

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HERTFORDSHIRE

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The Charity shall be known as Churches Together in Hertfordshire and shall cover the geographical area of the County of Hertfordshire.

2. BASIS

Churches Together in Hertfordshire (CTH) unites in pilgrimage those churches in Hertfordshire which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord according to the Scriptures, and in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves:

- ▶ To seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and
- ▶ To fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world;
- ▶ To the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. RELATIONSHIPS: CTH

- a. participates in the life and work of Churches Together in England (CTE) as an intermediate body;
- b. sponsors Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs);
- c. accepts affiliation of local Churches Together (CT) groups.

4. OBJECTS AND AIMS

1. to advance the Christian religion through:
 - a. facilitating common witness to the Christian Religion by member churches; and
 - b. working for Christian unity; and
 - c. offering advice and guidance to those running schools connected with member churches.
2. to relieve financial hardship anywhere in the world by making grants from funds raised either directly by the group or by the co-ordinated fundraising efforts by member churches.

5. POWERS

In pursuance of the Objects and Aims but not otherwise, the Charity may exercise the following powers:

1. power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Trustees shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law.

2. power to buy, take on lease or in exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain and equip it for use.
3. power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Charity.
4. power subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Charity with repayment of the money so borrowed.
5. power to employ such staff (who shall not be Trustees) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the objects and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants.
6. power to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them.
7. power to establish or support any charitable agencies, trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects.
8. power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the trustees may think fit.
9. power to do such lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

6. CONSTITUENT CHURCHES (CCs)

Membership of CTH is open to:

1. Churches or Associations of churches groups, with a significant presence in Hertfordshire whose national bodies are members of CTE. (Founder members are listed in Schedule A)
2. Churches or Associations of churches groups, with a significant presence in Hertfordshire which on principle have no creedal statements in their tradition and therefore cannot formally subscribe to the statement of faith in the Basis, provided that on their admission they satisfy, and that they thereafter continue to satisfy three quarters of the Churches which subscribe to the Basis listed in Schedule A.
3. All local CT groups
4. All LEPs in Hertfordshire
5. Bodies in Associations. Associations, networks and movements which bring together Christians of different denominations for purposes congruent with the Basis and the aims and objectives of CTH may be invite to become *Bodies in Association*. Such bodies may be represented at the Forum.

The Churches and Associations of Churches listed in Schedule A shall continue to be Constituents at the point of adoption of this constitution.

Other Churches and Associations of Churches eligible to be Constituents may be elected on the affirmative vote of three quarters of the existing Constituent Churches.

For this purpose each Constituent shall have a single vote to be exercised by its representatives on the Forum, and at least twelve weeks notice of a proposal for election to membership shall be given to the Committee so that member Churches have a time to form a view on the matter.

6. ORGANISATION

1. The Forum

This is the general meeting of the Charity and shall meet annually to allow people representing the churches at local level to meet. Its functions shall be:

- a. To engage in worship and discussion.
- b. To receive reports from the Committee and other Ecumenical Groups or Agencies.
- c. To reflect on the activities and future programme of CTH and determine its priorities.
- d. To recommend to member Churches such matters as it believes should be addressed jointly.
- e. To elect six members of the committee.
- f. To appoint the Chairperson, who shall also be the Chairperson of the Committee, and shall hold office for three years. Ideally the appointee will be from a different denomination each time on a rotating basis. They shall for the period of the appointment be a full member of the Committee.
- g. To appoint an Honorary Treasurer who shall be for the period of the appointment, a full member of the committee.
- h. To appoint an Honorary Examiner.
- i. To receive the annual accounts and to ratify the level of subscription for member Groups and Churches.
- j. To appoint representatives to the Forum of CTE.
- k. To be a visible sign of the Churches' commitment to one another and to assist the churches in the visible expression of Christian Unity.
- l. To provide a meeting point for Church Leaders and representatives within its area.

The County Ecumenical Development Officer of CTH shall serve as secretary to the Forum.

The Forum shall be an open meeting. Its membership for voting purposes shall be:

- The Presidents, who are the appropriate leaders of the CCs in Hertfordshire.
- Two representatives of the CCs, one of whom may be an Ecumenical Officer.
- Two representatives of each local CT group affiliated to CTH.
- Two representatives of each LEP sponsored by CTH.
- One representative of each Body in Association and Agencies sponsored by CTH.
- Others as determined from time to time by the committee.

Twenty members shall constitute a quorum.

2. The Committee

The Committee is the management committee of CTH. The members of the Committee are the Trustees of the Charity, as defined in Section 97(1) of The Charities Act 1993 as 'the persons having the general control and the management of the administration of a charity.'

The Committee shall meet at least twice a year. Its functions shall be:

- a. to allow member Churches to make decisions together which are proper to them, where necessary referring matters back to the member Churches.
- b. to respond to initiatives from the member Churches and the Forum.
- c. to agree a budget (including the level of subscription) and receive accounts
- d. to appoint and (if considered appropriate) to dismiss members of staff (including the County Ecumenical Development Officer(s) whose appointment shall be for a period determined by the Committee) and deal with all matters relating to the terms and conditions of their appointment.
- e. to direct and support the work of the County Ecumenical Development Officer(s).
- f. to be the Sponsoring Body for LEPs and Ecumenical Agencies in the County, encouraging and advising their development, confirming their constitutions, establishing mechanisms for oversight, receiving reports, agreeing liturgical arrangements and arranging for appropriate reviews.
- g. to oversee the work of the Ecumenical University Chaplaincies.
- h. to sponsor the work of other specialised agencies and committees such as Workplace Ministry etc.
- i. to set up permanent sub committees and temporary groups which may be needed, determine their membership and terms of reference and to keep them under review, provide that all acts and proceedings of any such sub committee and task groups shall be fully reported to the Committee.
- j. to appoint and employ such other staff as may be necessary for the Forum and for the work of the Committee.
- k. to decide upon all applications for membership of and invitations to CTH.
- l. to encourage the fostering of good relations with other faith communities.
- m. to encourage all who share a similar remit or concern to work together.
- n. to undertake the arrangements for the annual Forum meeting, and preparing a report for that meeting.
- o. to keep the Churches informed about ecumenical initiatives within Hertfordshire, in particular those promoted by CTE and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. (CTBI)

The membership of the Committee shall be:

- The Chairman as appointed by the Forum
- One representative appointed by each of the Constituent Churches in membership of the Forum.
- The denominational Ecumenical Officers
- Six representatives appointed by the Forum.
- Two representatives to the Forum of CTE (unless already members of the Committee)
- The Treasurer
- One representative of each Body in Association

The Committee shall have power to co-opt up to five members.

Eight members shall constitute a quorum

The County Ecumenical Development Officer of CTH shall serve as secretary to the Committee in a non-voting capacity.

Others may only attend if invited to do so, but they are not entitled to vote, not are they eligible for election to the Committee or appointment to any other committee.

The Forum will appoint a Chairperson who shall also be Chairperson of the Forum, and shall hold office for three years. Ideally the appointee will be from a different denomination each time on a rotating basis. (See also 7.1.f)

In the event of any member Church ceasing to be a Constituent member of CTH that body's representative will automatically cease to be in membership of the Committee.

8. FINANCE

The work of CTH shall be maintained by contributions from CCs as agreed among them, and from local CT groups as ratified by the Forum. The Committee shall also have the right to seek donations from trusts and private individuals towards the furtherance of the work.

The Committee shall prepare a budget for each calendar year and shall submit the proposed budget for each year to the appropriate financial authorities of the CCs not later than January in the preceding year.

The funds belonging to the Charity shall be applied only in furtherance of the objects.

Accounting records shall be maintained in accordance with the Charities Act 1993 and any subsequent legislation in relation to charities as may be enacted by Parliament.

The statement of accounts of the Charity shall be transmitted to the Charity Commission and communicated to the appropriate authorities of the member churches.

CTH shall operate a bank account as agreed by the Committee in the name of the Charity into which all monies shall be paid. Cheques drawn on this account shall require the signature of any two from among the Chairperson, the Treasurer, and two other members appointed by the Committee. Where the County Ecumenical Development Officer is one of the signatories, cheques drawn shall be subject to a limit agreed by the Committee.

9. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

It is intended that CTH should reflect the developing life of the churches as they continue their pilgrimage together. From time to time a Review Group shall be appointed by the Constituent Churches to report on progress and make proposals for any desirable change.

10. RULES

The committee may make and amend all Rules necessary for the conduct and operation of CTH. At least three months notice of change shall be provided to the representatives of the member churches. Such Rules shall be consistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

11. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

Amendments to this constitution shall be approved at a meeting of the Forum with the consent of not less than three quarters of the CCs provided that three months notice is given to the representatives of the CCs to enable their decision making bodies to form a view on the matter.

For this purpose each CC shall have a single vote to be exercised by its representatives on the Forum. No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which shall cause CTH to cease to be a charity in law.

12. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The Committee may call a special general meeting of the Charity at any time. In addition, the Secretary shall call a special general meeting if at least three Constituent Churches request such a meeting in writing, stating the business to be considered. At least 21 days notice must be given in each case. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

13. DISSOLUTION

CTH may be dissolved by a resolution passed by not less than three quarters of the CCs by their representatives present and voting as a Special General Meeting of the Forum convened for the purpose of which at least six months' notice shall have been given to the representatives of the member churches. Such resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by or in the name of CTH provided that if any property remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities such property shall not be paid to or distributed among the CCs but shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to some or all of the objects of CTH as the Trustees may determine and if and in so far as effect cannot be given to this provision then to some other charitable purpose.

SCHEDULE A

Constituent Churches

The Central Baptist Association
The Church of England (Diocese of St Albans)
The Methodist Church (Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District)
The United Reformed Church (North Thames and East Midlands Provinces)
The Roman Catholic Church (Archdiocese of Westminster)
The Salvation Army (Central South and London North East Divisions)
The Religious Society of Friends

SCHEDULE B

Bodies in Association

Focolare Centre – Welwyn Garden City
The St Albans Centre for Christian Studies – Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban

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