

**TOTTERDOWN BAPTIST CHURCH
CONSTITUTION
Amended and adopted 2013**

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CHURCH CONSTITUTION

1 NAME

The Church is known as Totterdown Baptist Church.

2 PURPOSE

The Church is a charity and its principal purpose is the advancement of the Christian faith.

3 CHARITABLE STATUS

3.1 The Church is excepted from registration with the Charity Commission because of regulations made under section 30 of the Charities Act 2011.

3.2 The Charity or Managing Trustees, as defined by section 177 of the Charities Act 2011, who shall carry out the day-to-day management and administration of the Church are the Diaconate being the Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Church Secretary and Church Treasurer (as appointed by the church meeting)

4 AFFILIATION

4.1 The Church is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the West of England Baptist Association.

4.2 The Church will promote, encourage and support the Union, the Association and BMS World Mission through prayer, financial contributions and, where appropriate, by making personnel available from the membership of the Church to support and advance the work of those bodies. When it is able to do so the Church will also support local Baptist and ecumenical gatherings and clusters.

5 BELIEFS

5.1 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 Ghost, 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.

5.2 The doctrines believed and promoted by the Church, as stated in the 1880 Trust Deed, are:

- "The divinity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, The Fall of Man, his recovery by the free and sovereign grace of God, his redemption by Jesus Christ alone, Justification by faith in Him, Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, The authority of the sacred scriptures as the rule of faith and practice, and the inseparable connection of Holiness of life with the pardon of sin."

As a Member of the Evangelical Alliance, the Church subscribes to the following doctrines in the Alliance's Basis of Faith:

- The one true God who lives eternally in three persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
- 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.
- 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.
- The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
- 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.
- 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.
- The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

5.3 The Church's Vision Statement is:

- "Being God's Family, helping people to know Jesus".

6 ACTIVITIES

6.1 General

In fulfilling the principal purpose of the Church to advance the Christian faith the Church will engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including:

- Worship and Prayer;
- Preaching and Teaching the Word of God
- Evangelism and Mission, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- Expressing God's love to the community through the mission of the Church;
- Nurture and growth of Christian disciples;
- Training and equipping the congregation for Christian service;
- Giving pastoral care;
- Supporting charitable social action at home and abroad;
- Relating in support and fellowship to Baptists and other Christians;
- Raising finance to further the Purpose by receiving grants donations and loans.

6.2 Baptism

Baptism, as defined in the Union's Declaration of Principle in clause 5.1, shall be available only to those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

6.3 Communion

Members are expected to regard their attendance at the Communion of the Lord's Supper, which shall be observed at least once a month and in which all Christians are invited to share, as a privilege and a priority.

7 JOINING

7.1 Membership is open to those who:

- profess their faith in God, Father Son and Holy Spirit;
- hold to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the authority of the Holy Scriptures and that interpretation of them usually called evangelical;
- commit themselves to serving Christ within the Church and beyond;
- accept the authority of the Church Meeting;
- acknowledge their responsibilities as Church Members (see clause 8.1.1);

7.2 A person wishing to become a member of the Church shall apply to the Diaconate

7.3 When a request is received for membership the Diaconate will appoint two Church Members to visit the applicant. The purpose of the visit is to ensure that the applicant has made a personal Christian commitment, shares the beliefs of the Church and

understands the responsibilities of membership. The visit provides opportunity for dialogue during which the applicant learns more about the Church and the visitors learn about the applicant.

- 7.4 At the next Ordinary Church Meeting following their visit the visitors will make a report which will include a recommendation either to accept or decline the application.

NOTE: It is expected that the visitors will comment on the applicant's Christian experience, recent church connections, whether the applicant has been baptised as a believer by immersion and has previously been in membership with another Baptist Church or a Church from another tradition. Personal and family information shared on the visit may only be communicated to the Church Meeting with the permission of the applicant.

- 7.5 The Church Meeting will consider and vote on the application for membership and if the application is approved the new member will be formally welcomed as a member of the Church at the next convenient Communion Service.

- 7.6 Where an applicant is already in membership with another Baptist Church note will be taken of any letter of commendation, but as a means of helping the applicant understand and become part of this Church, visitors will be appointed and a report made to the Church Meeting as above.

- 7.7 Members who have not been baptised as believers by immersion may become members of the Church but shall be encouraged to give prayerful consideration to the matter of baptism.

8 BELONGING

8.1 Responsibilities

8.1.1 The responsibilities of membership include:

- Attending worship and participating in Church activities;
- Personal prayer and Bible study;
- Helping the Church whenever possible by using abilities to advance the Purpose and Vision of the church through its activities. This may mean working behind the scenes on administrative tasks and helping with practical projects;
- Attending and participating in regular Church Meetings;
- Giving regular financial support to the Church in proportion to personal resources and circumstances.

NOTE: *The church is a community of Christian believers. Members should not only respect, serve, encourage and help each other but also work with others when appropriate so that the Purpose, Beliefs and Activities of the Church are maintained and developed. The Church community must have at its heart that Christian love which was the hallmark of believers in the early church. This does not prevent mutual accountability. Financial support is a private matter between each Church Member and God. There may be regular general encouragements to give financially but it is recognised that for some people this is difficult and that they may contribute to the overall activities of the Church in many other ways.*

8.1.2 When there are differences that lead to difficulties between members of the Church (and it is recognised that sometimes misunderstandings will arise) each member should try to resolve the situation with gentleness and humility following Christian and Biblical principles. It is a matter of great sadness when problems arise and it may be necessary for another wise and experienced member of this Church (or if invited a member of a neighbouring Baptist Church) to act as mediator or friend to those seeking to achieve reconciliation.

NOTE: *Clause 8.1.2 is offered as a framework within which differences within the Church can be dealt with in a Godly way.*

8.2 Membership List

8.2.1 An up to date list of those who are members of the Church shall be maintained.

8.2.2 If a member formally resigns from the Church or becomes a member of another Church their name shall be removed from the list of members.

8.2.3 If a member does not formally resign, whether or not they have given a verbal or written indication that they are considering resignation, but have not, without good reason, attended any Church activities, especially Communion, for at least six months, their membership shall be reviewed.

8.2.4 If it is known that a member is permanently living more than twenty miles from the Church and has not attended any Church activities for

at least one year their membership shall be reviewed.

8.2.5 At least once in every year the Church Meeting shall review and consider revisions to the Membership List. A person's name may be removed from the Membership List only with the approval of the Church Meeting.

8.2.6 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 in the Church then the Church Meeting may, after considering the facts, terminate the membership of that person. The Church Member should be allowed to hear what is said at the Church Meeting, to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before the Church Meeting prayerfully and carefully considers whether that person's name should be removed from the list of members.

NOTE *Clause 8.2.6 is commended as a framework within which church discipline may be exercised. The clause should be read and acted upon only after the procedures mentioned in clause 8.1.2 have been exhausted. Action under this Clause would be a matter of great sadness to the whole Church and an action of last resort after all means of resolving disagreements by dialogue have failed.*

8.2.7 People who do not feel able to fulfil all the responsibilities of membership, but who wish to be associated with the church, may ask to become "Friends of TBC". Friends of TBC are not able to vote and are not counted for

quorum purposes, but will be kept informed of church activities.

9 CHURCH MEETINGS

9.1 Function

Church Members in Church Meeting shall meet together 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 and, as such, shall be the final decision making authority for all matters relating to all affairs of the Church save for, in connection with church property, those matters reserved for decision approval or action by the Holding Trustees. All organisations, groups and committees operating within the life of the Church, and their leaders, shall be accountable to the Church Meeting.

9.2 Types

9.2.1 There are two types of Church Meetings, Ordinary Church Meetings and Special Church Meetings.

9.2.2 Ordinary Church Meetings shall be held at regular intervals throughout the year but on not less than four occasions in any calendar year.

9.2.3 One Ordinary Church Meeting each year shall include the Annual General Meeting of the Church to receive Annual Accounts and Reports appoint Auditors or Independent Examiners and deal with other appropriate business.

9.2.4 A Special Church Meeting shall be held when necessary to consider the especially important

matters described in clause 9.4.3 or as required under clause 9.4.4.

9.2.5 Church Meetings shall be arranged so as to be convenient for as many Church Members as possible.

9.3 Convening

9.3.1 An Ordinary Church Meeting shall be properly convened if as a minimum requirement the date, time and place for the meeting are publicised at the worship service or services on the previous Sunday (or other regular weekly meeting time when the Church gathers together). One quarter of the members shall constitute a quorum.

9.3.2 A Special Church Meeting shall be properly convened if as a minimum requirement the date, time and place for the meeting are publicised, with an indication of the matters to be considered, at the public worship service or services on the two previous Sundays (or other regular weekly meeting time when the Church gathers together). If possible an explanation of the agenda items shall be provided in advance of the meeting so that, so far as practicable, all members shall have the opportunity of prayerfully considering the issues before the meeting. One third of the members shall constitute a quorum.

NOTE: *Clauses 9.3.1 and 9.3.2 do not prevent the Church also using other means to communicate information about the Church Meeting. The intention is to ensure that as many members as possible are aware that a meeting is planned and have the opportunity to attend. As*

the matters to be discussed at a Special Church Meeting may have a long-term effect on the Church longer notice and more information are needed. A Special Church Meeting and an Ordinary Church Meeting may be held on the same day, if convenient.

9.4 Agenda

9.4.1 Prayer, praise, worship and the reading of Scripture shall be key features of the Church Meeting. The discussion of any business matters affecting the life and activities of the Church shall be set in this context of worship and the gathering of members in fellowship and prayer with the intention that, so far as possible, practical issues are not perceived as being separate from the spiritual aspects of Church life.

9.4.2 The business to be considered at an Ordinary Church Meeting may include:

- Applications for membership and the review of the membership list;
- The appointment of Deacons;
- The appointment of a Secretary and a Treasurer;
- The appointment of other individuals to undertake particular tasks necessary to the activities of the Church;
- Receiving financial reports and approving budgets;
- Receiving reports on the activities of the church;
- Considering proposals from the Diaconate for the development of the life of the Church and the advancement of its Purpose and the Vision Statement through its activities;

- Receiving suggestions from all the members as to how the Church can develop its mission and achieve its objects.

9.4.3 A Special Church Meeting shall be called when there are specific and important issues to be considered, including:

- The appointment of a Minister or Elders;
- The dismissal of Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Church Secretary or Church Treasurer
- The purchase, sale or mortgage of church property whether it is residential property or church buildings or land;
- A resolution concerning a loan or grant advanced to the church from an outside organisation such as the Baptist Union Loan Fund;
- The demolition, alteration, extension or major repair of any part or the whole of the property owned by the church;
- The appointment of trustees or the adoption or permitted variation of trusts for any property which the church has or is to acquire;
- The amendment of this Constitution in accordance with Clause 13.2;
- A decision to amalgamate with another church;
- A decision to share the church buildings under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969;
- A decision to close the church;
- Any other matter considered by the Diaconate to be of sufficient significance.

9.4.4 A Special Church Meeting shall also be convened as soon as possible upon the receipt by the Diaconate of a written request for a meeting signed by at least one tenth of

the church membership or twelve Church Members, whichever is the less.

recorded as the formal decision taken by the Church Members.

9.5 Conduct

9.5.1 Members of the Church and, if invited, those who normally attend church events may attend an Ordinary Meeting but only members shall vote.

9.5.2 A Minister, or if there is no Minister the Moderator, if available and willing, shall normally chair each Church Meeting. If neither a Minister nor the Moderator is available or if they are unwilling to chair meetings the Church Meeting shall appoint a person for that purpose.

9.5.3 A resolution passed at either an Ordinary Church Meeting or a Special Church Meeting shall not be rescinded 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.

NOTE: *Clause 9.5.3 avoids the same issue being examined again without allowing time for implementation of the stated wishes of the members at a properly convened Church Meeting and giving time for further thought and prayer.*

9.6 Voting

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

9.6.2 For each matter requiring a decision a vote shall be taken and the outcome of the vote

9.6.3 Each Church 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 Members in advance of the vote.

9.6.4 No proxy votes shall be allowed and no postal votes shall be valid unless authorised by this Church Constitution for the election of Deacons.

9.6.5 Where any matter requires a decision affecting or involving individuals and any embarrassment might be caused by a public vote then a secret ballot shall be held.

9.6.6 If not less than three members request a secret ballot for a vote on any matter then a secret ballot shall be held.

9.6.7 If a secret ballot is to be held two Church Members present at the Church Meeting will be appointed as scrutineers to arrange the ballot and count the votes. The person chairing the Church Meeting shall announce the outcome without necessarily revealing the numbers of votes.

9.6.8 A resolution at an Ordinary Church Meeting shall be carried if supported by a majority of the Church Members present, entitled to vote and voting.

9.6.9 If there is an equality of votes on any matter at an Ordinary Church Meeting the person chairing the meeting shall have a casting vote

whether or not that person is a Member of the Church and whether or not that person has already voted on that resolution.

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

9.6.11 Although Members of any age may attend and participate in a Church Meeting the minimum age for voting will be 18 years. Members who are less than 18 years of age shall be considered as Junior Members and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. On reaching their eighteenth birthday, the church shall formally recognise them as members.

9.6.12 Members are not eligible to vote until they have been in membership of the Church for at least six months.

9.7 Records

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

9.7.2 The Minutes shall be written or printed and filed in a book or binder set aside for this purpose which shall be kept in a safe place. As these Minutes may be of historical interest the materials used to record them shall be of sufficient quality to ensure that they survive for many years.

9.7.3 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 Church Members' acceptance of the Minutes by signing and dating them as a correct record of the preceding meeting.

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

10 LEADERSHIP

10.1 General

10.1.1 The Diaconate acting according to the will of God as discerned by the Church Meeting and having power shall do all lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Purpose through the activities of the Church.

10.1.2 One half of the Diaconate shall constitute a quorum.

10.1.3 With the exception only of a Minister or Ministers as authorised by clause 10.2.8, no member of the Diaconate as a Managing Trustee shall be entitled to receive any personal remuneration or benefit from the office of trustee other than the reimbursement of reasonable and proper expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.

10.2 Ministers

10.2.1 The Church may decide to have a Minister or more than one Minister or no Minister.

10.2.2 The tasks which will be fulfilled by a Minister 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 and the teaching of the Christian faith. The Minister shall work with the Church toward the achieving of its Purpose.

10.2.3 When the Church is seeking to appoint a Minister it will consult the Association before commencing any recruitment process and follow, so far as practicable, the Union's procedures and recommended terms for the settlement of Ministers.

10.2.4 A Minister will be appointed by a vote of at least two thirds of the members present, entitled to vote and voting at a Special Church Meeting.

10.2.5 Notwithstanding any legal status afforded to a Minister by statute the Church recognises that the Minister and the Church are in a relationship based on Christian love and trust and mutual accountability. A Minister shall at first instance be in a relationship of mutual accountability with the Deacons and Elders (if any) and also with the Church Meeting.

10.2.6 A Minister shall be accredited by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, unless a special waiver is sought.

10.2.7 A Minister shall accept the Union's Declaration of Principle and any doctrinal

requirements contained in this constitution or the Foundation Trust Deeds that apply to the Church.

10.2.8 Notwithstanding the fact that a Minister or Ministers appointed by the Church are Charity or Managing Trustees they will be entitled to be paid an agreed remuneration or stipend out of the general funds of the Church.

10.3 Deacons

10.3.1 Deacons shall, with the Minister(s) (if any), be responsible for the leadership of the Church, the fulfillment of its Purpose, the pastoral care of its members and its day-to-day management and administration.

10.3.2 The Church shall from time to time appoint Church Members who shall not be disqualified from being a charity trustee and who shall have been in membership for at least six months to be Deacons. The Church Meeting shall decide upon the maximum number of Deacons that can be appointed from time to time.

10.3.3 The spouse of a serving Deacon shall not be eligible for election.

10.3.4 At all times at least a majority of the Deacons shall be persons who have been Baptised in the manner described in the Declaration of Principle in clause 5.1.

10.3.5 Deacons shall usually serve for a term of up to three years, and may then be eligible for re-election for one further term of three years. One year shall elapse before becoming

eligible for re-election. A third, so far as possible, of the Deacons shall retire annually.

- 10.3.6 Nominations for the role of Deacon shall be made to the Church Secretary not later than three Sundays before the Ordinary Church Meeting at which the election is to be held. Nominations must be submitted in writing with the supporting signature of another unrelated Church Member and the consent of the candidate. No person may nominate more candidates than there are places vacant. Requests for nominations shall be made at both services on the two Sundays immediately before that Sunday when nominations must cease.
- 10.3.7 Voting shall be by secret ballot at an Ordinary Church Meeting. Church Members shall be asked to vote for those whom they believe should serve as Deacons. They shall vote for no more candidates than there are vacancies. The scrutineers shall report in writing and in confidence to the person chairing the Church Meeting the number of votes cast for each candidate. The number of candidates, being not more than the number of vacancies, receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared to be elected provided that each candidate so declared shall have received votes from at least one half of those members voting.
- 10.3.8 In case of unavoidable absence Church Members may obtain a voting paper from the Church Secretary which, to be counted, must be returned to the Church Secretary before the commencement of the Church Meeting at which the election is to be held.

10.3.9 If there are more candidates than vacancies and if after the ballot, some vacancies remain unfilled because insufficient candidates have received votes from at least half of those members voting then, if that Church Meeting agrees, the person chairing the Church Meeting shall delete from the names of those who have not been elected those with the lowest number of votes so as to leave as many names as there now are vacancies (he or she may use his or her casting vote where there is a tie). These names shall be submitted to that or another Church Meeting for balloting on the remaining places.

10.3.10 In order to comply with clause 10.3.4 preference must be given to Baptised candidates with fewer votes where the circumstances so require.

10.3.11 Deacons shall serve so long as they have the support of the Church membership and a Special Church Meeting may rescind the appointment at any time.

10.4 Elders

10.4.1 The Church Meeting may appoint Elders to assist the Minister(s) in the spiritual leadership and teaching of the Church and to share with the Minister(s) and the Deacons the pastoral care of the members of the fellowship.

10.4.2 Church Members who are perceived to have received from the Holy Spirit such spiritual wisdom and grace as is required of them in Scripture shall be eligible for nomination as Elders.

- 10.4.3 Church Members may suggest to the Minister, Elders and Deacons the names of those whom God may be calling into Eldership, and the Ministers, Elders and Deacons after prayerful consideration shall nominate to the Church Meeting candidates for appointment. They shall be Baptised persons who shall have been in membership of the Church for at least twelve months and who are not disqualified by law from being a Charity Trustee of a Church. The spouse of a serving Elder or Deacon shall not normally be eligible for election.
- 10.4.4 A nomination for Eldership shall be submitted to a Special Church Meeting and an Elder shall be appointed following a ballot in which at least two thirds of those present, voting and entitled to vote are in favour.
- 10.4.5 Elders shall normally serve for a term of five years but may then be eligible for reappointment.
- 10.4.6 After two terms of office Elders shall allow one year to elapse before being eligible for reappointment.
- 10.4.7 Elders shall serve so long as they have the support of the Church membership and a Special Church Meeting may rescind the appointment at any time.

10.5 Secretary and Treasurer

- 10.5.1 The Church shall appoint, on the recommendation of the Diaconate and from the members of the Church, a Church

Secretary and a Church Treasurer to serve the Church upon terms agreed by the Church Meeting.

- 10.5.2 The Church Secretary and the Church Treasurer shall be automatically because of their office members of the Diaconate and shall be additional to the Deacons appointed under clause 10.3.2.

10.6 Moderator

When there is no appointed Minister the Church, or if they do not do so, the Association shall appoint a person who is a Church Member or a member of another Baptist Church to be the Moderator who will hold office until a new Minister is appointed or until released or dismissed by the Association.

11 FINANCE

- 11.1 The Church's financial year will run from 1 January to 31 December.
- 11.2 A statement of the Church Accounts (audited or independently examined as required by law) shall be received by the Annual General Meeting of the Church.
- 11.3 Financial statements of Church organisations shall be presented to the Diaconate and reported to the Annual General Meeting of the Church.

12 CLOSURE

If the Church resolves 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, shall be applied for charitable purposes as decided by a Special

Church Meeting or, failing decision in that way, as decided by the Association.

13 CONSTITUTION

13.1 A copy of this Constitution will be given to every Church Member and to every applicant for membership.

13.2 This Constitution may be altered only by a resolution of a Special Church Meeting and where at least three months' prior notice of the proposed alteration has been given.

13.3 No alteration may be made which:

- is contrary to the terms of any Trust Deeds affecting the church property;
- varies any provisions as to doctrines to be proclaimed by the Church or the qualifications of the Ministers, Deacons, Elders or Members;
- alters the terms of clause 12;
- is not approved in writing by the Holding Trustees of the Church land and buildings;
- would cause the Church to cease to be a charity.

13.4 This constitution was adopted at a Special Church Meeting held on Sunday July 1st 2007. It has been subsequently amended:

- Paragraph 10.4.3 on January 24th 2012
- Paragraph 3 on March 19th 2013

13.5 The following guidelines were adopted on Tuesday March 20th 2012:

GUIDELINES FOR ELDERS & DEACONS

When an eldership team has been established to work alongside the minister:

- Deacons, as managing trustees, will continue to be responsible for the main areas of church life, as per the normal agenda headings: Finance, Fellowship, Mission, Children's & Youth work, Fabric, Health & Safety, Administration and Legal matters regarding the functioning of the charity.
- Some of these areas (eg fabric, youth work, health & safety) will be delegated to focus meetings involving other church members, led by the deacon responsible. These groups will be empowered to make day to day decisions, but will refer back to the whole diaconate for major decisions, subject to church meeting approval.
- The elders will meet regularly to support the minister by praying, and discussing issues such as the church's teaching programme, spiritual direction, specific or sensitive pastoral issues, values, policies etc.
- Elders will serve for 5 years as per the constitution, but will be reaffirmed annually by secret ballot, when they will need to receive at least two thirds of the votes of those present and voting.
- On certain occasions, it may be deemed appropriate for the elders and deacons to meet jointly to discuss specific issues or make strategic decisions. (eg setting goals for the year.)
- In the event of a pastoral vacancy the responsibility for seeking and appointing a minister rests in the first instance with the secretary, who should contact the regional ministers for guidance (according to the church rules). Discussions about suitable candidates, and subsequent interviews will be conducted by a joint

meeting of elders and deacons. Such meetings will be chaired by a moderator appointed through WEBA.