

1 The Church And Its Name

The Church means members of the charitable unincorporated association governed by this constitution and known as Upton Vale Baptist Church (or such other name as shall subsequently be adopted by decision of the Church Members' Meeting and with the consent of the Charity Commission).

2 Purpose

The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith, particularly though not exclusively, through, worship of God, making disciples of Jesus Christ and expressing God's love to the world in word and action. The Church may also carry out other charitable purposes in the UK and other parts of the world.

3 Beliefs

3.1 The Church subscribes to the Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith:

“ We believe in

- a. The one true God who lives eternally in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- b. The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
- c. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God - fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
- d. The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
- e. The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ - born of the Virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
- f. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
- g. The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
- h. The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
- i. The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
- j. The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers - given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
- k. The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost and establish a new heaven and new earth.”

3.2 As a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain the Church subscribes to the Union's Declaration of Principle:

"That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again on the third day'.

That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world."

4 Activities

4.1 In fulfilling the Purpose the Church will engage in a range of Activities either on its own or with others that will vary from time to time with Activities being initiated, expanded, or closed, as appropriate

4.2 The Activities may include but are not restricted to:

1. Worship

- regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, teaching and preaching.
- the sacraments of baptism (according to the BU declaration of principle) and the Lord's Supper.

2. Mission

- evangelism and mission - locally, in other parts of the UK and overseas.

3. Discipleship

- nurture and growth of Christian disciples.
- education and training for Christian and community service.

4. Service

- support and encouragement of charitable social action locally, in other parts of the UK and overseas.

5. Community

- giving and encouraging pastoral care.
- encouraging relationships with other Christians.

4.3 Notwithstanding the appointment of persons to accept responsibility for any of the Activities all individuals, organisations, groups, and committees operating within the life of the Church, and their leaders, shall be accountable to the Charity Trustees (as defined in clause 15.4 and who are referred to as Trustees in the document) and also through any specific direction of the Church Members' Meeting.

5 Affiliation And Relationships

- 5.1 The Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (Baptist Union) and the South West Baptist Association.
- 5.2 The Church will normally promote, encourage, support and advance the work of the Baptist Union, the South West Baptist Association and BMS World Mission through prayer, through financial contributions and, where appropriate, by making personnel available from the membership of the Church. When it is able the Church will also support local Baptist and ecumenical gatherings.

6 Belonging To The Church

- 6.1 The responsibilities of membership normally include:

1. Unity

- regularly attending services of worship and the celebration of the Lord's supper
- playing a full part in the life of the Church including participating in Church Members' Meetings
- speaking and acting in love towards other members
- respecting and supporting the Church leaders

2. Mission

- engaging in personal and public prayer for others
- expressing God's love to the world through speech and action
- always welcoming and including others

3. Service

- discovering, developing and using our gifts and abilities to advance the Purpose
- supporting the Church financially in proportion to our personal resources
- expressing God's love to the world in our actions and lifestyle

4. Upholding Christian values

- behaving in a way that is consistent with our understanding of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible.

- 6.2 If there are differences that lead to difficulties between members of the Church (and it is recognised that these will sometimes arise) each member should try to resolve the situation with gentleness and humility following Christian and Biblical principles. It may be necessary for another wise and experienced member of this Church (or if invited a member of a neighbouring Church or representative of the Association) to act as mediator or friend to those seeking to achieve reconciliation.

7 Joining And Becoming A Church Member

- 7.1 Church Membership is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, desire to live according to His will and are committed to this local group of Christians. We would normally expect that this commitment has been or will be demonstrated by Baptism as a believer.
- 7.2 Applicants for membership shall be required to attend a short course at which the basis of faith, constitution, vision, practices, organisation of the Church and responsibilities of membership will be explained.
- 7.3 Following the course, applicants whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession will be accepted into membership on confirmation that they have accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and are committed to taking a full part in the life of the Church and subject to ratification by the Church Leadership Team.

8 The Membership List

- 8.1 A list of the current Church Members (hereinafter Members) shall be maintained by the Trustees incorporating changes because of additions or deletions arising through death, transfer to another Church, resignation, or a resolution by Church Members' Meeting.
- 8.2 Changes to the membership list shall be reported at the next convenient Church Members' Meeting.
- 8.3 In order to keep the membership list up to date it shall be reviewed at least once every year when the Church Members' Meeting may resolve to make any appropriate deletions.
- 8.4 At any time, in exceptional circumstances where the conduct of a Member is considered to be contrary to the Purpose and Beliefs of the Church and/or disruptive to the relationships between Members then the Trustees may recommend to a Members' Meeting that the membership of that person be reviewed. The Members may, after considering the facts, terminate the membership of that person. The Member shall be allowed to hear what is said at the Church Members' Meeting and, either in person or through a representative, to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing from the meeting so that the Church Members' Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether they should resolve to remove that person's name from the list of Members.

9 Church Members' Meetings

- 9.1 Church Members shall meet together in a Church Members' Meeting (hereinafter Church Meeting) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ to discern the mind of God in the affairs of the Church.
- 9.2 Only the Church Meeting shall have authority to make the following decisions:
- the appointment and removal of a Minister,
 - the appointment and removal of Trustees,
 - decisions relating to Church land and buildings including (without limitation) any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage, or redevelopment of property, and
 - the closure of the Church.

- 9.3 Any decisions taken under 9.2 in relation to property must comply with the requirements of statute law and any specific property trusts under which the land and buildings are used and occupied by the Church.

10 Frequency And Content Of Church Meetings

- 10.1 Church Meetings shall be held at regular intervals on not less than four occasions in any calendar year and shall be an opportunity to consider and review matters associated with the life of the Church including those matters specified in 9.2; to approve the annual budget and to consider proposals from the Trustees or other Members for the development of the Church and the advancement of its Purpose through its Activities.
- 10.2 One Church Meeting each year shall include the Annual Church Meeting for the Members to receive annual accounts and reports and to appoint an Auditor or Independent Examiner.

11 Calling Church Meetings

- 11.1 Church Meetings shall be convened by the Trustees so as to be convenient for as many Members as is reasonably possible.
- 11.2 A Church Meeting shall be properly convened if as a minimum requirement the date, time and place for the meeting are publicised, with as full an indication of the matters to be considered as possible, at the public worship service or services on the two previous Sundays (or other regular weekly meeting time when the Church gathers together).
- 11.3 Additional meetings shall be convened by the Trustees as necessary but they shall have specific responsibility to convene an Extraordinary Church Meeting as soon as possible upon the receipt of a written request for a meeting signed by at least five percent of the Church membership or twelve Members, whichever is the greater.
- 11.4 Members, guests invited by the Trustees, and, if publicly invited, those who normally attend services of the Church may attend a Church Meeting but only Members may speak or vote except that the chairperson may invite people who are not Members to speak.

12 The Conduct Of Church Meetings

- 12.1 Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be a key feature of the Church Meeting. The discussion of any matters affecting the life and activities of the Church shall be set in this context with the intention that, so far as possible, practical issues are not perceived as being separate from the spiritual aspects of the Church.
- 12.2 A quorum of twenty percent of the total number of Members shall apply to Church Meetings.
- 12.3 The Church Meeting shall appoint a person (who may or may not be a Minister of the church) to chair the Church Meetings.

12.4 A resolution passed at a Church Meeting shall not be rescinded within one year, unless notice of the resolution for rescission is given at the Church Meeting prior to that at which there is to be a vote on the resolution to rescind.

13 Voting

13.1 Members shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at a Church Meeting.

13.2 For matters requiring a decision a vote shall be taken and the outcome of the vote recorded as the resolution of the Members.

13.3 When a vote is taken each Member shall have one vote which they may use at the Church Meeting after hearing about the issues and any comments or questions raised by other Church Members in advance of the vote.

13.4 No proxy votes shall be allowed and no postal votes shall be valid.

13.5 If any matter requires a decision affecting or involving individuals and any embarrassment might arise by a public vote then a secret ballot shall be held if requested and agreed by the Church Meeting.

13.6 If a secret ballot is to be held a minimum of two persons will be appointed by the Church Meeting as scrutineers to the ballot to count the votes. The person chairing the Church Meeting shall announce the outcome without necessarily revealing the numbers of votes.

13.7 A resolution at a Church Meeting shall be carried if supported by at least two thirds of the Members present, entitled to vote and voting.

13.8 The Church Meeting or Trustees may want a higher measure of support for a particular resolution but a higher proportion of votes for a resolution shall not override the arrangements in clause 13.7 unless, before the vote is taken, the Church Meeting passes a further or enabling resolution referring to that particular resolution and specifying the proportion of votes necessary to pass it.

14 Minutes

14.1 The business conducted at Church Meetings and, in particular, any decisions of the Members shall be recorded in the Minutes for future reference.

14.2 The Minutes shall be written or printed and filed in a book or binder set aside for this purpose using materials of sufficient quality to ensure that they survive for many years and shall be kept in a safe place or may be stored in some other medium provided that they are no less secure or long lasting.

14.3 Each set of Minutes shall be approved by the Church Members attending the next Church Meeting. They shall have the opportunity to review the Minutes and to correct any errors of fact before a formal vote on the approval of the Minutes is taken. If the Minutes are approved the person chairing the Church Meeting shall confirm the Members' acceptance of the Minutes by signing and dating them as a correct record of the preceding meeting.

14.4 The signed Minutes shall be conclusive evidence of the decisions taken at the Church Meeting to which they relate.

15 The Appointment And Removal Of Trustees

15.1 The statutory definition of Charity Trustees (hereinafter Trustees) in Section 97(1) of the Charities Act 1993 is “persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity.”

15.2 The Church Meeting shall appoint Trustees to be responsible for the governance of the Church. Subject to any specific or general directions of the Church Meeting and the provisions of 9.2 the control management and administration of the Church shall be by the Trustees, save that the Trustees are not required to do anything that would cause them to be in breach of this Constitution or any trustee duty placed upon them as a result of this role.

15.3 No person may serve as a Trustee if they are disqualified under the Charities Act 1993 or any other legislation.

15.4 In this Church it shall be the Minister(s) (in accordance with clause 15.6), the Church Administrator (in accordance with clause 15.7) and the Elders (in accordance with clauses 15.12 – 15.17) who together are the Trustees of the Church at the time of registration of the Charity with the Charity Commission and thereafter. Collectively the Trustees are also called the Church Leadership Team.

15.5 Trustees shall, with the possible exception of any newly appointed Minister, be chosen from among the Members with the maximum number of Trustees being ten including a maximum of four Trustees who receive payment from the funds of the Charity.

15.6 The Senior Minister shall by the nature of their responsibilities be a Trustee. In addition the Trustees may recommend to the Church Meeting the appointment as Trustees of up to two additional employed Ministers who have responsibility for the oversight of the whole Church, provided that following the appointment the number of unpaid Trustees shall exceed the number of paid Trustees. For this purpose members of an employee’s family are treated as paid Trustees.

15.7 Where the Church employs a Church Administrator (or equivalent) who fulfils the role of Church Secretary and/or Church Treasurer that person shall by the nature of their responsibilities be a Trustee. If no such Church Administrator is employed, the Trustees shall arrange for the appointment of a Church Secretary and/or Church Treasurer (or equivalents) from among the Trustees.

15.8 Elders shall be appointed from the Membership to (together with the Minister(s) and Church Administrator) take responsibility for the spiritual oversight, strategic vision, pastoral care and practical administration of the Church. There shall be a maximum of six Elders. In the event that following the election of Elder or at any other time the number of unpaid Trustees does not exceed the number of paid Trustees, the Trustees shall use all reasonable endeavours to rectify without delay including, if necessary, amending the timescales set down in 15.13.

- 15.9 Any person who has been a Member of the Church for at least one year and been baptised as a believer shall be eligible for election as an Elder including close family members (spouse, parent, child, sibling) of a serving Elder. An Elder should be a mature Christian who has a lifestyle consistent with the principles set out for leaders in the New Testament (eg: 1 Timothy 3, 1 Peter 5 and Titus 1). They should be trustworthy, self controlled, gentle and generous. They should be respected in the community and have an ordered family and personal life. An Elder should be able to work well in a team and be supportive of the aims and objectives of the Church.
- 15.10 Elders shall serve so long as they have the support of the Church Meeting and shall be appointed for an initial three year term with the opportunity to be nominated for reappointment at the end of each three year term.
- 15.11 Recognition of new Elders is an ongoing part of the life of the Church in which all Members have a part to play. On an ongoing basis therefore, Church Members should seek to identify those who fulfil the qualifications and function of an Elder (as set out in 15.8 and 15.9) and who are beginning, in humility, to serve the Church in this way under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. The qualifications and role of an Elder will be communicated to Members on a regular basis.
- 15.12 The appointment of Elders shall be undertaken by processes that are clear and open so that all Members are able to consider prayerfully who should be appointed as an Elder. The process shall ensure that notice is given of any forthcoming election so that Members may nominate prospective Elders whose names shall be submitted (after they have indicated a willingness to be appointed) for decision to the Members with the intention of ensuring that those appointed have a sufficient level of support.
- 15.13 Appointment of Elders will normally take place at the April Church Meeting each year but may take place at any Church Meeting at the discretion of the existing Church Leadership Team. Nominations for the role of Elder shall be made not later than nine Sundays before the Church Meeting at which the election is to be held and requests for nominations shall be made on the four Sundays immediately before that Sunday.
- 15.14 Nominations may be made either by individual Church Members or by the existing Church Leadership Team. Nominations shall be made in writing to the Church Administrator with the supporting signatures of three other Church Members and the consent of the Nominee.
- 15.15 It is important that prior to agreeing to stand, candidates have a clear understanding of the role and the associated responsibilities. To this end, candidates will be given an information pack about the role and the legal requirements of a Trustee. They will be invited to meet and pray with an Elder of their choice and with the Senior Pastor (both acting as individuals rather than as members of the CLT). The candidate will be entitled to take an observer to these meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the role, ensure that they fully understand the responsibilities and to explore what particular contribution they could make to the team. Candidates will be asked to confirm in writing that they agree to stand for election and that they meet the legal requirements.

- 15.16 The names of those candidates who have fulfilled the requirements set out in 15.15 and have agreed to stand will be published to Church Members at least five Sundays before the meeting at which the vote is to be taken. During this period candidates will make themselves available before and after Sunday services for discussion with Church Members who may not know them well.
- 15.17 Voting shall be by secret ballot at a Church Meeting. Members shall be asked to vote for those Candidates who they believe would serve the Church well as Elders. Each Member may vote for as many Candidates as they believe meet these criteria. The number of Candidates receiving the highest number of votes up to the number required to fill the vacancies shall be elected provided each Candidate shall have received votes from at least two-thirds of those members voting.
- 15.18 For avoidance of doubt, in the event of the meeting at which the election was scheduled to take place is not quorate, the election shall then take place at the next Church Meeting that is quorate and it shall not be necessary for the election process to be repeated.
- 15.19 A technical defect in the appointment of a Trustee of which the Trustees were unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken by the Trustees.
- 15.20 A Church Meeting may terminate the appointment of any Elder at any time. Where a Church Meeting is considering such action, the Elder shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Meeting and, either in person or through a representative, to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated.

16 Responsibilities Of Charity Trustees

- 16.1 The Trustees shall be responsible for the governance of the Church and the fulfilment of the Purpose through its Activities acting according to the will of God as discerned by the Church Meeting and subject to any specific or general directions of the Church Meeting in relation to the matters set out in clause 9.2.
- 16.2 The Trustees should keep in an appropriate state of repair and insure to their full value against fire and other usual risks all the buildings of the Charity (except those where the responsibility is of a third party where they shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that the third party does so). They must ensure that suitable public liability and employer's liability insurance is in place.

17 Proceedings Of Trustees

- 17.1 Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be key features of any meeting of the Trustees whose leadership and administration of the Church shall be characterised as much by mutual accountability, service, and pastoral care, as strategic thinking and effective management.
- 17.2 The Trustees shall determine when and how frequently they shall meet provided that they shall convene meetings of the whole group not less than once every two months.

- 17.3 The Trustees shall determine a quorum for their full meetings that shall not be less than two persons or half of their number whichever is the greater nor include less than half of either the paid trustees or the unpaid trustees.
- 17.4 The Trustees have the following powers in the administration of the Church to:
- a. delegate any of their functions to committees consisting of two or more persons appointed by them provided that all proceedings of committees must be reported promptly to the Trustees.
 - b. to make rules consistent with this Deed to govern proceedings at their meetings and at meetings of committees, and
 - c. to make regulations consistent with this Deed to govern the use and application of the property and funds of the Church including regulations about the operation of bank accounts and the commitment of funds.
 - d. The Trustees may invite any Minister, Employee or Member to attend and take part in their meetings except that that person shall not be entitled to vote.
- 17.5 For matters requiring a decision the Trustees shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at their meetings but where this is not possible a vote shall be taken and the outcome recorded as the resolution of the Trustees. Each Trustee shall have one vote.
- 17.6 Every issue may be determined by a simple majority of votes cast at a meeting of the Trustees but if there is an equality of votes on any matter the resolution will be considered rejected and the matter shall be referred back to the submitter for review and if appropriate resubmission to a subsequent meeting for consideration.
- 17.7 The Trustees shall always act in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the general law.
- 17.8 Subject to clause 9.3 the Trustees shall act in accordance with the specific directions of the Church Meeting in relation to matters relating to Church property including any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or redevelopment of Church property.
- 17.9 Minutes shall be prepared of the proceedings at the meetings of the Trustees including any appointments, the names of those present, the decisions taken, and where appropriate the reasons for the decisions and the Trustees shall decide from time to time whether all or part of these minutes shall be treated as confidential.
- 17.10 Trustees shall respect the confidentiality of their meeting.

18 Powers Of Trustees

- 18.1 The Trustees shall have specific power subject to any general or specific directions of the Church Meeting to apply for and accept grants and to provide security in respect of obligations under grant agreements.

- 18.2 For the avoidance of doubt, the Trustees shall, for the advancement of the Purpose, have power to borrow money, receive grants, give guarantees and or security for loans, and to make grants or loans of money except that if the value of any transaction exceeds 5% of the previous years' general income it must be supported by a resolution of the Church Meeting. In the event of a charge over land and/or buildings being required this must be consistent with provisions in the trusts for the land and with statute law.
- 18.3 For the avoidance of doubt the Trustees shall have power to make grants to other charities working elsewhere in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world.

19 Application Of Income And Capital

The Trustees must use the income and may use the capital where trusts permit it to be spent to promote the Purpose provided that the Trustees may apply an appropriate reserves policy in accordance with the general law.

20 Remuneration Of Trustees

- 20.1 With the exception only of a Minister or Ministers and Church Administrator as authorised by clause 23, or a remuneration permitted under clause 20.2 no Trustee (or any person, firm or company connected with the Trustee as defined in Schedule 5 of the Charities Act 1993) may be paid or receive any other direct or indirect benefit for being a Trustee except the reimbursement of reasonable and proper expenses and other payments permitted by statute or specifically authorised by the Charity Commission.

- 20.2 Where it is proposed that a Trustee (or any person, firm or company connected with the Trustee as defined in Schedule 5 of the Charities Act 1993) is to be employed or receive remuneration or sell goods or services or any interest in land to the Church and where this gains the approval of the Church Meeting then this shall be permitted only if:
- a. the Trustee or any person connected with the Trustee who may benefit directly or indirectly from the proposed remuneration declares an interest in the proposal before discussion on the matter begins;
 - b. absents himself or herself (or in the case of any connected persons themselves) from any part of any meeting at which the proposal is discussed and takes no part in any discussion of it and is not counted in determining whether any such meeting is quorate;
 - c. does not vote on the proposal;
 - d. the remaining Trustees who do not stand to receive the proposed benefit are satisfied that it is in the interests of the Church to contract with or employ that Trustee (or connected person) rather than another independent person and must record the reason for their decision in the minutes;
 - e. in reaching that decision the Trustees must balance the advantage of contracting with or employing a Trustee against the disadvantage of doing so (especially the loss of the Trustee's services as a result of dealing with the Trustee's conflict of interest);
 - f. The Trustees authorising the proposed transaction comprise a majority of the Trustees body and have not received any such benefit.

21 Ministers

- 21.1 The Church may have a Minister or more than one Minister or no Minister.
- 21.2 A Minister of this Church shall have been Baptised by immersion upon profession of faith, shall accept the Beliefs being the Basis of Faith and the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle and shall become a Member of the Church as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 21.3 The Minister, whether or not they are on the Register of Persons Accredited for Ministry shall be supportive of the Church's relationships with other Baptist Churches, the South West Baptist Association and the Baptist Union.
- 21.4 The tasks fulfilled by Ministers will vary depending on individual ability and gifting but a Minister is normally expected to be involved in the Activities of the Church with an emphasis on the leading of worship and prayer, the teaching of the Christian faith and the pastoral care of individuals. The Minister shall work with the Church towards achieving its Purpose through its Activities.
- 21.5 Notwithstanding any legal status afforded to a Minister by statute the Church recognises that the Minister and the Church are in a Covenant relationship based on Christian love and trust and mutual accountability. A Minister shall be in a relationship of mutual accountability with the other Trustees and also with the Members.

22 The Appointment and Removal Of Ministers

- 22.1 When the Church is seeking to appoint a Minister it will normally consult the appropriate staff within the Association before commencing any appointment process and follow, so far as practicable, the Baptist Union's procedures and recommended terms for the settlement of Ministers.
- 22.2 A Minister will be appointed or removed by a resolution of the Members at a Church Meeting at any time.
- 22.3 Where a Church Meeting is considering the dismissal of a Minister the Minister shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Meeting and to correct any errors of fact and, either in person or through a representative, to offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for his/her actions before withdrawing so that the Church Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated.
- 22.4 The Church and the Minister shall normally agree 'Terms and Conditions of Appointment' including termination procedures based on the standard terms of appointment published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

23 The Remuneration Of Trustees

Notwithstanding the fact that any Minister or Ministers and the Church Administrator appointed by the Church may be Trustees they will be entitled to be paid an agreed and reasonable remuneration or stipend out of the funds of the Church.

24 Pastoral Vacancies and The Appointment Of A Moderator

When there is no appointed Minister the Church Meeting may appoint a person who is a Member or a member of another Baptist Church to be the Moderator (but if they do not do so then the Association may recommend an appointment of a suitable person) who will hold this office until a new Minister is appointed or until they resign or are released or dismissed by the Church Meeting.

25 Finance

- 25.1 The Trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the financial administration of the Church.
- 25.2 Once in each year the Trustees shall present a budget of subsequent years' projected income and expenditure at a convenient Church Meeting.

26 Record Keeping and Accounting

- 26.1 The Church's annual financial year will be as determined from time to time by the Church Meeting.

- 26.2 Financial statements of all Church organisations that form part of the Activities shall be presented to the Trustees and incorporated into the Church's financial statements.
- 26.3 A statement of the Church Accounts (audited or independently examined as required by law) shall be received by a Church Meeting.
- 26.4 Financial Records, annual reports and statements of account relating to the Church for the previous six years must be available for inspection by any Trustee.
- 26.5 The law requires Trustees to make the annual report and accounts available to any person who requests these. The Trustees may make a reasonable charge to cover the administration costs of meeting this request.

27 Constitution

- 27.1 A copy of this Constitution will be made available to Members and to every applicant for membership with the intention that every Church Member shall be informed about the organisation of the Church and be enabled to participate in the life of the Church and in Church Meetings.
- 27.2 No amendment may be made to this Constitution that would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at law.
- 27.3 Subject to clauses 27.4 this Constitution may be altered only by a resolution of a Church Meeting notice of the intended change having been given at the previous Church Meeting.
- 27.4 No amendment may be made to clause 20.2 or 28.2 without the prior written permission of the Charity Commission.

28 Closure

- 28.1 If the Church resolves to close it shall notify the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Baptist Association.
- 28.2 If the Church shall resolve to close or shall cease to meet for worship for at least six months the assets of the Church, after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities (not being property assets subject to separate trusts) shall be applied for Christian charitable purposes as decided by a Church Meeting or, failing decision in that way, as decided by the Association and notified to the Union.
- 28.3 The Trustees of Churches that are registered charities shall notify the Charity Commission of any closure or dissolution.
- 28.4 The property assets shall be dealt with by the holding Trustees in accordance with the property trusts.

This constitution was adopted by vote at a Church Meeting held on 22nd September 2009 and amended by vote of the Church Meeting held on 25th January 2011.