



Walsall Independent Evangelical Church Church Handbook

We certify this to be the Church Handbook adopted by the members of Walsall Independent Evangelical Church at a meeting of the members held on the _____

Chairman: _____ Secretary: _____

As amended in accordance with the provisions of this Church Handbook on:

Date of Revision	Signature of Chair	Signature of Secretary

1. Introduction

Welcome to Walsall Independent Evangelical Church. This local church is one part of a much wider body of people who are the church of God, made up of people who recognise Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and who are united to Him by the Holy Spirit.

We come together as a group of people to help one another, as individuals and as a church, to grow in our Christian faith and to share this with other people; to enjoy being in God's presence and worshipping Him together; to share teaching from the Bible and personal stories of the amazing things Jesus has done; to encourage one another as we try to live out Jesus' teaching; to make Jesus known to other people.

When we meet together we learn more about God and Jesus through the Bible; pray for people in our Church, our local community and the world; provide care and friendship to one another; and reach out to people who do not know Jesus or the importance of recognising who He is. (Acts 2:42, Matthew 28:18-20, Hebrews 10: 23-25, Romans 12: 3-5)

2. Legal structure

The legal structure of our Church is a 'charitable incorporated organisation' (a "CIO"). We have a Church Constitution which deals with the legal requirements we must meet as a CIO. Any changes to our Constitution must be registered by the Charity Commission before they come into effect.

Our Constitution was adopted on _____¹ and registered by the Charity Commission on _____². It was last amended on _____³.

This document is our Church Handbook. It sets out the internal workings of our Church and is based on our understanding of the Bible. It sits alongside our Constitution, and both documents should be read together to understand how the Church operates. This Church Handbook must always be consistent with our Constitution – if it is inconsistent, the Constitution takes precedence.

If there is anything you are unsure about, please speak to the Pastor or one of the Charity Trustees.

¹ Add the date the Constitution was adopted by the first members

² Add the date the CIO was registered by the Charity Commission

³ You will need to update the date here each time the Constitution is amended – that is the date the amendments are registered by the Charity Commission not the date the changes are approved by Church Members. You can leave it blank until it is amended for the first time after the CIO has been registered.

3. Our basis of faith

Our Basis of Faith sets out the core truths of the Gospel which we believe every true Christian should agree with. Under our Constitution, the charitable purposes of our Church and the activities we carry out must be consistent with our Basis of Faith.

Appendix A contains our Basis of Faith.

4. Doctrinal distinctives

Our Church has another statement of beliefs called ‘Doctrinal Distinctives’. These set out our Church’s position and teaching on certain specific matters, as we recognise that genuine Christian believers may take different views.

Appendix B contains our Doctrinal Distinctives.

5. Ethical statements

These statements set out our Church’s teaching on ethical matters and explain how our Basis of Faith is worked out practically in day-to-day life.

Appendix C contains our Ethical Statements.

6. Becoming a member of our Church

If you are a Christian and you think of Walsall Independent Evangelical Church as your ‘spiritual home’ then we hope you will demonstrate this formally by becoming a Church Member.

This is a way of showing to other people that you are committed to using your gifts and time to serve in our Church, to being served by other Church Members, and to serving together with them to show Jesus’ love to others.

- We ask people to confirm that they agree with our Basis of Faith before they can become a Church Member.
- We ask people to confirm that they accept our Doctrinal Distinctives as our Church’s teaching on these matters. Church Members may hold and discuss a different personal view but are asked not to insist on their own view or to seek to override the Church’s teaching on these matters.
- Church Members are to live in a way that is consistent with our Ethical Statements.

Appendix D explains how you can become a Church Member.

7. Being a Church member

Church Members have a particular role in decision-making within our Church, including confirming the appointment of Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees, being consulted on the ways the Church should carry out its mission and its activities and priorities, agreeing to create

new staff roles and/or appoint staff, and identifying ways of using the Church's resources to further the Kingdom of God.

Appendix D explains more about what being a Church Member looks like in practice and how Church Membership may come to an end.

8. Leadership of our Church

Jesus Christ Himself is the leader of our Church. Through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, we are guided by Jesus' teaching – both by His words and the insight we are given into how He lived and treated people.

The Lord Jesus also gives us leaders, referred to in this local Church as Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees. As they themselves seek to follow Jesus they provide an example for others to follow, and the Bible encourages us to imitate the faith that they have. (Hebrews 13:17)

As our leaders watch over our Church and are accountable to God, the writer to the Hebrews tells us to have confidence in them and submit to the authority God has given them “so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.” (Hebrews 13:7)

The Church's Constitution states that the individuals who hold the following Church Officer roles are the charity trustees of our Church:

Elders, Church Secretary, Church Treasurer and Other Appointed Trustees

As charity trustees, these individuals have certain legal duties and responsibilities under the law in England and Wales.

Appendix E explains how these Church Officers are appointed and how their roles may come to an end. It also explains the other Church Officer roles we have in our Church, in addition to the roles of the Charity Trustees.

9. Church discipline

As a Church, we are part of the family of God. As with any family, the members of this Church may disagree with one another, or fall into a pattern of behaviour that does not reflect how Jesus has taught us to live. We recognise that we are all sinners and make mistakes and are grateful for God's forgiveness when we confess our sins to Him (1 John 1:8-9).

Discipline is the responsibility of the whole church and is exercised in a spirit of love and humility. It is also a particular responsibility of the Elders' continued ministry as they seek to restore an individual Member. However, we recognise that sometimes Church Members may refuse to be reconciled to each other when disputes arise, or to persist in behaviour that is dishonouring to God and the Bible's teaching. In these circumstances we may, with sorrow, have to take the step of removing them from formal Church Membership. This is because such behaviour and lack of repentance may indicate that they are not truly part of the family of God. It can also tempt other Church Members and attendees to follow their example, particularly if their behaviour is left 'unchecked' by the leadership. (Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5)

Removing someone from Church Membership is not a decision that is taken lightly, but with the hope that it will prompt the individual to recognise their sin and turn back to Jesus, so that we can welcome them back into our Church with open arms.

Appendix F explains how church discipline is carried out.

10. Church members' meetings

All Church Members are encouraged to attend Church Members' meetings whenever possible. These are valuable opportunities to share together the work of our Church and other organisations our Church supports, to discuss and take decisions about new activities and ideas, and to pray and praise God together.

Appendix G explains how often Church Members' Meetings are held and how decisions are made.

11. Other provisions relating to the day to day running of the Church

Appendix H covers other matters relevant to how we run our Church on a day-to-day basis, which are not covered anywhere else in this Church Handbook. This includes:

The Lord's Supper

Applications for baptism

Church safeguarding and other policies

12. Changing this Church Handbook

Appendix I sets out how this Church Handbook can be amended.

Appendix A – 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. Humanity

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. God created us male and female, which is identified by our biological sex. Marriage is the exclusive union of one man and one woman and is a picture of the relationship between Christ and his bride the Church. Sexual intimacy is a gift from God to be enjoyed only within the context of marriage.

4. The Fall

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.

5. 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.

6. 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

sinner 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

Appendix B – Doctrinal Distinctives

Baptism

Baptism is a command of the Lord Jesus Christ to all those who believe in Him (Matthew 28:19). This Church teaches, preaches and practises believers' baptism. The normal mode of baptism is full immersion in water, but the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees may agree an alternative where appropriate.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (or Communion) is a symbolic meal of thanksgiving established by the Lord Jesus in which we:

- Regularly remember His atoning work on the cross
- Acknowledge our sharing in the benefits of His death
- Have fellowship with the Lord Jesus and each other
- Are reminded of His love for us, which is to guide our relationships as the body of Christ
- Proclaim His death until His return.

Marriage

Our Basis of Faith sets out that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of belief and practice. The Church upholds that the teaching of the Bible is that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33) and that all sexual practices outside of marriage between a man and a woman are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) regardless of whether or not homosexual marriage is permitted by the laws of England and Wales.

As a member of the FIEC, this Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Same-Sex Marriage adopted by the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (<https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/same-sex-marriage>).

Women in Ministry

This Church's position is that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, church leadership, and elsewhere. The Bible teaches that although women are precluded from certain roles and ministries within the church, they are of equal status to men and have other important ministries.

This Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Women in Ministry adopted by (FIEC) in their Statement on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (<https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/women-in-ministry>).

Gospel Unity

As a member of the FIEC, this Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Gospel Unity adopted by the FIEC in their Statement on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (<https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/gospel-unity>).

Appendix C– Ethical Statements

Marriage

In line with our Basis of Faith and Doctrinal Distinctives it is important that the Church and Church Members in no way condone, promote, assist or encourage adulterous or extra-marital sexual practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

Gender

In accordance with our Doctrinal Distinctives and the FIEC Statement on Women in Ministry, we recognise that God created us male and female and calls us to live according to our gender identity, which is inseparable from our biological sex determined at conception. Our gender may not be changed or reassigned.

Appendix D – Church Membership

This appendix sets out the provisions for Church Membership that are referred to in the Constitution.

1. Eligibility for church membership

Membership of this local Church is open to all those who:

- Publicly profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and are seeking to live as one of His disciples.
- Are in full agreement with the Church's Basis of Faith (in Appendix A).
- Are prepared to accept the Doctrinal Distinctives of the Church (in Appendix B).
- Are committed to living in accordance with the Ethical Statements of the Church (in Appendix C).
- Have been baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- Commit themselves to serve Christ with the other members of the Church.
- Agree to submit themselves to the leadership and authority of the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees of the Church.
- Fully accept the responsibilities and obligations of Church Membership (outlined in paragraph 3 below).

2. Categories of membership

2.1. Full members

Anyone aged eighteen years or above, who fulfils the other membership criteria, may become a Full Member of the Church. References to 'Church Members' in the Constitution and this Church Handbook mean Full Members unless stated otherwise.

2.2. Junior members

- 2.2.1. Anyone aged under 18 years, who fulfils the other membership criteria, may become a Junior Member of the Church.
- 2.2.2. Junior Members are encouraged to attend and participate in discussions at Church Members' meetings but are not allowed to vote.

2.3. Honorary members

- 2.3.1. The Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees may give someone the status of Honorary Member.
- 2.3.2. Honorary Members may attend and participate in discussions at a Church Members' meetings but are not allowed to vote.
- 2.3.3. Honorary Membership of the Church shall be open to those persons who:

- 2.3.3.1 are temporarily living in Walsall or the surrounding area and have formal Membership of another church elsewhere
- 2.3.3.2 have been in Church Membership at Walsall Independent Evangelical Church but have now moved away and with the agreement of the Elders wish to retain a formal link with the Church; or
- 2.3.3.3 are ministry partners with membership elsewhere at their primary supporting church

and who have confirmed in writing (or other means permitted by the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees) their whole-hearted agreement to the Basis of Faith.

- 2.3.4. Individuals who are no longer capable of managing and administering their own affairs because of mental disorder, illness or injury may also be transferred from the register of Full Members to become an Honorary Member.

3. Privileges and responsibilities of church members

- 3.1. Being a Church Member brings both privileges and responsibilities. The privileges include being identified as part of this local Church of God, being able to take part in discussing and agreeing the way in which the Church should move forward and benefitting from the pastoral care of the Church leaders and other members.
- 3.2. We ask all Church Members to show their commitment to actively serving Christ as part of our Church, including by:
 - 3.2.1. Seeking to live a life that is consistent with the faith we profess in our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Bible's teaching (Philippians 3:16; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 - 3.2.2. Taking part in Sunday worship (including participating in the Lord's Supper) as well as prayer meetings, Bible studies and other meetings and events arranged by the Church, as individual circumstances allow. (Acts 20:7, Hebrews 10:24-25, Acts 2:42, 20:7).
 - 3.2.3. Regular private prayer, including for Church Members and the work and ministry of our Church, and personal Bible study (2 Timothy 3:15-17, Philippians 4:6).
 - 3.2.4. Sharing in the work of our Church, according to the individual calling, gifts and opportunities God has given you. (1 Corinthians 12-14).
 - 3.2.5. Using opportunities to witness to those who don't regularly attend our Church, by what you say and the way you live. (Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 15:58).
 - 3.2.6. Praying for the Church's leadership in their commitments and as they work together to build up the church of God, both locally and worldwide (1 Thessalonians 5:12-18).

- 3.2.7. Regular financial giving to our Church and the Lord's work in general, including for mission, in accordance with your means (Malachi 3:10, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
- 3.2.8. Showing Christian love and concern both to others in the church and for the wider community (John 13:35, 1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- 3.2.9. Attending and participating in Church 'business' meetings. Sharing views respectfully and openly and engaging in constructive discussion on matters raised at church meetings with the aim of reaching a common mind and unity of purpose. (1 Timothy 4:12, Philippians 2:1-2).
- 3.3. Each Full Member also has a legal duty, which is stated in our Constitution as follows:
 - "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."

4. Applying to become a church member

- 4.1. The first Members of the Church CIO are the people named as the first charity trustees in the Constitution. Individuals who are listed on the register of members of the unincorporated church charity at the date the CIO is registered will be accepted into membership of the CIO once they have submitted a membership application to the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees or otherwise confirmed in writing that they approve the CIO Constitution and this Church Handbook, including to accept the legal duty of members of the CIO mentioned in paragraph 3.3 above. There will be no need for an interview and formal approval at a Church meeting in these circumstances.
- 4.2. Anyone meeting the eligibility criteria outlined in paragraph 1 above is encouraged to become a Church Member. The procedure for applying for membership is as follows:
 - 4.2.1. Anyone interested in applying for membership of the Church should firstly speak to one of the Elders and Deacons.
 - 4.2.2. They will then be asked to fill in a short application form.
 - 4.2.3. Where a person applying for membership was previously a member of another church, the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees may request a reference from the leaders of that church regarding the applicant's suitability for membership.
 - 4.2.4. The Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees will then consider whether the applicant is eligible for membership. This will normally involve arranging to meet with the applicant to discuss their application and any queries they may have. This includes to discuss:
 - How the applicant became a Christian and when they were baptised.
 - How the applicant's life has changed by the power of the Holy Spirit since becoming a Christian.

- How the applicant sees themselves becoming involved at the Church.
 - If the applicant agrees with the Church's Basis of Faith and is willing to accept the Doctrinal Distinctives and to live in accordance with the Church's Ethical Statements.
 - If the applicant is willing to comply with the Church Constitution and this Church Handbook, including the duty of members.
- 4.2.5. Where the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees agree that an applicant meets the criteria for membership, the applicant will be informed that their name will be put forward to a Church Members' meeting.
- 4.2.6. The application shall be approved if confirmed by the majority of Church Members present at a Church Members' meeting. If approved, the individual will be accepted into membership at that Church Members' meeting and formally welcomed into Church Membership the next Sunday the church shares the Lord's Supper.
- 4.3. New Members of the Church will be encouraged to attend all Church Members' meetings after being admitted to membership and Full Members will be entitled to vote on any matter.
- 4.4. The Pastor shall become a Full Member on taking up his appointment provided the eligibility criteria in paragraph 1 is met.
- 4.5. The Church Secretary will maintain a written register of all Full Members. A separate register shall be maintained of Junior Members and Honorary Members including their category of membership.

5. Resigning or transferring church membership

- 5.1. A Church Member may resign voluntarily by submitting a written letter or email to the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees. This provision shall apply to both Full Members and to Junior/Honorary Members.
- 5.2. A Church Member will cease to be a member when he/she dies. This provision shall apply to both Full Members and to Junior/Honorary Members.
- 5.3. The Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees may transfer a Church Member from the register of Full Members to become an Honorary Member if they have not attended the Church for a period of six months and have been notified in writing by the Church Secretary before the change is made. The Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees may subsequently decide to transfer them back to the register of Full Members. This provision does not apply to a Full Member who is serving as a mission worker in another country.
- 5.4. If a Church Member wishes to transfer their membership to another church, then they should inform the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees. The Church Secretary will

usually write to the church to provide a reference on behalf of the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees, if requested.

6. Removing an individual from church membership

- 6.1. The provisions of this paragraph 6 shall apply to both Full Members and to Junior/Honorary Members
- 6.2. A Church Member will be treated as having resigned from membership of the Church if they have not attended the Church for a period of two years and have been notified in writing by the Church Secretary that they will be removed from membership before the change is made. The Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees may subsequently decide to admit them back into membership. This provision does not apply to a Church Member who is serving as a mission worker in another country.
- 6.3. A Church Member will be treated as having resigned from membership of the Church if they become a member of another church. There may be exceptions, at the discretion of the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees, as noted in paragraph 2.3.
- 6.4. If a Church Member moves out of the geographical area served by this Church, it will be assumed that they resign their membership, unless there are exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Elders, Deacons, Charity Trustees as noted in paragraphs 2.3 and 5.3.
- 6.5. A Church Member may be removed from membership by the application of the disciplinary procedure set out in appendix F.

Appendix E- Appointment of church officers

This appendix sets out how the different Church Officer roles and other positions in our Church are appointed and how they may come to an end.

1. Charity trustees: summary

- 1.1. The Constitution provides that the following Church Officers will automatically be appointed as the Charity Trustees of our Church by virtue of their offices:
 - 1.1.1. Elders (including the Pastor)
 - 1.1.2. the Church Secretary
 - 1.1.3. the Church Treasurer
 - 1.1.4. other Appointed Trustees,together, the “Church Officer Trustees”.
- 1.2. Only those individuals appointed to the Church Officer roles specified in the Constitution will automatically be Charity Trustees. Other than the Charity Trustees, those individuals who held Church Officer roles immediately before the transfer of assets and liabilities from the charitable unincorporated association to the CIO shall continue in office in the CIO with no requirement for re-appointment. This is unless the Church Members have agreed that they should not continue in office when this Church Handbook is first adopted, or the individuals resign from office, or their appointment otherwise comes to an end in accordance with this Church Handbook.
- 1.3. The Charity Trustees must fully subscribe to our Church’s Constitution and Church Handbook, the Basis of Faith and our Doctrinal Distinctives and live in accordance with our Ethical Statements.
- 1.4. For the avoidance of doubt, if an individual resigns as a Charity Trustee of the Church under the provisions of the Constitution, this will also be taken as a resignation from the Church Officer role under which they are appointed as a trustee (and vice versa). For example, if an Elder resigns as a Charity Trustee, they will also resign as an Elder, and if they resign as an Elder they will also resign as a Charity Trustee.

2. The Pastors

- 2.1. The Church may appoint Pastors, who are set apart for the teaching and preaching of the Bible and the pastoral leadership of our Church. They may already be a Church Member or may become a Church Member when they take up the role of Pastor.
- 2.2. The decision to invite an individual to serve as a Pastor in our Church is made by the Church Members, on the recommendation of the Church Leadership. A Church Meeting will be called for this purpose and at least 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.

- 2.3. The Pastors are Elders of our Church and references in this Church Handbook to Elders includes the Pastor(s). The Senior Pastor will usually Chair meetings of Elders/Deacons and Charity Trustees and Church Members providing they do not have a conflict of interest in an item to be discussed.
- 2.4. The Pastor will be an employee of the Church with a contract of employment.
- 2.5. The Pastor may resign from employment by giving notice in writing in accordance with his contract of employment.
- 2.6. The Elders and Other Appointed Trustees may seek authority at a Church Meeting to terminate the appointment of a Pastor, subject to the requirements of employment law and the Constitution. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the authority to be granted. Where such authority is granted, the Elders and Other Appointed Trustees must still act in accordance with the requirements of employment law and the Constitution.

3. Elders

- 3.1. The Elders are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral oversight of our Church. Elders are men whom the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:2-3.
- 3.2. Elders may be appointed on a trial basis on the recommendation of the Church Leadership, Church Members having been informed prior to the commencement of the trial period. A typical trial period would not exceed 6 months. During the trial period the individual would be invited to attend meetings of Trustees but would not be appointed as a Trustee. On successful completion of the trial the Church Leadership would proceed to a full appointment.
- 3.3. Elders are nominated for appointment or re-appointment by the Church Leadership and appointed by the Church Members. 75% of Church Members present and voting must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.
- 3.4. An Elder will serve for a term of 5 years and may then be re-appointed, apart from the Pastor(s) (who will remain in office as an Elder for so long as they are the Pastor).
- 3.5. An Elder may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the other Elders, Other Appointed Trustees, or the Church Secretary.
- 3.6. The Elders will be responsible for making recommendations to Church Members for the admission and/or removal of Church Members in accordance with the provisions of Appendix D and Appendix F of this Handbook. In accordance with clause 16 of the Constitution this responsibility has been delegated to them by the Charity Trustees and may be reviewed from time to time.
- 3.7. If an Elder no longer displays the qualities required of an Elder and/or one or more of the reasons for church discipline contained in this Church Handbook apply, then the Church

Leadership may propose to a Church Meeting that the appointment of the Elder be terminated. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the decision to be carried.

4. Other Appointed Trustees

- 4.1. The Other Appointed Trustees have key leadership responsibilities for both the practical affairs and regular activities of our Church. These include areas of administration, finance, care and outreach as well as oversight of the Church alongside the Elders, Church Treasurer and Church Secretary. Other Appointed Trustees are individuals who the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. This includes agreement with the Basis of Faith, Ethical Statements and Doctrinal Distinctives of the Church.
- 4.2. Other Appointed Trustees are nominated for appointment or reappointment by the Elders and elected by Church Members. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the decision to be carried.
- 4.3. An Other Appointed Trustee will serve for a term of 5 years and may be reappointed.
- 4.4. An Other Appointed Trustee may resign from office by giving notice in writing to Elders, Other Appointed Trustees, or the Church Secretary.

If an Other Appointed Trustee no longer displays the qualities required of a Charity Trustee and/or one or more of the reasons for church discipline contained in this Church Handbook apply, then the Elders may propose to a Church Meeting that the appointment of an Other Appointed Trustee be terminated and the Other Appointed Trustee in question shall be given reasonable opportunity to make representations to the Church Members prior to the decision to terminate their office being taken. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the decision to be carried.

5. Deacons

- 5.1. The Deacons have key leadership responsibilities for both the practical affairs and regular activities of our Church. These include areas of administration, care and outreach. Deacons are individuals whom the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- 5.2. Deacons are nominated for election or re-election by the Church Leadership and elected by Church Members following successful completion of a trial period. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for a Deacon to be elected.
- 5.3. A Deacon will serve for a term of 5 years and may be re-elected.
- 5.4. A Deacon may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the Elders.
- 5.5. If a Deacon no longer displays the qualities required of a Deacon and/or one or more of the reasons for church discipline contained in this Church Handbook apply, then the

Elders may propose to a Church Meeting that the appointment of the Deacon be terminated. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the decision to be carried.

6. Church secretary and church treasurer

- 6.1. The Elders, Church Officers and Other Charity Trustees shall appoint from among themselves a Church Secretary and a Church Treasurer.

6.2. Church Secretary

The Church Secretary is responsible for overseeing the administration and ‘corporate’ governance of our Church. This includes the arrangements for Church Meetings (including preparing and sending notices, and taking minutes), making sure that the provisions of the Constitution and Church Handbook are followed, managing the documentation relating to employment of staff and/or paid office holders and taking minutes of Charity Trustees’ meetings. The Church Secretary also maintains the register of members, which we must do under the terms of our Constitution.

6.3. Church Treasurer

The Church Treasurer is responsible for overseeing the financial governance of the Church. This includes maintaining the accounts of the Church and supporting records and ensuring that the Charity Trustees have implemented suitable financial controls.

7. Other church officers

- 7.1. The Church Leadership may appoint individuals to other Church Officer roles within the Church. Only those individuals appointed to the Church Officer roles specified in the Constitution will be charity trustees.
- 7.2. Other than the Charity Trustees, those individuals who held Church Officer roles immediately before the transfer of assets and liabilities from the charitable trust to the CIO shall continue in office in the CIO with no requirement for re-appointment. This is unless the Church Members have agreed that they should not continue in office when this Church Handbook is first adopted, or the individuals resign from office, or their appointment otherwise comes to an end in accordance with this Church Handbook.

8. Church staff

The Charity Trustees may appoint Church staff as employees and/or paid office holders. The appointment of staff/establishment of new Church staff posts must be approved by Church Members at a Church Meeting.

Appendix F– Church discipline

This appendix explains the reasons that our Church may need to exercise discipline and the procedure we will follow, which is based on the Bible’s teaching.

1. Who church discipline applies to

- 1.1. Clause 9.4 of the Constitution sets out certain steps that must be followed if a Church Member will be removed from membership as a result of church discipline and who is involved in the decision.
- 1.2. The provisions of Appendix F apply to both Full, Junior, and Honorary Members.
- 1.3. There may be individuals who regularly attend and take part in the life of our Church but who are not Church Members. The procedures set out below provide a guide to dealing with issues and disputes that may arise with individuals who are not Church Members.

2. Reasons for church discipline

A Church Member may be subject to church discipline for any of the following reasons:

- 2.1. They err in doctrine so that they no longer affirm the Basis of Faith of the Church (see Appendix A).
- 2.2. They are no longer willing to accept the practices and doctrinal positions that are set out in the Church’s Doctrinal Distinctives (see Appendix B).
- 2.3. They err in conduct by committing open sin which brings the Lord Jesus, His Gospel and/or the Church into disrepute.
- 2.4. They have consistently failed to fulfil the responsibilities and obligations of a member of the Church.
- 2.5. They refuse to repent of sin committed against another person or Church Member which has been drawn to their attention.
- 2.6. They have made false and malicious allegations against another person or Church Member.
- 2.7. They are causing significant or persistent division or dissension in the Church.
- 2.8. They are no longer willing to submit to the leadership and authority of the Elders, Deacons and Charity Trustees of the Church.

3. Process for church discipline

- 3.1. The Elders must be informed as soon as possible where it is believed that any of the reasons set out in paragraph 2 above apply to a Church Member. Where a member of the Church believes they have been sinned against, they should normally raise the issue first

with the person concerned and only report it to the Elders if the two members concerned are unable to resolve the matter between themselves.

- 3.2. Where the Elders are informed, or they themselves believe that any of the reasons set out in paragraph 2 above apply to a Church Member, at least two of the Elders will meet informally with the Church Member to discuss the matter and seek to resolve it, in line with Biblical principles.
- 3.3. The Elders looking into the matter will report back to the Elders to decide whether it is necessary to hold a formal disciplinary meeting and what additional steps they should take, if any.
- 3.4. During the process of looking into such a matter, the Elders may decide that it is appropriate to temporarily limit the Church Member's involvement in church activities, while the issue is being reviewed and a clear conclusion reached. The Church Member concerned will be notified if this is the case, with clear reasons given and an explanation of what will happen next. The Church Member may continue to attend and vote at Church Members' meetings but may not be permitted to participate in the Lord's Supper.

4. Process for removal from church membership

- 4.1. Before the Elders propose removing someone from Church Membership they must carry out the following process:
 - 4.1.1. The Elders will have made all reasonable efforts to address the issue, as outlined in paragraph 3 above, so that the Church Member can continue in membership, if possible.
 - 4.1.2. If the Elders are formally considering whether or not to remove the Church Member from membership, they will write to the Church Member to explain why they are considering removing their membership.
 - 4.1.3. The Elders will give the Church Member 21 clear days' notice of a meeting at which they will formally consider whether to propose that the Church Member be removed from membership. The Church Member will be invited to make representations either at the meeting or in writing before the meeting. They can either make such representations themselves or ask a representative to do this for them.
 - 4.1.4. The Elders must take into account those representations when deciding whether to propose removal of the Church Member from membership.
- 4.2. The Elders may propose to a Church Meeting that a Church Member be removed from membership. The Church Member will be entitled to a reasonable amount of time during the Church Meeting to make representations before a vote is taken but must leave the room before the vote. 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for Church Membership to be removed.

- 4.3. The Church Member will be informed of the decision of the Church Members by the Church Secretary and the register of Members will be amended, if required.
- 4.4. Anyone who has been removed as a Church Member may re-apply for membership in the normal way and will be welcomed back into Church Membership if their application is approved.

5. Additional disciplinary measures

- 5.1. Even in cases where there has been genuine repentance, the Elders may still be required to report certain issues to the relevant secular authorities. In such cases, the Elders will give the individual concerned all the pastoral and practical support that is appropriate for someone who is genuinely repentant (whether or not they are still a Church Member).
- 5.2. If someone is removed from Church Membership, the Elders may also impose any of the following additional measures:
 - 5.2.1. A restriction from attending or taking part in any or all of the meetings of the Church, including meetings or activities that are normally open to the public.
 - 5.2.2. The remaining Church Members may be asked not to have any association with the person who has been removed from membership, in line with specific guidance from the Elders. Any of these additional measures may be altered or removed later by the Elders.

Appendix G - Church Members' Meetings

This Appendix explains when and how Church Members' Meetings will take place. In our Constitution these are called "General meetings of Members", and this means the same thing as "Church Members' Meetings".

1. Arrangements for church members' meetings

- 1.1. The Constitution sets out the arrangements our Church must follow for Church Members' Meetings, under the headings "Members' Decisions" and "General meetings of members" (clauses 10 and 11). These are summarised here, but the provisions of the Constitution must be followed.
- 1.2. All Church Members will be given at least 14 clear days' advanced notice of Church Members' Meetings, in writing. Clause 11.3.3 of the Constitution sets out the information that we must provide in the notice of a Church Members' Meeting. Copies of the agenda and minutes of the last Church Members' Meeting will be made available to Church Members by the Church Secretary.
- 1.3. Church Members' Meetings must be held in person unless there is an express provision in the Constitution or under legislation for general meetings to be held electronically.
- 1.4. If Church Members want to suggest an item to be discussed under 'any other business' they should inform the Church Secretary at least 7 days before the meeting, so that it can be considered.

2. Frequency

- 2.1. Under our Constitution we must have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year and there is certain 'business' which must be undertaken in that meeting, such as receiving our Church's annual accounts for the year before.
- 2.2. Our Church usually holds three other Church Members' Meetings during the year in addition to the AGM, so that there is one each quarter.

3. Quorum

- 3.1. In order to make decisions at a Church Members' Meeting there must be enough Church Members there to form a 'quorum'. Our Constitution says that our quorum is 40% of all current Church Members or 5 Church Members, whichever is higher. This means that enough Church Members must be present in person, not including any postal or proxy votes (see 4.4 below).
- 3.2. If there are not enough Church Members present to form a quorum then the meeting will either be postponed or can go ahead, but if it goes ahead no decisions can be made. The

Constitution sets out what happens if a reconvened meeting that was postponed still does not have a quorum.

4. Voting for decisions

- 4.1. Most decisions at a Church Members' Meeting can be made by a simple majority of Church Members present and voting (i.e. 51% or more) and each Church Member has one vote. In these cases, votes will normally be made by a show of hands and no proxy or postal/email votes will be allowed.
- 4.2. There are some more significant decisions where the number of Church Members voting in favour must be higher for example, for changes to the Constitution. These are set out in paragraph 5 below.
- 4.3. If a decision is significant or might be contentious, the Pastor, Elders, Officers, Deacons and Other Charity Trustees may decide that voting will take place by a secret ballot. A secret ballot can also be requested by 20% of the Church Members present at the meeting.
- 4.4. The Constitution provides more detail about voting at Church Members meetings.

5. Voting requirements for specific decisions

- 5.1. The table below shows the decisions that must be approved by Church Members at a Church Members' Meeting under the Constitution or a specific section of the Church Handbook, including where a majority is required that is more than a simple majority. It also says what majority is required and where this is stated in the Constitution or Church Handbook. These are listed as "Type A decisions" in the table.
- 5.2. There are other decisions that Church Members must approve at a Church Members' meeting even though these are not specified in detail under the provisions of the Constitution or this Church Handbook. These are listed as "Type B decisions" in the table.

Type A decisions		
	Decision	Majority required
1	To allow a Church Members Meeting to proceed on short notice (Constitution - 11.3.2)	90% of all Church Members
2	To amend the Constitution (Constitution - 27.1)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
3	To amend the Basis of Faith (Constitution - 27.3)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting

Type A decisions		
	Decision	Majority required
4	To wind up the Church (Constitution – 28)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
5	To establish a new paid staff post and/or appoint a new member of staff	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
6	To appoint a Pastor (Handbook – appendix E paragraph 2)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
7	To remove a Pastor from office (Handbook - appendix E paragraph 2)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
8	To appoint an Elder (Handbook - appendix E paragraph 3)	75% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members Meeting
9	To remove an Elder from office (Handbook - appendix E paragraph 3)	75% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members Meeting
10	To elect a Deacon (Handbook - appendix E paragraph 5)	75% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members Meeting
11	To remove a Deacon from office (Handbook - appendix E paragraph 5)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting

Type B decisions		
	Decision	Majority required
1	To commit expenditure of more than £5,000 for a single item or a cumulative amount of more than £10,000	51% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
2	To buy or sell land or buildings	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting

Type B decisions

3	To amalgamate or transfer the undertaking of the Church with another Church or organisation	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members Meeting (This must be 75% Church Members present and voting at a Church Members' Meeting or 100% of Church Members if passed otherwise than at a Church Members' Meeting, if the Church's assets are being transferred to another CIO)
4	To formally establish a new CIO or other entity as a Church plant	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting

Appendix H – Other provisions relating to the day to day running of our Church

The Lord's Supper/Communion

The Lord's Supper (Communion) is normally celebrated frequently, at morning or evening Sunday services and at mid-week meetings. All who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, know Him as their personal Saviour and have demonstrated their personal faith through baptism are encouraged to take part.

Applications for baptism

Anyone interested in being baptised should first speak to one of the Elders.

The decision whether to baptise an individual will be taken by the Elders.

Church safeguarding and other policies

The Charity Trustees shall operate a Church safeguarding policy and shall ensure that activities involving children and vulnerable adults are conducted in accordance with that policy. A copy of the Church's safeguarding policy is available by application to the Church Safeguarding Officers.

Each person overseeing Church activities involving children or vulnerable adults and every Elder, Deacon and Charity Trustee shall provide to the Safeguarding Officers a current Disclosure and Barring Service certificate.

The Church also maintains a number of other policies including A Data Protection Policy, a Privacy Policy and a Venue Hire policy. These are available to view on the Church Web Site.

Appendix I– Amendments to the Church Handbook

1. The Church Handbook can be changed if the proposed amendment is approved by the Church Members at a Church Members' Meeting. This is provided the proposed amendment would not cause the Church to lose its charitable status or make the Church Handbook inconsistent with our Constitution.
2. A majority of 75% of those Church Members present and voting at a Church Members meeting is needed to approve an amendment to the Church Handbook.
3. Notice will be given to Church Members in advance if any changes are proposed to the Church Handbook. This will provide details of the proposed changes including the specific wording of the amendment(s).
4. Any changes to our Constitution must be made in accordance with clause 27 of the Constitution.