

# **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1. BASIS**

Churches Together in Herefordshire supports and facilitates the unity of churches, denominations of churches or associations of churches, in the County of Herefordshire, 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:

- a. To seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body.
- b. 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.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

- a. Full membership is open to:
  - i. Churches or associations of churches whose national bodies are members of Churches Together in England
  - ii. Churches or networks of churches with a significant presence in Herefordshire who are willing to assent to the Basis of Churches Together in Herefordshire (1)
  - iii. Membership is also open to churches unable to subscribe formally to a credal statement but willing to work in the spirit of the Basis (1)
- b. Associate Membership is open to Bodies (associations, networks, movements etc) which bring together Christians of different denominations for purposes congruent with the Basis of Churches Together in Herefordshire.
- c. Any church or association or body may only be received into full membership, associate membership or observer status at the May AGM.

### **3. OBJECT**

The object of Churches Together in Herefordshire is the advancement of the Christian faith.

### **4. AIMS**

In association with Churches Together in England and with the local groups of Churches or Christians Together within the county:

- a. To work and pray for Christian Unity.
- b. To provide a means of consultation on matters of common concern within the churches and with the wider community.
- c. To be the Sponsoring Body of Local Ecumenical Partnerships in accordance with CTE practice.

- d. To enable Christians in Herefordshire to develop growing relationships, to ensure good communication, to respond to the needs of society and to witness to the Gospel together.

## **5. REPRESENTATION**

- a. The Standing Committee shall consist of:
  - i. The five founder member denominations of Churches Together in Herefordshire who shall usually be represented by their Church Leaders or their representatives: The Church of England – Anglican Denominational Ecumenical Officer; The Roman Catholic Church – Roman Catholic Denominational Ecumenical Officer; The United Reformed Church – URC Denominational Ecumenical Officer; The Regional Minister (Team Leader) of The Heart of England Baptist Association; and The Methodist Church Chair of the Birmingham District.
  - ii. An additional person nominated by the appropriate authority in each of these respective denominations.
  - iii. A representative elected by each of the Herefordshire Local Churches Together Groups.
  - iv. The Council shall have discretion to invite representation from other member groups as it deems appropriate to provide balance to the Council's membership.
- b. The roles of the Standing Committee shall be:
  - i. A Chair elected by the Standing Committee from its members for a term of three years.
  - ii. A Vice Chair (who is the Chair of the Standing Committee) elected from the Council by its members.
  - iii. A Treasurer, who shall be elected or co-opted by the Standing Committee annually.
  - iv. An Executive Secretary (usually the County Ecumenical Officer) who shall be subject to the terms and conditions agreed on behalf of Churches Together in Herefordshire at the time of his/her appointment.
  - v. The Treasurer and Secretary shall be Ex-Officio members of the Standing Committee

## **6. STANDING COMMITTEE**

- a. There shall be a Standing Committee which normally will meet four times a year. The function of the Standing Committee will be:
  - i. To facilitate the decision-making processes of the Standing Committee.
  - ii. To implement the decisions of the Standing Committee as appropriate.
  - iii. To assist and guide the County Ecumenical Officer.
  - iv. To offer, receive and share good practice and information between the denominations, groups and agencies represented, or to which Churches Together in Herefordshire relates.

- v. To carry out such functions as the Standing Committee shall from time to time decide.
- b. The membership of the Standing Committee will be:
  - i. The Chair (the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee)
  - ii. The Treasurer of the Standing Committee
  - iii. The Executive Secretary of the Standing Committee
  - iv. Five people from the Standing Committee representing the founder member denominations (usually the five nominated to the Standing Committee by those denominations).
  - v. Other co-opted members as the Standing Committee shall from time to time decide.

## **7. FINANCE**

- a. The denominations and associations of churches, and the local Churches Together groups, which are represented on the Standing Committee of Churches Together in Herefordshire shall pay to Churches Together in Herefordshire such annual sums as shall be required by Churches Together in Herefordshire, after appropriate consultation with member bodies.
- b. Accounting records shall be maintained in accordance with the Charities Act 2022 and the Treasurer shall make appropriate reports to Churches Together in Herefordshire. The accounting year for Churches Together in Herefordshire shall be from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December.
- c. Churches Together in Herefordshire shall operate a bank account(s) into which all monies will be paid. Cheques shall require the signatures of any two from three people chosen by the Standing Committee, one normally being the Treasurer.
- d. The statement of accounts for the calendar year previous to the Annual General Meeting shall be presented at that meeting and shall be drawn up in accordance with the Charities Act 2022. At the Annual General Meeting an auditor for the current accounting year shall be appointed or, where permitted by the Act, an independent examiner.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND WORK**

The constitution and work of Churches Together in Herefordshire and its officers shall be reviewed at least every five years by a Review Group to be appointed by the Standing Committee under the guidance of Churches Together in England.

## **9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

To amend the constitution, notice of such amendment must be given in writing to the Secretary in advance of a meeting of the Standing Committee. The wording of the proposed amendment shall be circulated with the papers for that meeting. The proposed amendment shall be debated at that meeting, but no vote shall be taken. At the meeting of the Standing

Committee next following there may be further debate and a vote shall be taken. Any amendment to the constitution may only be enacted after being approved by a vote of not less than two thirds of the representatives present and voting at that meeting. Those abstaining shall be counted as not voting.

## **10. DISSOLUTION**

- a. If the Standing Committee, or any member groups of Churches Together in Herefordshire, should propose the dissolution of Churches Together in Herefordshire, the Standing Committee shall seek guidance from the Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations from Churches Together in England.
- b. If so advised, a review group shall be convened in accordance with paragraph 9 of this constitution.
- c. If after this process it is felt appropriate to dissolve Churches Together in Herefordshire, a meeting of the Standing Committee shall be called with at least twenty-one days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed).
- d. If the proposal is confirmed by a two thirds majority of those present and voting the Standing Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of Churches Together in Herefordshire. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other agencies, organisations, institutions or charities as the Ecumenical Officer shall determine.
- e. A final financial statement showing a nil balance shall be prepared by the Treasurer and audited/examined and copies sent to all member bodies of Churches Together in Herefordshire.

Revised and updated December 2023