



Introduction

This Protocol sets out the procedures we will adopt so that we conform to our Constitution and current Charity Law. It includes some areas where the constitution merely requires that our procedures are “public, clear & open” and others where our current practice is “narrower” than the Constitution/law requires.

These procedures are not part of the Constitution document and do not need Charity Commission approval. They can be approved by a Church Members meeting and altered/amended by the same process at any time.

In the Protocol below:

- Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the Constitution. Words in italics are for the purposes of aiding understanding.
- The Constitution refers to “Church Members’ meeting” but this document uses the words “Church Meeting”.

Leadership Team and their responsibilities

The Church is led by a leadership team that provides spiritual oversight and strategic guidance whilst ensuring good governance of the church’s life – the ‘Leadership Team’.

The Leadership Team comprises all Ministers ex officio together with all elected lay (i.e. not Ministers) Leaders.

Further, Bookham Baptist Church is a charity recognised and regulated by the Charities Commission. Under the Charities Act 1993 Section 97(1) a charity should have Trustees who are those ‘persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity’

All Ministers are defined as Trustees by the Constitution. For the purposes of clarity this Working Protocol affirms that all Ministers and elected lay Leaders will be the Trustees of Bookham Baptist Church. Lay Leaders are elected on this basis.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the church is run in accordance with its objectives, the law and the Church Meeting’s wishes; strategic oversight; budgets and financial oversight; appointment terms and pay of Ministers and their direct reports; maintaining all premises are kept in good order and adequately insured.

Leadership may from time to time delegate certain activities to fulfil governance needs to the Operations Management function within the paid service of the Church without negating their legal responsibilities.

Protocol

4.3 *Appointment to roles in the church*

Whereas the creation/continuance of all organisations and groups and the appointment of their leaders may both require Church Meeting and Leadership authorisation the Church Meeting is content that:

- a. The Trustees shall have the power to appoint and remove leaders of Congregations, Small Groups, Youth and Children’s work, Rainbow Pre-School, and similar organisations, and



advising a subsequent Church Meeting accordingly. The prime leaders of organisations and groups have the power to appoint assistants and helpers as appropriate.

- b. The Trustees shall have the power to employ staff and agree their job descriptions, contracts etc. except that all Ministerial appointments shall be made as set out in the constitution.

However, all new employment positions shall first be approved by the Church Meeting. Further, where it is proposed to employ a lay Leader or a close relative of the same, that employment shall first be approved by the Church Meeting.

5.2 Supporting other organisations

The specific additional organisations, missions and individuals that the church will support will be decided by the appropriate mission team and ratified by the Church Meeting from time to time.

7.4 New Members joining the church

A person desiring to join the church will approach, initially, one of the Leaders or Church Office who will then initiate the process, of which there are two variants :-

- a. Transferring from another Christian Church
The candidate may produce or we will obtain a letter of commendation from their former church. Two members appointed by the Leadership Team or their delegate will visit the candidate to give them a copy of our constitution, this working protocol and other relevant information. The visitors will explain something of the ethos of this church and ensure that both parties are 'of the same mind'. Their application will then be approved by the Leadership Team before final approval by the Church Meeting.
- b. Joining on repentance and confession of faith whether made at baptism or not.
The candidate will be visited by two members appointed as above, preferably from within a candidate's Small Group who will give them the information above and also hear their testimony of repentance and faith. The visitors' report will be presented via the Leadership Team to the Church Meeting for the purpose of approving their application.

In both cases, the new member will be received into membership formally at the first mutually convenient Sunday Communion Service following the Church Meeting. Should this not be possible within a reasonable time, then the new member may be received into membership at one of our Sunday Services. Their membership of this church runs from the date of this event

8.3 Leaving the church

A member wishing to transfer their membership to another church or resign will advise a Leader who will arrange, if appropriate, for a letter of commendation to be sent to their new church and will also advise the Leadership and the next Church Meeting.

If there has been no meaningful contact with the church for a period of 12 months and as part of the process referred to in 8.3, a Leader or other authorised member should contact the member concerned by personal contact or mail to their last recorded address to enquire as to their intentions concerning their membership. If no response is received after three months a further letter will be sent which includes a statement to the effect that if after a further three months no response has been received then this will be interpreted as their resignation. This will be reported to the next Church Meeting and then their name deleted from this church's membership roll.



10.3 Annual Church Meeting

The Annual Church Meeting will normally be held within six months of the end of the church financial year and is usually held in March.

The consideration of proposals for the strategy and vision of the church may also be agreed at the Annual Church Meeting.

10.3 & 26.2 Presentation of annual accounts to the Annual Church Meeting

If the audit or examination of the annual church accounts has not been completed by the date of the Annual Church Meeting, then draft accounts in the approved format and “subject to audit” may be presented and adopted. When the audit or examination has been completed and accounts “signed off”, they will then be presented for approval at the next Church Meeting; any variations from the draft accounts will be fully explained.

11.2 & 11.3 Notice of Ordinary and Special Church Meetings

The normal way of publicising these meetings will be by announcing them in the verbal notices at all services on the Sundays referred to in the Constitution and, on or before then, via Church Suite. The details may be set out either

- in the notice sheet or
- in a separate written advice made available at the services or
- by email or similar electronic methods to those members who have so requested advice by that method.

12.3 Chair of Church Meetings

By approving this Working Protocol, the church authorises any Leader for the time being, who may or may not be one of the Ministers, to chair Church Meetings.

The Church Meeting may also authorise other specific members to chair the meetings and if there is no such authorised person available at the appointed time of a Church Meeting, then the meeting may appoint a church member as the first item of business of that meeting.

13.9 & 13.10 & 22.2 Percentage of votes required to call or dismiss a Minister

Whereas paragraph 13.10 allows the church meeting to require a higher percentage vote in certain circumstances, the approval of this Working protocol means that resolutions to call or dismiss a Minister will carry if passed by not less than 75% of those members present and voting.

13.11 Minimum age for voting at Church Meetings

As this church is happy to baptise and/or admit into membership a young person, then they are also authorised to vote at a Church Meeting so there is no minimum age for voting at our Church Meetings.

15.4 Qualities sought in lay Leaders

In considering nominations for the office of a lay Leader, we will look for guidance in the qualities set out for oversight and leadership in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

15.7 Requirements for baptised Trustees

Whereas clause 15.7 requires the majority of the Trustees to have been baptised in accord with clause 3, it will be our intention to maintain a majority of two thirds of the Leadership Team being so baptised.

15.10 Lay Leaders' sabbaticals

Notwithstanding the obligations of reappointing lay Leaders set out in 15.10, we recognise the need for lay Leaders to have sabbaticals and recommend that they do so at approximately six year intervals. Such sabbatical leave may be taken by mutual agreement between the Leadership Team and the member towards the end of a second consecutive term or at the end of that term. The



sabbatical leave will be for a minimum of 6 months and, if taken wholly within an elected term of three years, a maximum of 12 months.

15.12.1 Nominations for the role of lay Leader.

Whereas any nomination will be valid if received by the Church Secretary directly or via the Church Office not later than 3 Sundays prior to the appropriate Church Meeting, it will be our practice for the Leadership Team to prayerfully consider all nominations received for the role of lay Leader, then to make known the nomination at the next Church Meeting which will then be voted on at the Church Meeting after that. This is to give adequate time for all church members to pray about and 'seek God' concerning these appointments.

15.12.3 & 13.4 Postal Votes for the election of lay Leaders

By approving this Working Protocol, the church authorises the use of postal votes for the election/re-election of lay Leaders as stated in these clauses. The onus is on the church member to ask for a postal ballot paper from the Church Office and to return their completed ballot paper to the Office or Church Secretary prior to the start of the Church Meeting. For the purposes of control, their name will be on the ballot paper issued but the way they vote will not be revealed to anyone other than the appointed scrutineers. The church has no responsibility for such votes if the delivery service chosen fails to deliver the completed ballot form in time and the result of any election will not be changed after the announcement at the Church Meeting. A member voting by post cannot vote in person on this issue at the Church Meeting. The reasons why a member might ask for a postal vote would normally be due to sickness/infirmity, business travelling or pre-booked holiday.

20.1 Trustees who are employed or who have close family members employed by the church

We note that the Constitution does not prohibit an employee of the church becoming a Trustee but Charity Law requires that paid (as defined above) members of the Trustees must always be in the minority.

25.2 Church Budget

In order to enable realistic budget setting, a Shared Budget Pool item may be included within our budget to provide additional funds for tight budgets that might be insufficient. Quarterly reviews by the Church Treasurer will be used to monitor overspending budget sectors and, if judged appropriate, increase their budgets by transferring extra budget to them from the Shared Budget Pool.

The approval of the annual budget authorises the Trustees to spend money in accord with the vision and subject to the conditions that

- a. no sector budget is forecast to be overspent, after any applicable transfer of budget from the Shared Budget Pool, (excluding any specifically nominated giving) by 5% or £2,000, whichever is the greater,
- b. any adverse variation of the forecast surplus or deficit compared to the budget is no greater than 3% of the forecast income, and
- c. the forecast free cash is no less than the Minimum Free Reserve.

In the event that any of these conditions is not satisfied, the Trustees will bring this to the next Church Meeting with proposed actions for ratification.