

# **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN LEICESTERSHIRE**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1. Introduction.**

The Charity shall be called Churches Together in Leicestershire.

Churches Together in Leicestershire includes those Christian bodies who have committed themselves to each other under God and whose desire is to become more fully united in faith, fellowship, pastoral care and mission. It shall recognise such unity is the gift of God. Churches shall seek to share fully, hold in common, and offer to the world those gifts which they have received and still hold in separation, recognising that in the unity we seek there will not be uniformity but legitimate diversity. They shall include those in Leicestershire (see note 2) who wish to belong and who subscribe to The Basis set out below in clause 2. They shall endeavour to put into practice at all levels and in all places the move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service to the world.

### **2. The Basis.**

Churches Together in Leicestershire shall unite in pilgrimage those Christian bodies in the County of Leicestershire 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; and
- 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 Leicestershire shall be associated with Churches Together in England.

### **4. Objects.**

The Objects of Churches Together in Leicestershire will be the advancement of the Christian religion for the public benefit and other purposes which are charitable according to the Law of England and Wales as the Trustees may determine.

### **5. Aims.**

In furtherance of the above objects, but not further or otherwise, the trustees of Churches Together in Leicestershire shall have power:

**5.1** to provide means of consultation between denominations, churches, local Councils and Groups of Churches, Local Ecumenical Partnerships and those in Local Covenants;

**5.2** to facilitate common witness to Christ by the member churches;

**5.3** to work and pray for Christian Unity in association with Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland;

**5.4** to be the Sponsoring Body for all Local Ecumenical Partnerships in the area, encouraging, guiding, supporting and reviewing new and existing partnerships.

***In particular Churches Together in Leicestershire shall seek:***

**5.5** to enable the churches, as pilgrims together, to develop their relationships, to share their resources, to seek a common mind and to make decisions together, and by so doing serve better the communities they are a part of, and serving the needs of others together;

**5.6** to encourage churches to worship, pray and reflect together on the nature and purpose of the church in the light of its mission - each church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition;

**5.7** to enable the churches to respond to the needs of the whole community and of the world and to witness the Gospel together;

**5.8** to enable the churches to live and share the Gospel, to evangelise together and to take further steps towards fuller unity.

## **6. Membership of Churches Together in Leicestershire.**

Membership of Churches Together in Leicestershire shall be open to:

**6.1** any denomination or association of churches which is represented in the area and which is a member of Churches Together in England, or affirms The Basis of Churches Together in Leicestershire, or satisfies 75% of the representatives to Churches Together in Leicestershire who are present and voting that it meets the requirements laid down in Note 2 below. An application for membership which requires such a vote shall be notified in writing to all members of Churches Together in Leicestershire not less than 6 months before the vote is taken.

**6.2** other Christian bodies which affirm The Basis and commit themselves to promote the aims of Churches Together in Leicestershire.

## **7. Structure.**

### ***Trustees***

**7.1** There will be five Trustees who will also be members of The Enabling Group

### ***The Church Leaders Group and The Enabling Group***

**7.2** In order that Churches Together in Leicestershire may function a Church Leaders Group shall be set up, made up of Church Leaders from each member body, as defined in section 6.

Each Church Leader representing the County of Leicestershire.

One of the Church Leaders will be the Chair of this Group, facilitated and convened by the County Ecumenical Development Officer (CEDO)

The Church Leaders have a representative role within and on behalf of Churches Together in Leicestershire, particularly in relation to civic and statutory bodies. Press statements and public comments made by Churches Together in Leicestershire will go out on their instruction and approval.

**7.3** The Enabling Group shall consist of at least one Church Leader (or their appointed representative) identified from the Grouping from 7.2 to serve as the Chair. In addition each member body, or group of member bodies, may appoint two representatives, of whom one may be its ecumenical officer. If the ecumenical officer is not a representative then he or she may be in attendance at meetings.

In choosing people to serve on the Enabling Group, it is hoped that there will be concern for representation both of clergy and lay people, women and men.

Each member of the Enabling Group (who is not a Church Leader, ex officio, or the CEDO) will serve as a member of the Enabling Group for 3 years at which point they shall submit themselves to their member body to be returned to the Enabling Group for a further period of office or otherwise.

This Group shall include the County Ecumenical Development Officer (CEDO) who will convene general meetings as necessary, no fewer than four times a year.

The second meeting of the year shall take the form of an Annual General Meeting. At that meeting the audited or independently examined accounts shall be presented, officers elected and an annual report submitted.

The CEDO will give at least 14 days notice that a general meeting is to take place.

An Extraordinary Meeting shall be convened on the written request of at least one third of the representatives and require the same notice and quorum (being 10 representatives) as for a general meeting.

The delegates appointed to represent the county at the Forum of Churches Together in England shall be ex officio members of the Enabling Group.

**7.4** The Enabling Group shall elect from within its membership a Chair (who should be a Church Leader or their representative) and a Vice-chair to serve for a period of two years. It shall also appoint an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer (these can be ex-officio 'representatives' on the Enabling Group).

**7.5** The Enabling Group shall be a point of reference for:

a) churches to make decisions together which are proper to them (where necessary referring decisions back to member churches for consultation and to the Church Leaders Group);

b) responding to initiatives from the Forum, Denominations, Local Churches Together Groups, Local Ecumenical Partnerships and other groups/associations;

c) ensuring that appropriate and regular reviews of ecumenical partnerships take place.

**7.6** The Enabling Group shall meet not less than four times a year.

**7.7** The Enabling Group shall make an annual report of its activities to each member body.

## **Co-ordinating Groups**

**7.8** Churches Together in Leicestershire shall carry out and develop its work through Co-ordinating Groups as and when necessary. These Groups may vary in size, frequency of meeting and length of life as is considered necessary. They shall be authorised by the Enabling Group.

**7.9** Each Co-ordinating Group shall nominate a chair, whose nomination would need to be ratified by the Enabling Group. He or she would be appointed for the life span of the Group and would submit a full written report on the activity of the Group to the Enabling Group as required. When necessary the Enabling Group may request a representative from the Group to attend its general meeting.

## **8. The Forum.**

There shall normally be a Forum which shall meet not less than once in every two years. All members of Churches Together in Leicestershire shall be entitled to be represented at the Forum. The Enabling Group shall be responsible for convening and organising the Forum and especially for determining fair representation of members at the Forum. This shall include representatives of Local Ecumenical Partnerships, Local Covenants and Churches Together. It may also include representatives of any association, network or movement which brings together Christians of different denominations in the area for purposes congruent with The Basis and Aims of Churches Together in Leicestershire. Issues identified at this Forum will be taken up by the Enabling Group and, where necessary, referred to the churches for decision and implementation.

## **9. Finance.**

**9.1** All member bodies which make up Churches Together in Leicestershire will be expected to contribute to the necessary running costs on an annual basis, as may from time to time be determined by the Enabling Group. Local Churches Together Groups, Local Ecumenical Partnerships, Local Covenants and other bodies will be expected to make an annual donation to the running costs of Churches Together in Leicestershire.

**9.2** The Enabling Group shall produce an annual budget and submit annual audited or independently examined accounts after the Annual General Meeting to each member body.

**9.3** Each Co-ordinating Group involved in expenditure of any kind shall submit a budget to the Enabling Group and shall produce accounts as required.

## **10. Communication.**

**10.1** Communication between the Enabling Group and Church Leaders shall be effected by the attendance at both bodies by the County Ecumenical Development Officer. There shall be at least two Church Leaders meetings each year.

**10.2** A website [www.churchestogetherinleicestershire.co.uk](http://www.churchestogetherinleicestershire.co.uk) may be maintained for public benefit

## **11. Review of the Constitution and work.**

The constitution and work of Churches Together in Leicestershire and its officers shall be reviewed at least every 5 years by a Review Group to be appointed by Churches Together in Leicestershire, in consultation with its member churches and with the Field Officer North and Midlands for Churches Together in England.

## **12. Amendments to the Constitution.**

- a) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the representatives of the Churches Together in Leicestershire Enabling Group who are present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
- b) No amendment may be made to the name of the charity, or to clause 4, clause 13 or this clause (12) without the prior consent in writing of the Charity Commissioners.
- c) No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the charity cease to be a charity at law.
- d) The Enabling Group should promptly send to the Charity Commissioners a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

## **13. Dissolution.**

If the Enabling Group decides, after considering the advice of the Review Group convened under Clause 11, that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the charity it shall call a meeting of all the representatives of Churches Together in Leicestershire of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Arranging Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of Churches Together in Leicestershire. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of Churches Together in Leicestershire as the members of the Enabling Group and Church Leaders Group of Churches Together in Leicestershire may determine or, failing that, shall be applied for some other charitable purpose. A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of Churches Together in Leicestershire must be sent to the Charity Commissioners.

### **[NOTE 1]**

This Constitution was reviewed and amended on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010

At that time the member bodies were:-

- The Baptist Union of Great Britain
- The Church of England
- The Congregational Federation
- The Lutheran Church in Great Britain
- The Methodist Church
- The Roman Catholic Church
- The Salvation Army
- The Religious Society of Friends
- The United Reformed Church

### **[Note 2]**

This is The Basis of Churches Together in England (CTE), to which the following churches already subscribe:

Baptist Union of Great Britain, Cherubim and Seraphim Council of Churches, Church of England, Church of Scotland, Congregational Federation, Council of African & Afro-Caribbean Churches, Council of Oriental Orthodox Christian Churches, Free Church Federal Council, Greek Orthodox Church, Independent Methodist Churches, International Ministerial Council of Great Britain, Joint Council for Anglo-Caribbean Churches, Lutheran Council of Great Britain, Methodist Church, Moravian Church, New Testament Assembly, Religious Society of Friends\*, Roman Catholic Church, Russian Orthodox Church, Salvation Army, United Reformed Church, Wesleyan Holiness Church.

\* Any church which in principle has no credal statement in its tradition, and therefore cannot formally subscribe to The Basis, may be accepted as a member provided that 75% of the full member churches are agreed that it manifests faith in Jesus Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures, is committed to the aims and purposes of CTE and will work within the spirit of The Basis.

The Religious Society of Friends has been welcomed into CTE under this clause.

### **[Note 3]**

This constitution was first approved in 1992 by the Ecumenical Sponsoring Body.

It was reviewed again, modified and approved on 13.11.2003

It was further reviewed, approved and adopted as amended on November 16th 2010, following the decision of Churches Together in Leicestershire to apply for Charity Registration.