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| **1**Constitution Document | THE CHURCH IS NAIRN BAPTIST CHURCH |
|  | The Church means members of the charitable unincorporated association governed by this constitution and known as Nairn Baptist Church.  |
| 2 | **PURPOSE**  |
|  | The principal purpose of the Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The Church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world. |
| **3** | **BELIEFS**  |
|  | As a Member of the Baptist Union of Scotland, the Church subscribes to the Union’s Declaration of Principle:“That the Lord Jesus Christ our God and Saviour is the sole and absolute Authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who ‘died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again on the third day’.That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.” |
| 4 | **ACTIVITIES** |
| 4.1  | In fulfilling its 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.  |
| 4.2  | The Activities may include but are not restricted to:* regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching;
* baptism, as defined in the Union’s Declaration of Principle;
* the Communion of the Lord’s Supper which shall normally be observed at least once a month;
* evangelism and mission, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
* the teaching, encouragement, welcome and inclusion of young people;
* nurture and growth of Christian disciples;
* education and training for Christian and community service;
* giving and encouraging pastoral care;
* supporting and encouraging charitable social action in the United Kingdom and abroad;
* encouraging relationships with and supporting Baptists and other Christians.
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| 4.3  | Any organisations or groups operating within the life of the church are accountable to the whole Church. This is an important practical point, since the church accounts need to include details of any expenditure by individual organisations so the groups operate in a context of mutual accountability. |
| 55.15.2 | **Affiliation and relationships:**The church is a member of the Baptist Union of ScotlandThe Church will normally promote, encourage, support and advance the work of the Baptist Union of Scotland, and BMS World Mission through prayer, through financial contributions and, where appropriate, by making personnel available from the membership of the Church. When it is able the Church will also support local Baptist and ecumenical gatherings.  |
| 6 |  | **BELONGING TO THE CHURCH** |
| **6.1** | The responsibilities of membership normally include:* attending worship and participating in Church Activities;
* personal prayer and Bible study;
* participation at the Communion of the Lord’s Supper as a privilege and a priority;
* helping the Church whenever possible;
* attending and participating in Church Members’ Meetings;
* giving regular financial support to the Church in proportion to personal resources and circumstances;
* upholding Christian values.
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| **6.2**  | If there are differences that lead to difficulties between members of the Church (and it is recognised that these will sometimes arise) each member should try to resolve the situation with gentleness and humility following Christian and Biblical principles. Sometimes it may be necessary for another experienced member of this Church (or if invited a member of a neighbouring Church or representative of the Baptist Union) to act as mediator or friend to those seeking to achieve reconciliation. |
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| **7**  | **JOINING AND BECOMING A CHURCH MEMBER** |
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| **7.1**  | Baptism by immersion upon personal profession of faith is the normal mode of entry into the membership of a Baptist church. |
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| **7.2**  | The church shall apply the following Baptismal qualification for Church Membership. Membership shall be open to all who profess repentance towards God, who have faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and have been baptised by full immersion. In special circumstances, brought by the leadership, the church meeting may allow membership without full immersion. For example, due to physical ailment disability or or other circumstances of a similar nature. Full membership may also be offered where the person has had the experience of believers’ baptism without the option of full immersion. |
| **7.3** | At the discretion of the Church Members’ Meeting, Associate membership may be offered to those who are professing Christians but who have not been baptised by full immersion.Associate members are eligible to attend the church members meeting and to take an active part including voting but they are not eligible to vote on certain items:-1. The calling of a minister
2. The appointment and/or dismissal of Deacons, Office Holders or Elders
3. The denomination of the church
4. A change in the constitution of the church
5. The decision to dispose of fixed assets
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| **7.4** | A person, eighteen years of age or over, wishing to become a Church Member shall apply in a manner determined by the Church Members’ Meeting which is that such applicants are interviewed by two members of the church, appointed by the leadership. |
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| **7.5**  | The Church Members’ Meeting will consider and vote on the application for membership and if accepted the new member will be welcomed into the church at the earliest opportunity. |
| **7.6** | Although it is hoped that all who worship with the church would wish to be members, the church welcomes all regular attenders and recognises that it needs the help of all committed people to fulfil its ministry. The Church Leadership will therefore consider an application by any committed Christian and sometimes from interested people seeking faith for roles within the church. In particular, with respect to children and youth work, eligibility will be based on a clear Christian commitment where membership is an ideal but not the only criteria |
| **8**  | **THE MEMBERSHIP LIST** |
| **8.1**  | A list of the current Church Members shall be maintained by the Church Leadership incorporating routine changes because of additions or deletions arising through death, transfer to another church, resignation, or a resolution by Church Members’ Meeting.  |
| **8.2**  | Routine changes to the membership list shall be reported at the next convenient Church Members’ Meeting. |
| **8.3** | 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, the Minister and/or the Church Leadership have authority to remove the individual/s from active membership, subject to consideration at the next members’ meeting. The Church Leadership or Minister may then recommend to that meeting that the membership of that person be reviewed. The Church Members may, after considering the facts, terminate the membership of that person. The Church Member shall be allowed to hear what is said at the Church Members’ Meeting, to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing from the meeting so that the Church Members’ Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether they should resolve to remove that person’s name from the list of Members. |
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| **9** | **CHURCH MEMBERS’ MEETINGS** |
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| **9.1**  | Church Members shall meet together in a Church Members’ Meeting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ to discern the mind of God in the affairs of the Church. |
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| **9.2**  | The Church Members’ Meeting (subject to clauses 7.3, 10.2 and 10.4) shall have reserved authority in the appointment and removal of a Minister, the appointment and removal of the Church Leadership, decisions related to church property including (without limitation) any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage, or redevelopment of property, the administration of the membership list, and the closure of the Church.  |
| **9.3** | Any decisions taken under 9.2 in relation to property must comply with the requirements of statute law and any specific property trusts under which the land and buildings are used and occupied by the church.  |
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| **10.**  | **ORDINARY AND SPECIAL CHURCH MEMBERS’ MEETINGS** |
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| **10.1**  | There are two types of formal Church Members’ Meetings - Ordinary or Special.  |
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| **10.2**  | Ordinary Church Members’ Meetings shall be held on not less than four occasions in any calendar year and shall be an opportunity to consider and review routine matters associated with the life of the Church including issues related to church membership, the calling of leadership elections, and whilst recognising the period office a church leader as being three years, the members meeting maintains the authority to dismiss any or all of the Church Leadership should the meeting deem the leader(s) membership to be terminated as per 8.3 above, or the leader(s) to be acting in a manner inconsistent with 1 Timothy 3:8-12, or managing church matters without appropriate care. A specific task of the church meeting is to approve matters for expenditure outwith those approved within the budget approved at the churches Annual General Meeting. This notwithstanding the leadership of the church at their discretion may expend up to the equivalent of 2 ½ percent of the annual income of the church without the requirement to seek first the approval of the church members at a church meeting.The church members meeting will consider proposals from the Leadership and Church members for the development of the Church and the advancement of its Purpose through its Activities. |
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| **10.3** | One Ordinary Church Members’ Meeting each year shall be the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and shall consider the annual accounts and reports, approve the church budget as presented by the office holders and appoint Auditors or Independent Examiners. The AGM will consider proposals for the strategy and vision of the church in the coming year, with other appropriate matters. The AGM will comply with prevailing Charity legislation. (Note: Charity legislation necessitates that the public will be admitted to the budget section of the meeting). |
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| **10.4** | A Special Church Members’ Meeting shall be convened when necessary to consider the appointment or dismissal of a minister, or of a member of the leadership team, or an elder. Or on matters relating to the purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or redevelopment of church property, the closure of the church, or matters considered by the Church Leadership to be of sufficient importance to require the calling of a Special Members’ Meeting.  |
| **11** | **CALLING CHURCH MEMBERS’ MEETINGS** |
| **11.1**  | An Ordinary Church Members’ Meeting shall be intimated at least one week prior to the meeting and an agenda will be made available at least one week before. |
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| **11.2** | A Special Church Members’ Meeting shall be intimated at the public worship service on the two previous Sundays. The matters to be discussed will be circulated to members one full week before the meeting.  |
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| **11.3**  | A special meeting may be convened if 12 members or 25% of the membership (whichever is the greater), write to the Secretary or Minister. (note the requirements of clause 11.2) |
| **11.4**  | On occasion, at the discretion of the leadership specially invited guests may attend. (For example representatives of the Baptist Union of Scotland or BMS). |
| **12**  | **THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEMBERS’ MEETINGS** |
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| **12.1**  | Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be a key feature of the Church Members’ Meeting. 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. |
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| **12.2** | A quorum of a third of the total number of Church Members shall apply to Church Members’ Meetings. |
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| **12.3**  | Under normal circumstances the Church Members’ Meeting shall be chaired by the minister or in his absence the secretary. This notwithstanding, the meeting may appoint another full member to be chair in the absence of both minister and secretary, or where the meeting deems a member’s particular expertise or gifts in a matter under discussion to be conducive to enhancing the decision making process of the meeting. |
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| **12.4**  | A resolution passed at a Church Members’ Meeting shall not be overturned within twelve months, unless the matter is reconsidered at a Special Members’ Meeting called for that specific purpose. |
| **13**  | **VOTING** |
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| **13.1**  | Members shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at a Church Members’ Meeting. |
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| **13.2** | For matters requiring a decision, a vote shall be taken and the outcome of the vote recorded as the resolution of the Members and Associate Members. |
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| **13.3** | Each Member and associate member shall have one vote which they may use at the Church Members’ Meeting (subject to exclusions listed in paragraph 7.3)  |
| **13.4**  | Postal votes shall be allowed and shall be valid when authorised by the Church Members’ Meeting. The process for collecting and counting postal votes shall be determined by the Church Members’ Meeting.(The primary reason for this clause is to ensure that members who cannot attend due to physical infirmity may be included. However, this is anticipated only for use when items of major importance are to be voted upon).  |
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| **13.5**  | 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 requested and agreed by the Church Members’ Meeting. |
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| **13.6**  | If a secret ballot is to be held two persons will be appointed as scrutineers to the ballot to count the votes. The person chairing the Church Members’ Meeting shall announce the outcome without necessarily revealing the numbers of votes. |
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| **13.7**  | Unless there is a stated requirement outlined within other clauses of this constitution a resolution at an Ordinary Church Members’ Meeting shall be carried if supported by a majority of the Members present, entitled to vote and voting. |
| **13.8**  | If there is an equality of votes on any matter at an Ordinary Church Members’ Meeting the resolution will be considered rejected and the matter shall be referred back to the submitter for review and if appropriate resubmission to a subsequent meeting for consideration. |
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| **13.9**  | A resolution at a Special Church Members’ Meeting shall be carried if supported by at least two thirds of the Members present, entitled to vote and voting plus any valid postal votes. |
| **14** | **MINUTES** |
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| **14.1**  | The business conducted at Church Members’ Meetings and, in particular, any decisions of the Members shall be recorded in the Minutes for future reference. |
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| **14.2**  | The Minutes shall be recorded and stored safely for the future. |
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| **14.3**  | Each set of Minutes shall be approved by the Church Members attending the next Church Members’ Meeting. 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 Church Members’ Meeting shall confirm the Members’ acceptance of the Minutes by signing and dating them as a correct record of the preceding meeting. |
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| **14.4**  | The signed Minutes shall be conclusive evidence of the decisions taken at the Church Members’ Meeting to which they relate. |
| **15** | **THE ROLES OF OFFICE BEARERS, CHARITY TRUSTEES, DEACONS AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM**  |
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| **15.1**  | The statutory definition of Charity Trustees in Section 97(1) of the Charities Act 1993 is “persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity.” For the purposes of clarity: all persons holding an elected office as Deacon, or holding an office as an office bearer are members of the leadership team, all the aforementioned are deemed to be Charity Trustees of Nairn Baptist Church. |
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| **15.2**  | The Office-Bearers of the Church shall be the Minister, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Church Members’ Meeting shall appoint the Leadership Team, (subject to clause 15:11) to be responsible for the governance of the Church. Subject to any specific or general directions of the Church Members’ Meeting and the provisions of 9.2 the control management and administration of the Church shall be by office holders and leadership team, save that they are not required to do anything that would cause them to be in breach of this Constitution or any trustee duty placed upon them as a result of this role.  |
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| **15.3**  | No person may serve as a Charity Trustee if they are disqualified under statutory legislation. |
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| **15.4** | The Deacons, and Church Secretary are to be chosen from among the full Church Members (rather than those holding associate membership), the Treasurer may be from associate or full membership. The maximum number of deacons being agreed from time to time by the Church Members’ Meeting. |
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| **15.5**  | Any person qualified to be a full member of the church shall be eligible for election to the leadership team or to serve in the role of secretary or treasurer, (unless disqualified by statute).  |

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| **15.6** | Members of the Leadership Team shall be appointed for one term of three years with the opportunity to be nominated for one further three year term only that must be followed by a vacant year when they shall not be eligible for reappointment. |
| **15.7** | The appointment of the leadership team and office holders shall be undertaken by processes that are public, clear and open so that all Church Members are enabled to consider prayerfully who should be appointed. The process shall ensure that notice is given of any forthcoming election so that Church Members may freely nominate prospective candidates whose names shall be submitted (after they have indicated a willingness to be appointed) for decision to the Church Members with the intention of ensuring that those appointed have a sufficient level of support from them. The office of secretary must drawn from The Leadership, in the event of an election for the office a ballot will be drawn from the full (rather than associate) membership of the church.The Office of Treasurer may be co-opted by the Leadership Team who would then require the approval of the membership at an ordinary meeting. |
| **15.8** | Nominations for the role of Deacon shall be made by full rather than associate members to the Church Secretary (or in the event of no church secretary the Minister) not later than three Sundays before the Ordinary Church Members’ Meeting at which the election is to be held. Nominations must be submitted in writing with the supporting signature of two other Church Members in full membership, and with the consent of the candidate. No member may nominate more than one candidate and the nomination must be seconded by a member in full membership. Requests for nominations shall be made at all services on the two Sundays (or other regular weekly meeting time when the Church gathers together) immediately before that Sunday when nominations must cease. |
| **15.8.1** | Voting shall be by secret ballot at an Ordinary Church Members’ Meeting, with postal voting papers accepted. Postal votes must be delivered to the secretary or minister before the commencement of the meeting. Each Member may vote for as many nominees as they wish. If the number of candidates, is not more than the number of vacancies they each shall be elected provided each candidate shall have received votes from at least 60% of those members voting.If there are more candidates than vacancies the nominees with the highest number of votes until each vacancy is filled will be deemed elected subject to the 60% rule above. |
| **15.8.2** | If there are more candidates than vacancies and if after the ballot, some vacancies remain unfilled because insufficient candidates have received votes from at least 60% of those members voting, then, if that Church Members’ Meeting agrees, the person chairing the Church Members’ Meeting shall delete those with the lowest number of votes so as to leave as many names as are vacancies. These names will then be put forward to this or the next members meeting on a simple accept / not accept vote and be elected should they achieve 60% acceptance. |
| **15.9** | A technical defect in the appointment of a Charity Trustee of which the Charity Trustees were unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken by the Charity Trustees. |
| **15.10** | Where a Special Church Members’ Meeting is considering the dismissal of a member of the Leadership Team or Secretary or Treasurer the person subject to the dismissal shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Members’ Meeting and to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Members’ Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated. |
| **16** | **Specific RESPONSIBILITIES of The Leadership in their role as CHARITY TRUSTEES** |
| **16.1**  | The Leadership shall be responsible for the governance of the Church and the fulfilment of the Purpose as per section 2 (page 1) and to fulfil the direction of the church as a result of decisions made by ballot at member’s meetings. |
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| **16.2**  | The Leadership should keep in an appropriate state of repair and insure to their full value against fire and other usual risks all the buildings of the Charity (except those where the responsibility is of a third party where they shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that the third party does so). They must ensure that suitable public liability and employer’s liability insurance is in place. |
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| **17** | **PROCEEDINGS OF The Leadership** |
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| **17.1** | Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be key features of any meeting of the Leadership. Administration of the church shall be characterised as much by mutual accountability, service, and pastoral care, as strategic thinking and effective management. |
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| **17.2**  | The Leadership Team shall determine when and how frequently they shall meet provided that they shall convene meetings of the whole group not less than once every two months. The meeting shall be chaired by the minister or in his absence the secretary. The Leadership shall, so far as possible, seek consensus on all matters considered at their meetings but where this is not possible may require a decision by vote, in this event all members carry an equal vote with the exception of the Treasurer in the event of him or her not being in full membership in which case they shall have no vote (but will be able to contribute to discussion). Should the treasurer not be an elected Deacon they may at the chair’s discretion be asked to withdraw from the meeting at a time where confidential membership matters are discussed. |
| **17.3** | Every issue may be determined by a simple majority of votes cast at a meeting of The Leadership Team but if there is an equality of votes on any matter the resolution will be considered rejected and the matter shall be referred back to the submitter for review and if appropriate resubmission to a subsequent meeting for consideration. |
| **17.4**  | The Leadership shall determine a quorum for their full meetings that shall not be less than two persons or half of their number whichever is the greater number. |
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| **17.5** | In addition to regular meetings of the whole group they may meet in such sub-groups as are necessary and convenient. Reports of such subgroup meetings must be made to the next full Leadership meeting. |
| **17.6**  | The Leadership shall always act in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the general law. |
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| **17.7**  | Subject to clause 9.3 The Leadership shall act in accordance with the specific directions of the Church Members’ Meeting in relation to matters relating to church property including any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or redevelopment of church property. |
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| **17.8**  | Minutes shall be prepared of the proceedings at the meetings of The Leadership including any appointments, the names of those present, the decisions taken, and where appropriate the reasons for the decisions and The Leadership shall decide from time to time whether all or part of these minutes shall be treated as confidential.  |
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| **17.9** | The Leadership shall respect the confidentiality of their meeting. |
| **18**  | **POWERS OF THE LEADERSHIP as Charity Trustees** |
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| **18.1**  | The Leadership as Charity Trustees shall have specific power, subject to any general or specific directions of the Church Members’ Meeting to apply for and accept grants and to provide security in respect of obligations under grant agreements. |
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| **18.2**  | For the avoidance of doubt The Leadership shall have power to borrow money, receive grants, give guarantees and or security for loans, and to make grants or loans of money towards the advancement of the Purpose. In the event of a charge over land and/or buildings being required this must be consistent with provisions in the trusts for the land and with statute law.  |
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| **18.3** | For the avoidance of doubt The Leadership shall have power to make grants to other charities working elsewhere in the United Kingdom and/or other parts of the world. |
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| **19**  | **APPLICATION OF INCOME AND CAPITAL** |
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|  | The Leadership must use the income and may use the capital where trusts permit it to be spent to promote the Purpose provided that the Leadership as Charity Trustees may apply an appropriate reserves policy in accordance with the general law. |
| **20**  | **REMUNERATION OF LEADERSHIP in their role as CHARITY TRUSTEES** |
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| **20.1** | With the exception only of a remuneration permitted under clause 20.2 no member of Charity Trustees (or any person, firm or company connected with the member) may be paid or receive any other direct or indirect benefit for being a Charity Trustee except the reimbursement of reasonable and proper expenses and other payments permitted by statute or specifically authorised by the Charity Regulatory authority. |
| **20.2** | Where it is proposed that a member of the Leadership Team as a Charity Trustee (or person, firm or company, connected with the Charity Trustee) is to be employed or receive remuneration or sell goods or services or any interest in land to the Church and where this gains the approval of the Church Members’ Meeting then this shall be permitted only if: |
|  | * the Charity Trustee or any person connected with the trustee who may benefit directly or indirectly from the proposed remuneration declares an interest in the proposal before discussion on the matter begins;
* absents himself or herself (or in the case of any connected persons themselves) from any part of any meeting at which the proposal is discussed and takes no part in any discussion of it and is not counted in determining whether any such meeting is quorate;
* does not vote on the proposal;
* the remaining Charity Trustees who do not stand to receive the proposed benefit are satisfied that it is in the interests of the Church to contract with or employ that Charity Trustee (or connected person) rather than another independent person and must record the reason for their decision in the minutes;
* in reaching that decision the Charity Trustees must balance the advantage of contracting with or employing a Trustee against the disadvantage of doing so (especially the loss of the Trustee’s services as a result of dealing with the Trustee’s conflict of interest);
* The Charity Trustees authorising the proposed transaction comprise a majority of the Charity Trustees body and have not received any such benefit.
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| **21** | **MINISTERS** |
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| **21.1** | The Church may have a Minister or more than one Minister or no Minister. Where a Minister is appointed it is expected that they will become a Member of the Church.  |
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| **21.2** | A Minister of this Church shall accept the Beliefs being the Baptist Union of Scotland’s Declaration of Principle. |
| **21.3**  | Where the Church has a Minister that person shall be ordained and in relationship with the Baptist Union of Scotland and on the Baptist Union’s Accredited List of Ministers, or pre-accredited in the case of a Minister in his early years of Ministry. |
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| **21.4**  | The Minister shall be supportive of the Church’s relationships with other Baptist Churches and the Baptist Union of Scotland |
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| **21.5**  | The tasks fulfilled by Ministers will vary depending on individual ability and gifting but a Minister is normally expected to be involved in the Activities of the Church with an emphasis on the leading of worship and prayer, the teaching of the Christian faith and the pastoral care of individuals. The Minister shall work with the Church towards achieving its Purpose through its Activities.  |
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| **21.6**  | Notwithstanding any legal status afforded to a Minister by statute the Church recognises that the Minister and the Church are in a Covenant relationship based on Christian love and trust and mutual accountability. A Minister shall be in a relationship of mutual accountability with the other Charity Trustees and also with the Church Members. |
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| **22**  | **THE APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF MINISTERS** |
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| **22.1**  | When the Church is seeking to appoint a Minister it will normally consult the appropriate staff within the Union before commencing any appointment process and follow, so far as practicable, the Baptist Union of Scotland’s procedures and recommended terms for the settlement of Ministers. |
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| **22.2** | A Minister will be appointed or removed by a resolution of the Church Members at a Special Church Members’ Meeting at any time.  |
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| **22.3** | Where a Special Church Members’ Meeting is considering the dismissal of a Minister the Minister shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Members’ Meeting and to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Members’ Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether the appointment should be terminated. |
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| **22.4**  | The Church and the Minister shall normally agree ‘terms and conditions of appointment’ including termination procedures based on the standard terms of appointment published by the Baptist Union of Scotland. |
| **22.5** | In the event of a Ministry terminating The Leadership will within ONE MONTH contact the administrators of the Baptist Pension Scheme advising them of the ministers departure and seek advice pertaining a `Cessation Event’ . This shall be the responsibility of the office holders. |
| **23**  | **THE REMUNERATION OF MINISTERS** |
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|  | Ministers are entitled to be paid an agreed and reasonable remuneration or stipend, and related expenses out of the funds of the Church which should be as a minimum be those outlined in the Baptist Union’s standard terms and conditions, and the terms agreed by the immediately preceding Assembly of the Baptist Union of Scotland. Pro-rata in the case of a part time appointment |
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| **24** | **PASTORAL VACANCIES AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A MODERATOR** |
| **24.1**  | When there is no appointed Minister the Church Members’ Meeting may appoint a person who is a Church Member or a member of another Baptist Church to be the Moderator (but if they do not do so then the Baptist Union of Scotland may make an appointment of a suitable person) who will hold this office until a new Minister is appointed or until they resign or are released or dismissed by the Church Members’ Meeting. In the procedure for appointing a new Minister, the moderator will chair a vacancy committee comprising any elders of the church and any additional members of the church as appointed by the church business meeting. In the event that the vacancy committee put forward a candidate for the post of minister the church will convene a special meeting of members to vote on whether to appoint the person. Postal votes will be included subject to them having been delivered to the secretary or minister before the commencement of the meeting. In order to call the person as minister at least 75% of the votes cast must be in favour before the minster can be appointed.   |
| **24:2** | Church Elders |
| **24.3** | The criteria for eldership are found in and 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9Whilst the role of deacon has within it elements of pastoral care and ensuring the functionality of the church the role of elder focuses more on spiritual oversight.The role of the elder is to:**Provide spiritual leadership and oversight of the church."Elders lead the church [**[1 Tim 5:17](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%205.17#_blank)**;** [Titus 1:7](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%201.7#_blank)**;** [1 Peter 5:1-2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Peter%205.1-2#_blank)**], teach and preach the Word [**[1 Timothy 3:2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%203.2#_blank)**;** [2 Timothy 4:2](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Timothy%204.2#_blank)**;** [Titus 1:9](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%201.9#_blank)**], protect the church from false teachers [**[Acts 20:17](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.17#_blank)**,** [28-31](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.28-31#_blank)**], exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine [**[1 Timothy 4:13](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%204.13#_blank)**;** [2 Timothy 3:13-17](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Timothy%203.13-17#_blank)**;** [Titus 1:9](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%201.9#_blank)**], visit the sick and pray [**[James 5:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%205.14#_blank)**;** [Acts 20:35](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.35#_blank)**], and judge doctrinal issues [**[Acts 15:16](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2015.16#_blank)**]. In Biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church".**The Minister is the presiding elder of the church.Any other elder must be in full membership of the church.The church may appoint other elders or no further elders.**Procedure for appointing an elder:**The existing elders upon prayerful reflection may approach a member so discerned as a person worthy under the scriptures to become an elder. If this person agrees that there may be a call to the eldership the next stage would be to put this to those in full membership (rather than associate membership) of the church. Votes will indicate only two outcomes, `In Favour’ or `Not in Favour’ and be by secret ballot at an ordinary church meeting with postal votes accepted subject to them arriving with the chair of the church meeting prior to its commencement. To be elected to office 75% of all votes cast must indicate `In favour’. The term of office will be for five years at which point the elder must demit office for a mandatory sabbatical of at least one year. Following this period and if the person remains willing to serve, in order that the church may ensure the person still meets the criteria for eldership they should first gain the agreement of the majority of other elders in office, and resubmit to the church as per the voting process in the first instance. |
| **24:4****24.5****24.6** | The Elder shall be supportive of the Church’s relationships with other Baptist Churches and the Baptist Union of ScotlandAn Elder may be removed by a resolution of the Church Members at a Special Church Members’ Meeting at any time.Where a Special Church Members’ Meeting is considering the dismissal of an Elder the Elder shall be allowed to hear what is said to the Church Members’ Meeting and to correct any errors of fact and offer any explanation of the circumstances or reasons for their actions before withdrawing so that the Church Members’ Meeting may prayerfully and carefully consider whether to remove the elder from their post. |
| **25** | **FINANCE** |  |
| **25.1**  | The Leadership are jointly and severally responsible for the financial administration of the Church. |
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| **25.2**  | Once in each year at the AGM the Leadership shall present a budget of subsequent years’ projected income and expenditure. |
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| **26** | **RECORD KEEPING AND ACCOUNTING** |
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| **26.1**  | The Church’s annual financial year will run from 1 January to 31 December |
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| **26.2** | Financial statements of all Church organisations that form part of the Activities shall be presented to the Charity Trustees and incorporated into the Church’s financial statements. |
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| **26.3** | A statement of the Church Accounts (audited or independently examined as required by law) shall be received by a Church Members’ Meeting. |
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| **26.4**  | Financial Records, annual reports and statements of account relating to the Church for the previous six years must be available for inspection by any Office Holder or member of the Leadership Team |
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| **26.5** | The law requires Charity Trustees to make the annual report and accounts available to any person who requests these. The Leadership may make a reasonable charge to cover the administration costs of meeting this request. |
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| **27**  | **CONSTITUTION** |
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| **27.1**  | A copy of this Constitution will be made available to Church Members and to every applicant for membership with the intention that every Member shall be informed about the organisation of the Church and be enabled to participate in the life of the Church and in Church Members’ Meetings. |
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| **27.2** | No amendment may be made to this Constitution that would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at law. |
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| **27.3**  | Subject to clauses 27.4 and 27.5 this Constitution may be altered only by a resolution of a Special Church Members’ Meeting. |
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| **27.4**  | No amendment may be made to clause 20.2 or 28.2 without the prior written permission of the Charity Regulatory Body.  |
| **27.5**  | Nothwithstanding the provisions 27.3 and 27.4 a resolution of a Special Church Members’ Meeting altering clauses 2, 3, 5, 7.5, 8.1, 9.1, 9.2, 15.2, 15.10, 27.3 or 28.1. shall have no legal effect unless (a) at least 6 months before the Special Church Members’ Meeting at which the resolution is considered, or such shorter period as may be agreed in writing by the Baptist Union of Scotland, the Church shall have given to those bodies written notice of the wording of the resolution and (b) the Church has afforded to those bodies reasonable opportunities, if those bodies so require, for enabling representatives of those bodies to meet representatives of the Church, to make representations to the Church Members’ Meeting, and to consider with the Church whether the proposed resolution might be withdrawn, amended or replaced by a different resolution.  |
| **28**  | **CLOSURE** |
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| **28.1** | If the Church resolves to close it shall notify the Baptist Union of Scotland.  |
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| **28.2**  | If the Church shall resolve to close or shall cease to meet for worship for at least six months the assets of the Church, after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities (not being property assets subject to separate trusts) shall be applied for Christian charitable purposes as decided by a Special Church Members’ Meeting or, failing decision in that way, as decided by the Baptist Union of Scotland. |
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| **28.3**  | The Charity Trustees of Churches that are registered charities shall notify the Charity Commission of any closure or dissolution. |
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| **28.4**  | The property assets shall be dealt with by the holding trustees in accordance with the property trusts. |