

Pavilion Christian Community

Constitution – March 2014

1 The Church And Its Name

The Church means members of the charitable unincorporated association governed by this constitution and known as Pavilion Christian Community (or such other name as shall subsequently be adopted by decision of the Church Members' Meeting and with the consent of the Charity Commission).

2 Purpose

The principal purpose of the Church is to declare and demonstrate the reign of God, in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Church is practised through worship of God, making disciples of Jesus Christ and expressing God's love to the world in word and action. The Church may also carry out other charitable purposes in the UK and other parts of the world.

3 Activities

3.1 In fulfilling the Purpose, the Church will engage in a range of Activities, either on its own or with others, that will vary from time to time, with Activities being initiated, expanded, or closed, as appropriate.

3.2 The Activities may include but are not restricted to:

1. Worship

- Regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, teaching and preaching
- The sacraments of Communion and Baptism

2. Mission

- Social Action and Evangelism – locally, in other parts of the UK and overseas

3. Discipleship

- Nurture and growth of people who choose willingly to follow the way of Christ
- Education and training for service in the church and world

4. Service

- Supporting and encouraging active participation in the mission and life of the church, as well as charitable social action locally, in other parts of the UK and overseas

5. Community

- Committed and involved in the welfare, support and growth of the Church
- Pray for and support the unique relationship between Pavilion (Church) and Rowheath (Community)

4 Belief

4.1 Through the Fellowship of Churches of Christ and its membership of Evangelical Alliance the Church accepts the Basis of Faith as outlined. Please see the web link <http://www.eauk.org/connect/about-us/basis-of-faith.cfm>

4.2 Pavilion Christian Community is a member of the Fellowship of Churches of Christ.

There are seven distinctives of the churches in the Fellowship of Churches of Christ network which express our views on church order:

- 1. Local Leadership:** Every expression of church has local believers who offer leadership according to their calling and gifts. They are part of the leadership gifts of God to a local community of believers.
- 2. Every Member Ministry:** While trained ministers can often be found in leadership, the focus of this leadership ministry is on empowering the local church to be an effective expression of the body of Christ.
- 3. Local Autonomy in National Partnership:** Every local church is self-governed but enjoys cooperative friendships and networking to assist in fulfilling their ministry.
- 4. Christian Unity in Diversity:** A passion for Christian unity that leads to mission has been one of the clarion calls of Churches of Christ since the early beginnings in the early 19th century. This is not uniformity, but open creativity to practice and express life locally while embracing shared core values.
- 5. Weekly Celebration of Communion:** A sacramental view of life acknowledges the interweaving of heaven and earth, which is regularly expressed in worship by participating in sharing bread and wine.
- 6. Believer's Baptism:** Encountering God personally by faith also includes baptism by immersion as an adult as a beginning experience of the Christian journey.
- 7. The Whole Church as the People of God:** We have always sought to encourage and participate in the 'catholicity' of the church, recognising that we are only one small part of a wonderful expression of God's people. While there will always be differences in belief and practices, we would uphold the value of the church as a missional community and seek to work with each expression to fulfil the great commission of Jesus.

5 Belonging to the Church

5.1 The responsibility of Membership normally includes:

a) Unity

- Regularly attending services of worship and the celebration of Communion
- Playing a full part in the life of the Church including attending and participating in Community Forum meetings
- Speaking and acting in love towards others Members
- Respecting and supporting the Leadership Team (Ministers, Elders)

b) Mission

- Engaging in personal and public prayer for others
- Expressing God's love to the world through speech and action
- Always welcoming and including others

c) Service

- Discovering, developing and using our gifts and abilities to advance the Purpose
- Supporting the Church financially in proportion to our personal resources
- Expressing God's love to the world in our actions and lifestyle

d) Upholding Christian values

- Behaving in a way that is consistent with our understanding of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible

5.2 We endeavour to work out all other matters in dialogue and debate as "matters of opinion". Many such matters are significant and important, for example views about social justice issues, family, and ethical issues. We realise that views on many of these issues are held sincerely and even passionately but we try not to break fellowship on these matters however much we might disagree about these questions.

6 Joining and Becoming a Church Member

6.1 Church Membership is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, desire to live according to His will and are committed to this local group of Christians. We would normally expect that this commitment has been or will be demonstrated by Baptism as a believer or you have been a Member in good standing of a Christian church of a differing tradition.

6.2 People who desire to be members will be required to attend the 'Connect Course' (usually one evening meeting) at which the basis of faith, vision & mission of the church constitution, organisation and responsibility of Church Membership will be explained. Added to this, the

Church Leadership Team (Ministers and Elders) will meet to also discern acceptance into Membership.

- 6.3 Following attendance at the 'Connect Course' and agreement by the Church Leadership Team the applicant will be introduced and welcomed to the whole church through any of the Community Forums.

7 The Membership List

- 7.1 A list of the current Church Members (hereinafter Members) shall be maintained by the Trustees incorporating changes because of additions or deletions arising through death, transfer to another Church, resignation, or a resolution by a decision taken at the Community Forum.
- 7.2 Members will be expected to regularly attend the church but there may be exceptions such as those who have been commissioned to serve in Christian ministries beyond the location of the church. Examples of this include chaplaincy work or being seconded to another mission organisations.
- 7.2 Changes to the Membership list shall be reported at the next convenient Community Forum.
- 7.3 In order to keep the Membership list up to date it shall be reviewed at least once every year (usually at the Annual Meeting).
- 7.4 At any time, in exceptional circumstances where the conduct of a Member is considered to be contrary to the Purpose and Beliefs of the Church and/or disruptive to the relationships between Members, then the Trustees may recommend to a Community Forum that the membership of that person be reviewed.

8 Church Members Meeting (Community Forum)

- 8.1 Church Members shall meet together in a Community Forum under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ. The Community Forum exists for the purpose of transparency, accountability and communication between the Church Leadership Team and the wider church community.
- 8.2 The Community Forum will meet at least two times a year. One of these meetings will be an Annual General Meeting and include a report on the annual accounts and reports to appoint an Auditor or Independent Examiner (usually January).
- 8.3 Only the Community Forum shall have the authority to make the following decisions:
- the appointment and removal of a Minister(s)
 - the appointment and removal of Elders
 - the approval of the annual budget
 - changes to the PCC constitution

The above decisions will be approved by at least 75% of the vote. All others decisions (such as those below) will be taken by consensus.

- Issues raised by 25% of Church Members who request a Membership discussion. This sort of request needs to be in writing to the Church Leadership Team (Minister and Elders) and to be signed by the people requesting the discussion.
- Decisions relating to Church land and buildings including (without limitations) any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage, or development of property, and
- The closure of the Church

9 The Conduct of Community Forums

- 9.1 Community Forums are places of worship (as much as a Sunday service). The discussion of any matters affecting the life and activities of the Church shall be set in this context with the intention that, so far as possible, practical issues are not perceived as being separate from the spiritual aspects of the Church.
- 9.2 A quorum of 25% of the total number of Members shall apply to Community Forums.
- 9.3 The Church Leadership Team shall appoint a person (who may or may not be a Minister of the Church) to chair the meetings.
- 9.4 The Agenda for the Community Forum will be sent out by the Church Administrator at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

10 Voting

- 10.1 Members shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at the Community Forum.
- 10.2 For matters requiring a decision a vote shall be taken and the outcomes of the vote recorded as the resolution of the Members.
- 10.3 When a vote is taken each Member shall have one vote which they may use at the Community Forum after hearing about the issues and any comments or questions raised by other Church Members in advance of the vote.
- 10.4 No proxy votes shall be allowed and no postal votes shall be valid unless under exceptional circumstances.
- 10.5 If any matter requires a decision affecting or involving individuals and any embarrassment might arise by a public vote then a secret ballot shall be held if agreed by the Church Leadership Team.
- 10.6 If a secret ballot is to be held a minimum of two persons will be appointed by the Church Leadership Team as scrutineers to the ballot to count the votes. The person chairing the Community Forum shall announce the outcome without necessarily revealing the numbers of votes.

11 Minutes

- 11.1 The business conducted at meetings and Community Forums shall be recorded in the Minutes for future reference.
- 11.2 The Minutes shall be written or printed and filed in a book or binder set aside for this purpose using materials of sufficient quality to ensure that they survive for many years and shall be kept in a safe place or may be stored in some other premium provided that they are no less secure or long lasting.
- 11.3 Each set of Minutes shall be approved by the Church Members attending the next Community Forum. They shall have the opportunity to review the Minutes and to correct any errors of fact before a formal vote on the approval of the minutes is taken. If the minutes are approved the person chairing the Forum shall confirm the Members' acceptance of the Minutes by signing and dating them as a correct record of the preceding meeting.

12 The Appointment and Removal of Elders

- 12.1 Elders shall be appointed from the Membership (together with the Minister(s) to take responsibility for the spiritual oversight, strategic vision, pastoral care and practical administration of the Church. There shall be a minimum of four Elders and maximum of eight Elders.
- 12.2 The appointment of Elders shall be undertaken by processes that are clear and open so that all Members are able to consider prayerfully who should be appointed as an Elder. The process shall ensure that notice is given of any forthcoming election so that Members may nominate prospective Elders whose names shall be submitted (after they have indicated a willingness to be appointed) for decision and recommendation by the current Elders with support from the Members.
- 12.3 Any person who has been a Member of the Church for at least two years and been baptised as a believer, or who has been a Member in good standing of a Christian church of a differing tradition, shall be eligible for election as an Elder. An Elder should be a mature Christian who has a lifestyle consistent with the principles set out for leaders in the New Testament (e.g 1 Timothy 3, 1 Peter 5 and Titus 1). They should be trustworthy, self controlled, gentle and generous. They should be respected in the community and have an ordered family and personal life. An Elder should be able to work well in a team and be supportive of the aims and objectives of the Church.
- 12.4 An Elder is appointed by the following process. Name is recommended by
 - the Church Leadership Team (Ministers and Elders) or
 - at least two Membersto the Church Members at a Community Forum. Through a secret ballot the Church Members will be asked to vote for or against this (or these) candidates.

- 12.5 An Elder will serve for a period of three years. They may be reappointed for a second term by the members, but would then normally be expected to have a year's sabbatical before seeking reappointment by the church.
- 12.6 An Elder standing for election / re-election must receive a positive vote from at least 75% of those voting.

13 Staff

- 13.1 Ministers are concerned with the spiritual direction and development of the local church as part of the universal church. Their responsibilities may include strategic leadership, developing the vision and ministry strategies of the church, day-to-day participation in pastoral work, evangelism, the leading of worship, celebration of the sacraments, preaching, teaching, developing the gifts and ministries of the members of the church and in encouraging the unity of the church.
- 13.2 The Minister(s) work in partnership with the Elders and together they form the Church Leadership Team. The Minister(s) and Elders will together hold regular meetings for planning, preparation and prayer.
- 13.3 The Senior Minister is appointed by the Community Forum.
- 13.4 Appointment of other staff (including staff team and voluntary positions such as Internships) is by the Senior Minister, in agreement with the wider Church Leadership Team. They may vary the type and nature of the roles available within the church as staff change, provided they remain within the budgetary authority delegated to them by the members. If the appointment of a staff member would lead to a deficit then the Senior Minister/ Elders would call a Community Forum to discuss this.
- 13.5 Duties: The duties of each staff member will be defined in their job description.
- 13.6 Term of office: the term of office of each staff member will be defined in their contract of employment.

14 Ministry Team Leaders

- 14.1 Ministry Team Leaders serve in specific areas of the church to fulfil the purpose and activities set out in sections 2 and 3. Each area of Ministry Team Leadership (MTL) will be under the guidance and authority of the Church Leadership Team (CLT).
- 14.2 Ministry Team Leaders will oversee significant areas of the life of the church. This will normally mean specialist areas of ministry, for example community and mission ventures (both local and global), life groups, youth, children, sports, pastoral care and prayer.
- 14.3 Appointment: The appointment of Ministry Team Leaders shall be undertaken by processes that are clear and open so that all the Members know the time when a new position or reappointment is being made.

- 14.4 The Church Leadership Team will discern who, from the Members, should be recommended to the Community Forum for appointment. Normally, each proposed candidate must already be a Member of the church for at least one year.
- 14.5 A probationary period of one year will be given for any person undertaking a Ministry Team Leader role. Upon successful fulfilment the person will be formally appointed at a church Community Forum by the members. The probationary year will be included in the first three years of office.
- 14.6 If, after the probationary period the person is deemed unsuitable for the position the Church Leadership Team will meet to discuss a process of pastoral care to provide support for the person.
- 14.7 If during a three-year cycle the Ministry Team Leader steps down voluntarily, for whatever reason, the position will be vacant and, following a period of reflection, a new appointment will be made.
- 14.8 Term of office: Normally three years after which they may be re-appointed for one more term. It is not expected that the Ministry Team Leader will continue in this role after six years.

15 Safeguarding Policy

- 15.1 The Church will appoint a Safeguarding Office who will be supported by two people.
- 15.2 The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Church Leadership Team and presented to the Community Forum.

Church verse for the year 2014

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:3-6