

# **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BEDFORDSHIRE**

## **THE BASIS**

- a) The Forum of Churches Together in Bedfordshire unites in pilgrimage those churches in Bedfordshire which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures. In obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit they commit themselves to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body. Their Mission is to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- b) This includes any church which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition and therefore cannot formally subscribe to the statement of faith in the Basis, provided that it satisfies 75% in number of those full member denominations which subscribe to the Basis that it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the scriptures, that it is committed to the aims and purposes of the Forum and that it will work in the spirit of the Basis.

## **AIM**

The objects of the Forum shall be the development and advancement of the Christian religion by the promotion of joint worship, mission and service in the county of Bedfordshire.

## **Powers and Responsibilities**

It shall have the following powers:

- To provide oversight for the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee and through that Committee to be responsible for ecumenical activity in the county;
- To sponsor such specialised ecumenical activities as is calculated to fulfil its purpose;
- To employ such persons as shall be required for the purposes of the ecumenical work;
- To determine any relevant financial arrangements;
- To publish an annual report.

## **MEETINGS**

The Forum shall meet at least once annually for worship, celebration, consultation and to further the understanding of ecumenical developments locally and nationally. The annual meeting shall also:

- Appoint up to six representatives to the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee from Churches Together groups, Councils of Churches and Covenanted Partnerships, who shall serve for a period of three years with the possibility of re-election after that time;
- Appoint the County Treasurer and Independent Examiner;
- Appoint biennially two representatives to the Forum of Churches Together in England;
- Determine the level of subscription from member groups and churches;
- Receive reports from the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee and other Ecumenical Groups;
- Determine as appropriate priorities for the work of the Bedfordshire County Ecumenical Development Officer and the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall consist of the following:

- The Church Leader or their representative of each denomination represented within the county who are members nationally of Churches Together in England (CTE);
- One further representative appointed by each denomination;
- Appropriate denominational ecumenical officers;
- Four representatives of each Churches Together Group, Council of Churches and Covenanted Partnership in the County;
- Two representatives of each of the other Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

## **OFFICERS**

The Chairperson of the Forum shall be the Chairperson appointed by the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee.

The Ecumenical Office Co-ordinator shall be appointed by the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee and shall service both the Forum and the Committee.

The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Forum and shall be responsible for receiving denominational grants, and other income including the annual subscription from local ecumenical groupings as determined by the Forum; for making appropriate payments including those to the County Ecumenical Development Officer; and shall prepare the budget and annual accounts in conformity with current legal requirements.

The County Ecumenical Development Officer shall be appointed by the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

The Forum of Churches Together in Bedfordshire is in association with Churches Together in England (CTE) through the County Ecumenical Development Officer and through the two members of the Forum of CTE.

## **REVIEW**

The Forum shall reflect the developing life of the Christian Churches as they continue their pilgrimage together. Every seven years a Review Group shall be appointed by the member churches in consultation with CTE to report on the progress of the pilgrimage and to make proposals for desirable changes.

## **AMENDMENTS**

This constitution and that of the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee may be amended with the consent of all the Member Churches by a resolution of the Forum of which twenty one days previous notice is given, passed by two thirds majority of those present and voting, providing that no amendments shall be made without the consent of each of the Member Churches, nor shall any amendment be made which would cause the Forum or the Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee to cease to be a charity at law.

## **WINDING UP**

In the event of dissolution, any assets remaining after all debts and liabilities have been satisfied shall be applied to or for some other charitable purpose or purposes of all or any of the Member Churches as the Forum shall determine.

## **BEDFORDSHIRE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE**

The Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee is the executive group for the Forum of Churches Together in Bedfordshire.

### **POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It shall have the following powers in carrying out its responsibility for ecumenical activity in the county:

- To be the sponsoring body for all Local Ecumenical Partnerships in the county, encouraging and advising their development, confirming their constitutions, establishing a Local Advisory Group (if required), receiving reports, agreeing liturgical arrangements and arranging for the appropriate reviews.
- Overseeing the work of university chaplaincies;
- Sponsoring the work of specialised agencies and committees such as Workplace Ministry etc;
- Appointing, employing, directing and supporting the County Ecumenical Development Officer;
- Undertaking the arrangements for the annual Forum meeting, and preparing a report for that meeting.
- Appointing and employing an Ecumenical Office Co-ordinator for the Forum and for its own work.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership shall be:

- One representative appointed by each of the denominations in membership of the Forum.
- The denominational ecumenical officers;
- Six representatives appointed by the Forum from Churches Together groups, Councils of Churches and Covenanted Partnerships;
- Two representatives to the Forum of Churches Together in England (unless already members of the Committee);
- The Treasurer;
- The County Ecumenical Development Officer and the Ecumenical Office Co-ordinator (ex officio).

Leaders of denominations in membership of the Forum are members of the Committee ex officio, but may wish to appoint one or more of their number to represent them. (They will in any case receive all Forum and Committee papers and may attend the Committee whenever they wish).

### **OFFICERS**

- The Committee shall appoint a Chairperson from its number who will act as the Chairperson of the Forum, and will serve for three years.
- The Ecumenical Office Co-ordinator, who will service both the Forum and the Committee.
- The Treasurer (appointed by the Forum).
- The County Ecumenical Development Officer.

## **CONTRACT**

The terms and conditions of employment and the responsibilities of the County Ecumenical Development Officer shall be set down and agreed in writing in accordance with current employment legislation. The Committee shall agree the contract with the Ecumenical Development Officer and shall also ensure his/her appropriate support.

A similar process shall be followed with the County Ecumenical Office Co-ordinator.

**February 2006**