

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN DEVON CONSTITUTION

Constitution dated 19th August 2014 – updated 23rd January 2020

1. NAME.

The charity shall be known as Churches Together in Devon (CTD), and it shall cover the geographical (ceremonial) area of the County of Devon.

2. BASIS.

Churches Together in Devon unites in pilgrimage those Churches in Devon which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour 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;

to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world;

to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. ASSOCIATION

Churches Together in Devon shall be associated with Churches Together in England and shall relate to other ecumenical bodies in the county of Devon

4. OBJECTS

The objects and aims of Churches Together in Devon shall be the advancement of the Christian religion, and other purposes which are charitable according to the law of England and Wales.

Churches Together in Devon shall seek to further these objects by:

- (i) facilitating common witness to the Christian religion by the member churches;
- (ii) providing means of consultation and co-ordination between member churches;
- (iii) working and praying for Christian unity.

5. AIMS

In particular, Churches Together in Devon shall aim (within its general objects):

- (i) to be a visible sign of the Churches' commitment to one another and to assist the churches in the visible expression of Christian unity;
- (ii) to affirm, support and service local ecumenism, whether it be structured or unstructured and in particular to encourage the formation and affiliation of local Churches Together groups;
- (iii) to act as Sponsoring Body for present and future Local Ecumenical Partnerships, ensuring for them the provision of appropriate ongoing advice and support, and proper periodic review;

(iv) to encourage shared worship and prayer, learning, service and evangelism, with each church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition;

(v) to encourage full and early ecumenical consultation so that churches may use resources, (including buildings and the deployment of personnel) with sensitivity and in the interests of good stewardship;

(vi) to provide a meeting point for church leaders and representatives within the ecumenical area;

(vii) to keep the churches informed about ecumenical initiatives within Devon and beyond, in particular those promoted by Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland;

(viii) to support the churches in their response to the needs and opportunities of society, to assist them in their relations with local government, and other statutory, voluntary and private bodies, and, when appropriate, to make representations on behalf of the churches, either independently or with others;

(ix) to encourage the fostering of good relations with other faith communities;

(x) to encourage those bodies and individuals in the churches which share a similar remit or concern to work together in mission and evangelism.

6. POWERS

In furtherance of the Objects, but not otherwise, the Charity may exercise the following powers:

(i) power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds CTD shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;

(ii) 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;

(iii) power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Charity;

(iv) 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;

(v) 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;

(vi) 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;

(vii) power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;

(viii) power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Enabling Group may think fit;

(ix) power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

7. MEMBERSHIP

(i) Full membership:

Membership of the Charity shall be open to any church interested in furthering the objects of the Charity; having at least one congregation in the county, and which is either:

a) a member church of Churches Together in England, or

b) a member church of the Evangelical Alliance and having a structural network across the county.

(ii) Observer Status

Churches or Associations of local churches who do not wish to seek full membership or who cannot accept the Basis may apply for Observer Status. Those accepted may be invited to appoint an observer to the Enabling Group at which they may speak but not vote.

(iii) Member Churches.

The expression 'member churches' used throughout this Constitution shall where the context permits include all churches and associations of churches referred to in paragraph 7(a) and 7(b) above.

(iv) Termination of Membership

The Trustees (see 8(i)) may unanimously and for good reason terminate the membership of any member church; provided that the member church concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Trustees, before a final decision is made.

8. ORGANISATION

The Enabling Group.

(i) The Enabling Group is the management committee of Churches Together in Devon. The members of the Enabling Group are the trustees of the charity, defined in Section 177 of the Charities Act 2011 as 'the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity'.

(ii) The Membership of the Enabling Group shall be as follows:

a) The Presidents of CTD being the Devon church leaders who currently comprise:

The Anglican Bishop of Exeter,

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth,

The Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District of the Methodist Church

The Moderator of the South Western Synod of the United Reformed Church,

The Senior Regional Minister of the South West Baptist Association

The Divisional Commander of the South Western Division of the Salvation Army

Any President may nominate an alternative senior leader to attend the Enabling Group.

b) One representative per member church in full membership as defined in paragraph 7(i) above, who is usually the Denominational Ecumenical Officer

c) The Charity Treasurer

d) Up to three co-opted members

(iii) Chair of the Enabling Group

One of the Presidents shall act as Chair, and be appointed for two years by the Enabling Group.

A newly accepted full member church as defined in paragraph 7(i) above, may nominate a President for acceptance by the Enabling Group after one year in membership.

The County Ecumenical Officer shall normally attend meetings of the Enabling Group in a non-voting capacity.

Other salaried employees may be in attendance if invited to do so, but are not entitled to vote, nor are they eligible for election to the Enabling Group or appointment to any other Committee.

There shall be a quorum when at least one third, of the number of members of the Enabling Group, is present at a meeting.

In the event of any of the member churches ceasing to be a full member of Churches Together in Devon that body's representative will automatically cease to be in membership of the Enabling Group.

(iv) The Enabling Group shall normally meet at least four times a year. The Enabling Group shall exercise general oversight of the work of Churches Together in Devon.

(v) One of the Enabling Group meetings annually will include the Annual meeting which will be an open meeting. Notification will normally be given via the website. The Annual meeting will approve a report of Churches Together in Devon, the annual accounts, appoint the Charity Treasurer, and elect annually Co-Opted members.

(vi) A special meeting of the Enabling Group may be called at any time, if at least three members of the Enabling Group request such a meeting in writing, stating the business to be considered. The County Ecumenical Officer shall normally call such a meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

9. FINANCE

(a) The work of Churches Together in Devon shall be maintained towards the furtherance of its work by contributions from:

(i) the member churches,

(ii) donations from local Churches Together groups as invited by the Enabling Group. The Enabling Group shall also have the right to accept donations from other sources, including trusts and private individuals.

(b) The Enabling Group shall prepare a budget for each calendar year and shall normally submit the proposed budget for each year to the appropriate financial authorities of the member churches not later than 30th September in the preceding year.

(c) Accounting records shall be maintained and independently examined in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and any subsequent legislation in relation to charities as may be enacted by Parliament.

(d) The accounts shall be approved by the Enabling Group, and be communicated to the appropriate financial authorities of the member churches.

(e) Churches Together in Devon shall operate a bank account in the name of the Charity into which all monies shall be paid. Cheques drawn on this account shall require the signatures of any two from those signatories appointed by the Enabling Group for sums over £500, and equivalent dual authorisation shall be required if any other form of transaction is used e.g. online banking. Single signatures or single authorisation for on-line banking shall be permitted up to the value of £500. The Enabling group may authorise the use of Standing orders / Direct Debits for regular transactions.

10. HOLDING TRUSTEES

All real and personal property acquired by or on behalf of Churches Together in Devon shall be vested in a trust corporation lawfully entitled to act as a Custodian Trustee.

11. REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

It is intended that Churches Together in Devon 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 member churches to report on progress and make proposals for any desirable changes.

12. TRUSTEES

(a) A member of the Board of Trustees shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- (i) is disqualified from acting as a member of the Trustees by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision);
- (ii) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
- (iii) is absent without the permission of the Trustees from all their meetings held within a period of twelve months and the Trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated; or
- (iv) notifies to the Trustees a wish to resign (but only if at least three members of the Trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect).
- (v) ceases to be a member of the Enabling Group

(b) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause (c) of this clause, no member of the Board of Trustees shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Charity (otherwise than as a trustee for the Charity) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Trustees) in any contract entered into by the Trustees.

(c) Any Trustee for the time being who is a solicitor, accountant or other person engaged in a profession may charge and be paid all the usual professional charges for business done by him or her or his or her firm when instructed by the other members of the Trustees to act in a professional capacity on behalf of the Charity: Provided that at no time shall a majority of the members of the Trustees benefit under this provision and that a member of the Trustees shall withdraw from any meeting at which his or her own instruction or remuneration, or that of his or her firm, is under discussion.

13. CHARITY COMMISSION

The Trustees shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual report, annual returns, and any other such requirements and its transmission to the Charity Commission.

14. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

Amendments to this Constitution may be approved at a meeting of the Enabling Group with the consent of not less than three quarters of the member churches, provided that six months notice is given to the representatives of the member churches, to enable their decision-making bodies to form a view on the matter. No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which shall cause Churches Together in Devon to cease to be a charity in law.

The Trustees should promptly send to the Charity Commission a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

15. DISSOLUTION

Churches Together in Devon may be dissolved by a Special general Meeting of the Enabling Group at which a proposal is passed by at least three quarters of the Trustees present.

Decision making bodies of Member churches (as defined in paragraph 7(i) must be given at least 6 months notice of such a proposal. Advice from Churches Together in England, if available, should also be sought and reported to all Trustees.

In the event of such a dissolution, such assets belonging to the Charity shall be given to a Charity or Charities with similar objects and aims.

A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Charity must be sent to the Charity Commission.

Adopted at the CTD Forum on 19th August 2014

Major Jean Harris SA
Chair, Churches Together in Devon
19th August 2014

Updated (para 9. (e)) at the CTD Enabling Group 23rd January 2020

Bishop Jackie Searle
Chair, Churches Together in Devon
23rd January 2020