

SWINDON CHURCHES TOGETHER
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND
CONSTITUTION

1. **BASIS**

Swindon Churches Together unites in pilgrimage those Churches in Swindon 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 :

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

and
- b. 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. **OBJECT**

The object of Swindon Churches Together shall be the advancement of the Christian religion and other purposes which are charitable according to the Law of England and Wales according to the doctrine and practices of the constituent Churches.

3. **AIMS**

The aims of Swindon Churches Together shall be:

- a. to enable the Member Churches, as pilgrims together, to explore the Christian faith together, to develop mutual relationships, to find common ground, and to work together to build God's Kingdom;
- b. to enable and encourage the Member Churches to worship and pray together;
- c. to enable the Member Churches to live and share the Gospel, to evangelise together and to take further steps towards fuller unity;
- d. to enable the Member Churches to respond to the needs of society and to witness to the Gospel together;
- e. to enable the Member Churches to 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.

4. **AREA**

Swindon Churches Together aims to serve an area broadly co-terminus with the Borough of Swindon.

5. **RELATIONSHIPS**

Swindon Churches Together is in association with the Swindon Churches Together Sponsoring Body and Churches Together in England. It is accountable to its member denominations and independent member churches.

6. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of Swindon Churches Together shall be open to:

- a. Any local church in the area which is affiliated to a Church or association of Churches which is a full member of Churches Together in England.
- b. Any other local church in the area which affirms the Basis and commits itself to promote the Object and Aims of Swindon Churches Together.
- c. Any local Christian Organisation in the Swindon area which affirms the Basis and commits itself to promote the Object and Aims of Swindon Churches Together.
- d. Any local church which on principle has no creedal statements in its tradition and therefore cannot formally subscribe to the statement of faith in the Basis, provided that it satisfies 50% in number of those Member Churches which subscribe to the Basis, that it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and it is committed to the Aims and purposes of Swindon Churches Together and that it will work in the spirit of the Basis.
- e. New applications for membership under 6.a, 6.b, ~~and 6.c~~ and 6d require the nomination of two existing members of Swindon Churches Together and require the approval of 50% of existing members. Members must be given at least 28 days in which to respond to a nomination.

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7. OFFICE-HOLDERS

- a. The officer-holders of shall be a Chair and a Deputy Chair (one of whom shall, if possible, be a minister and the other a lay person and who, if possible, should belong to different denominations), an Honorary Treasurer and an Honorary Secretary (plus a Minute Secretary, if desired) to be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Ecumenical Council. Office holders shall normally serve for an initial period of three years and may be re-elected if willing to serve, normally for no more than one further period not exceeding three years.
- b. Office holders shall be nominated by a proposer and seconder, each from different member churches. Such nominations to be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary at least 4 weeks before the Annual General Meeting.
- c. A list of nominations shall be circulated with the Notice of meeting and Agenda for the Annual General Meeting.
- d. Office holders shall be elected by simple majority at the Annual General Meeting.

8. ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

- a. The Ecumenical Council shall consist of the ordained clergy and ministers and up to two others, preferably lay people, appointed from each Member Church.

- b. The Ecumenical Council may co-opt others; such co-options not exceeding 25% of the total number from the Member Churches.
- c. The Ecumenical Council shall normally meet not less than three times annually. One of these meetings shall normally be the Annual General Meeting at which the independently examined/inspected accounts shall be presented, and any new office-holders and members of the Executive elected.
- d. Other meetings of the Ecumenical Council shall be held as deemed desirable by the Executive Committee or at the written request of Ecumenical Council members from three Member Churches.
- e. At least three weeks' notice in writing of any meeting of the Ecumenical Council shall be given.
- f. The attendance by at least one Ecumenical Council member of at least half of the Member Churches shall constitute a quorum.
- g. Voting at Ecumenical Council meetings will be by a single representative of a Member Church. Decisions will be by simple majority of those voting, unless agreed by the Council prior to voting on a particular motion.

9. SPONSORING BODY

- a. The Sponsoring Body shall have oversight of the Local Ecumenical Partnerships within the area covered by Swindon Churches Together.
- b. The Sponsoring Body shall be accountable to the denominations involved in the Local Ecumenical Partnerships and report its business to Swindon Churches Together.
- c. Members ~~hip of the Sponsoring Body are appointed by the shall consist of the~~ regional leaders of denominations represented in each partnership and may be the regional leaders or their nominated deputies~~representatives~~.
- d. The Sponsoring body will meet at least twice a year.
- e. The sponsoring Body shall elect a chair from amongst their number.
- f. A report from the Sponsoring Body shall be presented to the next scheduled meeting of the Ecumenical Council.
- g. Swindon Churches Together will undertake to pay reasonable expenses incurred by the Sponsoring Body in undertaking Local Ecumenical Partnership reviews.

10. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- a. The Executive Committee shall enable the Member Churches to make decisions in common, to serve as a reference point for the Ecumenical Council and enact the business of Swindon Churches Together between meetings of the Ecumenical Council. Any actions or decisions that the Executive Committee makes shall be ratified at the next meeting of the Ecumenical Council.
- b. The Executive Committee shall comprise the office-holders of the Ecumenical Council, up to four lay people, and up to four clergy or ministers appointed by the Member Churches with regard to

an appropriate representation of the various Christian traditions and denominations in membership.

- c. The Chairman of the Sponsoring Body shall be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
- d. Nominations for membership of the Executive Committee shall require a proposer and seconder from different member churches and are to be submitted to the Honorary Secretary at least four weeks before the meeting of the Ecumenical Council at which the election is to take place. Nominations for election will be circulated with the notice of the meeting and the agenda.
- e. Elected members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by simple majority at the Annual General Meeting.
- f. Attendance by at least half of those eligible to be present shall constitute a quorum.

11. SCT Groups

- a. SCT will encourage and support the creation of specialist sub groups of SCT that support and further the Aims and Object of SCT within the Swindon area. Membership of such groups is entirely voluntary.
- b. Such groups will be responsible for their own organisation and management but would be financially supported by SCT provided prior approval of expenditure is approved by the Executive or the Ecumenical Council.

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12. FINANCE

- a. Each Member Church/body shall pay such annual sum to Swindon Churches Together as shall be agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Ecumenical Council. The annual sum may be related both to the size of the church and to its ability to pay.
- b. The financial year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.
- c. All payments shall require the signature or authorisation of at least two members of the Executive Committee.
- d. An honorary Independent Examiner shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.
- e. The Executive Committee shall be jointly and severally responsible for the proper use of the funds and resources of Swindon Churches Together.
- f. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for producing and implementing policies for grants and loans, such policies will be agreed by the Ecumenical Council.
- g. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to authorise expenditure, between meetings of the Ecumenical Council, up to an amount determined by the Ecumenical Council. Such expenditure to be reported to the next meeting of the Ecumenical Council for ratification.
- h. The Honorary Treasurer shall present a finance report to each meeting of the Ecumenical Council.

13. CONSTITUTION

The constitution and any subsequent amendment to it requires the approval of 66% of the Member Churches, acting either through their members of the Ecumenical Council or through their normal

decision-making bodies. Member Churches must be given at least 28 days' notice in writing of a proposed change.

14B DISSOLUTION OF SWINDON CHURCHES TOGETHER

- a. A motion to dissolve Swindon Churches Together must be circulated to Member Churches at least three months before it can be considered by a special meeting of Member Churches when the support of at least 75% of Member Churches is required for the motion to be successful. It will be the responsibility of Ecumenical Council members to discuss the proposal for dissolution with their nominating bodies.
- b. Any residual funds and property shall be allocated to Christian charitable organisations designated by the Ecumenical Council.

Date: _____

Approved: _____