3.2 the decisions made at the meetings; and
  - 23.1.3.3 where appropriate the reasons for the decisions;
- 23.1.4 decisions made by the charity trustees otherwise than in meetings.

## **24 Accounting records, accounts, annual reports and returns, register maintenance**

- 24.1 The charity trustees must comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 with regard to the keeping of accounting records, to the preparation and scrutiny of statements of accounts, and to the preparation of annual reports and returns. The statements of accounts, reports and returns must be sent to the Charity Commission, regardless of the income of the Church, within 10 months of the financial year end.
- 24.2 The charity trustees must comply with their obligation to inform the Commission within 28 days of any change in the particulars of the Church entered on the Central Register of Charities.

## **25 Standing Orders**

- 25.1 Subject to clause 25.4
  - 25.1.1 the charity trustees may from time to time make, alter, add to or repeal standing orders for the proper regulation of the affairs of the charity trustees and the regulation of matters which have been delegated by the charity trustees including functions, powers and decision making; and
  - 25.1.2 the Church members in general meeting may alter, add to or repeal the standing orders.
- 25.2 The charity trustees must adopt such means as they think sufficient to bring the standing orders to the notice of Church members.
- 25.3 Standing orders are binding on all Church members and charity trustees.
- 25.4 No standing order may be inconsistent with or may affect or repeal anything in the constitution or the Church Rules.

## **26 Disputes**

If a dispute arises between members of the Church about the validity or propriety of anything done by the members under this constitution, and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation.

## **27 Amendment of constitution**

- 27.1 This constitution can only be amended by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of votes cast at a general meeting of the members of the Church.
- 27.2 Any alteration of clause 3 (Purposes), clause 28 (Voluntary winding up or dissolution), this clause, or of any provision where the alteration would provide authorisation for any benefit to be obtained by charity trustees or members of the Church or persons connected with them, requires the prior written consent of the Charity Commission.
- 27.3 No amendment to the adopted Basis of Faith shall be made without a resolution passed at a Church members' meeting by at least 80% of all members approving the amendment. Prior to making any amendment to the Basis of Faith, the Church shall take advice on whether or not the proposed change would constitute an alteration of the Church's purposes requiring the prior written consent of the Charity Commission.
- 27.4 The specifying of charitable purposes by the charity trustees in accordance with clause 3.1.2 does not constitute an amendment to the constitution.
- 27.5 No amendment that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011 or the General Regulations shall be valid.
- 27.6 A copy of any resolution altering the constitution, together with a copy of the Church's constitution as amended, must be sent to the Commission within 15 days from the date on which the resolution is passed. The amendment does not take effect until it has been recorded in the Register of Charities.

## **28 Voluntary winding up or dissolution**

- 28.1 As provided by the Dissolution Regulations, the Church may be dissolved by resolution of its members. Any decision by the members to wind up or dissolve the Church can only be made:
- 28.1.1 at a general meeting of the members of the Church called in accordance with clause 11 (Church Members' decisions), of which not less than 14 days' notice has been given to those eligible to attend and vote:
- 28.1.1.1 by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of those voting, or
- 28.1.1.2 by a resolution passed by decision taken without a vote and without any expression of dissent in response to the question put to the general meeting.
- 28.2 Subject to the payment of all the Church's debts:
- 28.2.1 Any resolution for the winding up of the Church, or for the dissolution of the Church without winding up, may contain a provision directing how any remaining assets of the Church shall be applied.
- 28.2.2 If the resolution does not contain such a provision, the charity trustees must decide how any remaining assets of the Church shall be applied.

- 28.2.3 In either case the remaining assets must be applied for charitable purposes the same as or similar to those of the Church.
- 28.3 The Church must observe the requirements of the Dissolution Regulations in applying to the Commission for the Church to be removed from the Register of Charities, and in particular:
- 28.3.1 the charity trustees must send with their application to the Commission:
- 28.3.1.1 a copy of the resolution passed by the members of the Church;
- 28.3.1.2 a declaration by the charity trustees that any debts and other liabilities of the Church have been settled or otherwise provided for in full; and
- 28.3.1.3 a statement by the charity trustees setting out the way in which any property of the Church has been or is to be applied prior to its dissolution in accordance with this constitution;
- 28.3.2 the charity trustees must ensure that a copy of the application is sent within seven days to every member and employee of the Church, and to any charity trustee of the Church who was not privy to the application.
- 28.4 If the Church is to be wound up or dissolved in any other circumstances, the provisions of the Dissolution Regulations must be followed.

## 29 Interpretation

In this constitution:

- 29.1 “**Basis of Faith**” means the adopted doctrinal basis of the Church set out at Appendix 1
- 29.2 “**charity trustee**” means a person who has been appointed as a charity trustee of the Church in accordance with this constitution.
- 29.3 “**Church Rules**” means the rules adopted by the members of the Church governing the internal practices of the Church as may from time to time be amended in accordance with their terms.
- 29.4 “**connected person**” means:
- 29.4.1 a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother or sister of the charity trustee;
- 29.4.2 the spouse or civil partner of the charity trustee or of any person falling within clause 29.4.1;

- 29.4.3 a person carrying on business in partnership with the charity trustee or with any person falling within clause 29.4.1 or 29.4.2;
- 29.4.4 an institution which is controlled –
- 29.4.4.1 by the charity trustee or any connected person falling within clause 29.4.1, 29.4.2 or 29.4.3; or
  - 29.4.4.2 by two or more persons falling within clause 29.4.4.1, when taken together
- 29.4.5 a body corporate in which –
- 29.4.5.1 the charity trustee or any connected person falling within clauses 29.4.1 to 29.4.3 has a substantial interest; or
  - 29.4.5.2 two or more persons falling within clause 29.4.5.1, who, when taken together, have a substantial interest.

(N.b. Section 118 of the Charities Act 2011 applies a different definition to “connected person” for the purpose of dispositions of land belonging to charities).

- 29.5 The “**Communications Provisions**” means the Communications Provisions in Part 10, Chapter 4 of the General Regulations.
- 29.6 “**Dissolution Regulations**” means the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (Insolvency and Dissolution) Regulations 2012.
- 29.7 “**FIEC**” means the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (registered charity number 263354).
- 29.8 “**General Regulations**” means the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012.
- 29.9 A “**poll**” means a counted vote, in which the actual number of votes cast for and against the resolution are counted to determine whether or not the resolution has been carried.
- 29.10 A “**ballot**” means a poll in which the people voting cast their votes in writing on a ballot slip.

## Appendix 1

### Basis of Faith

#### **1. God**

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

#### **2. The Bible**

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

#### **3. The Human Race**

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

#### **4. The Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

#### **5. Salvation**

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

#### **6. The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

#### **7. The Church**

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by

mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

### **8. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

### **9. The Future**

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.