



Christchurch
HARBOROUGH

Church handbook for members

Registered charity No. 1184289

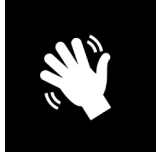
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Introduction

Welcome to Christchurch Harbourough (CCH).

We are a group of ordinary people who belong to an extraordinary family. This local church is one small part of the Church of God made up of everyone who is united to the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit through faith in Him.

The Church of God is essentially a gathering of God's people, assembled spiritually around the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven (Hebrews 12: 22-24). As a local part of that Church, we gather together to remind ourselves of His presence with us and the great things He has done for us, and we spur each other on to do the good works that He has saved us to do.

This booklet is our family handbook. It covers how you can become a part of our family, the expectations of family members and how we make decisions together.

If there is anything that you are unsure about, please speak to one of the Elders, who will be happy to go through it with you.





1. Becoming part of this local church family

If you are a Christian and you regard this local church as your spiritual home you are already essentially part of our family and we hope that everyone in that situation will acknowledge this by becoming a formal member of the church.

By becoming a member, you are identifying yourself to the other members as one of God's people and committing yourself to serve them, to be served by them and to serve together with them, under the spiritual oversight of the Elders, as the church's leaders.

The process for becoming a member is set out in Appendix C of this booklet. One of the key requirements for becoming a member is that you formally agree to the beliefs summarised in Appendix A, which is this church's Basis of Faith. The Basis of Faith sets out the core truths of the Gospel which we believe every true Christian will agree with.

We also have another statement of beliefs at Appendix B, which are our Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements. The Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements set out the church's position on a number of matters which affect the way we conduct our church family life together. These distinctives flow from our desire to submit to the authority of the Bible in all matters of faith and practice.

We understand that the practical outworking of some of these distinctives may differ from other believers in our Lord Jesus. Church members are not required to agree with all the matters in the Doctrinal Distinctives and may hold and discuss views to the contrary, but members are required to respect the positions set out in the Doctrinal Distinctives as the teaching of the Church and should not be insistent on their own views or divisive over these matters. If someone wishes to promote contrary views, membership of this local church is unlikely to be appropriate.





2. Being part of our family

In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul exhorts the members of that local church to “Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5:1&2).

Paul insists that they must no longer live in the way that they used to before they became Christians. Therefore, we expect that the members of this local church family will be works-in-progress, continually “putting off” their old selves, being renewed in their spirits and growing into the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The privileges and responsibilities of church membership in Appendix C set out some of the ways in which we believe a Christ-like character will be expressed in the life of the church, but this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Some areas of service within the church are only open to members. On becoming a church member, there will be a discussion about the areas of service that might be appropriate.



3. The leadership of our family

The leader of our family is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who leads us by sending His Spirit to give us insight into His word and to empower our obedience to His word. The Lord Jesus also gives us leaders, referred to in this local church as Elders and requires us to follow them as they follow his example and to submit to their leadership so that they can serve us with joy (Hebrews 13:7 and 13:17).

The process for the appointment of Elders is summarised in Appendix D. From time to time one of the Elders may be designated Pastor or Senior Pastor as he is set apart to give himself full time to ministry in the church.

We have a Covenant of Care between the Elders and the congregation. It can be found in Appendix E.

Many of the decisions within our family will be made by the Elders, but there are some decisions that will require the approval of the church members at church members' meetings. The provisions for the arranging and running of church members' meetings are summarised in Appendix G, with full details in the Church Constitution.



4. Family discipline

As with any family, sometimes the members of this local church may fall out with each other or will fall into a pattern of behaviour which does not reflect the family likeness. However, true family members will show that they really are part of the family by being reconciled to each other when disputes arise and by continually turning away, with the Lord's help, from patterns of behaviour which are dishonouring to Him.

Where members refuse to be reconciled or to turn away from behaviour that dishonours the Lord, we may sadly have to take the step of removing them from formal membership because their behaviour indicates that they may not truly be part of the family.

In removing someone from membership in these circumstances, our hope is always that their removal will prompt them to repentance and that they will be welcomed back with open arms. The way family discipline is conducted is set out in Appendix H.



5. Moving to another part of our wider family

For many good reasons, members of our family may move to other parts of the country or abroad so that they are no longer able to gather together with us. Whenever this happens, we will help you find another Bible-believing church that you can belong to.

When you join another church, your membership of this church will normally come to an end, but you will of course still be part of our wider family. When you do join another local church we can provide a reference to confirm that you are in good standing with us and not subject to family discipline, if your new church family requests that.

In some situations, such as if you move to a part of the world where there is no healthy local church family, it may be appropriate for you to remain as a member of this church and to continue to be supported in prayer and other ways.





6. The legal structure of the church and amendments to the Handbook

The church was founded in 2011. It needs to have a legal structure so that we can hold finances and property in accordance with the laws of the land.

Since March 2019, the church has therefore been established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). In addition to this Church Handbook, there is also a Constitution for the church containing all the matters that are legally required to be included in a CIO's governing document. The Constitution sets out the legal purposes for which the church is established, which are as follows:

- *The advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith primarily, but not exclusively, within Market Harborough, the surrounding neighbourhood, and*
- *such other charitable purposes as shall, in the opinion of the members of the Church in general meeting, put into practice the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith, including but not limited to: the prevention and relief of need, hardship and sickness; the advancement of education; and the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life;*

provided that the advancement of such purposes must be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the Basis of Faith, the Doctrinal Distinctives



and Ethical Statements as may be adopted and amended by the Church from time to time in accordance with the provisions of this Handbook.

The Constitution designates the Elders of the church as the charity trustees for legal purposes.

The Constitution states that it is the legal duty of each member of the church to “exercise his or her powers as a member of the church in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the church” as set out above.

Although the church was established as a CIO under the Constitution dated 24th March 2019 under the Name, “Christchurch Market Harbourough”, the name by which we describe ourselves is “Christchurch Harbourough” because we are seeking to reach the whole of the surrounding Harbourough area.

This version of the Church Handbook was agreed by the members on 13 June 2021. .

Any new member must confirm in writing their wholehearted agreement to the Church’s Basis of Faith and acceptance of the provisions of this Church Handbook before being admitted to membership.

The process for making amendments to the Church Handbook is set out in Appendix J.



7. Queries or questions

If you have any queries or questions, please speak to one of the Elders.



Appendix A

Church Basis of Faith

The church's Statement of Faith is the Doctrinal Basis of Faith of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), of which CCH is a member. This is reproduced below by permission:

1. God

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator; Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2. The Bible

God has revealed Himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. The Human Race

All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without

spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please Him.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. The Church

The Universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for

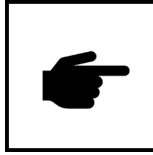
evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8. Baptism and The Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into his church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.



Appendix B

Doctrinal Distinctives & Ethical Statements

Doctrinal Distinctives

We recognise that there are a number of doctrines, not referred to in the Basis of Faith over which genuine Christian believers may take different views. Our Doctrinal Distinctives set out the position and teaching of the Church on these matters. Church members are not required to agree with the matters in the Doctrinal Distinctives and may hold and discuss views to the contrary, but members are required to respect the positions set out in the Doctrinal Distinctives as the teaching of the Church and should not be insistent on their own views or divisive over these matters.

Elders are required to be in full agreement with the Basis of Faith, the Doctrinal Distinctives and the Ethical Statements of the church, with the exception that a man may be appointed as an Elder if he holds to a different belief in respect to baptism from that stated in the Doctrinal Distinctive, provided that this fact is brought to the attention of the members of the church and that the majority of serving Elders will continue to be in full agreement with the Doctrinal Distinctive in regard to baptism.

1. The Sufficiency of the Scriptures

Christchurch Harborough believes that God speaks to men and women today through the Scriptures. When the Scriptures are read or explained,

whether publicly or privately, God speaks by his Spirit. The Scriptures contain everything which it is necessary for God to say, whether explicitly or through deduction by good and necessary consequence, to enable men and women to come to salvation through Christ, and to grow to maturity in Christ such that they might know how to live to please him. Since the Scriptures are entirely sufficient in this regard, no additional word or revelation from God is required to enable a person to know God, or to know his will. Where anyone claims that God is speaking a word by any means other than through the Scriptures, such word shall not be accepted unless it is first rigorously tested to determine whether it is consistent with the Scriptures. In accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, the Elders of the church are the persons within the congregation who bear the responsibility for assessing whether any such word is genuinely from God.

2. Baptism

Christchurch Harborough believes that Baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is an outward sign which marks a person's regeneration and baptism by the Holy Spirit into membership of the Church of Jesus Christ. As such it should only properly be administered to a person who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism should, wherever possible and practicable, be administered by immersion in water, symbolising that the person baptised has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and is the possessor of the benefits thereof.

3. The Lord's Supper

Christchurch Harborough believes that the Lord's Supper is a remembrance meal at which Christian believers share bread and wine together to remind themselves of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of the new covenant of salvation which he inaugurated, and to proclaim that he will return. Jesus Christ is no more present at a celebration of the Lord's Supper than at any other gathering of the members of a local church. The Lord's Supper should be celebrated on a

regular basis by the members of the church, ideally in the context of a fellowship meal demonstrating their unity in the body of Christ.

4. Election and Evangelism

Christchurch Harborough believes that God is sovereign in the salvation of men and women. Those persons who exercise genuine repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ do so because they have been chosen by God. Knowledge of this truth promotes amongst believers absolute humility and assurance of salvation. However it does not follow from the truth of election that believers need not participate in mission and evangelism. The Church is commanded by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all men everywhere, and the proclamation of the gospel is the means by which the elect are brought to salvation.

5. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Christchurch Harborough believes that every genuine believer was baptised by the Holy Spirit at the moment at which they were regenerated and brought to true faith in Jesus Christ. The experiences of the disciples at Pentecost and of the Samaritan believers in Acts Chapter 8 were unique and unrepeatable moments of salvation history, and they do not provide a pattern for present day spiritual experience. Whilst every genuine believer is therefore always indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it does not follow that every believer is necessarily filled with the Spirit at all times. All believers are urged by Scripture to ensure that they are increasingly yielded to the power, influence and control of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them.

6. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Christchurch Harborough believes that all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament may be bestowed upon believers today as God himself directs in his sovereignty. The gifts of the Spirit did not cease to be available to the church with the passing of the apostolic age, and they will only pass away when Jesus Christ returns to establish his kingdom.

7. The Gift of Tongues

Christchurch Harbourough believes that although the gift of tongues may be given to believers today, it is not a gift which is given to every believer, nor is it a sign of receipt of the Holy Spirit. Tongues are given not as a means by which God may speak to his church, but are a gift whereby members of the church are enabled to praise God in languages other than their own. The gift of tongues should be used publicly to offer praise to God at a meeting of a local church only where an interpreter is present who will be able to translate the praise offered so that it can be understood and affirmed by all members of the congregation.

8. Salvation By Christ Alone

Christchurch Harbourough believes that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and that he provides the sole means by which men and women may come to salvation. The Christian faith is the only true religion, and adherence to any other belief cannot lead to salvation. Believers in Jesus Christ are required to display tolerance in their attitude towards those of other faiths, but also to seek to bring them to a true saving knowledge of him by prayer and evangelism.

9. Leadership of the Local Church

Christchurch Harbourough believes that, in accordance with the pattern established in Scripture, a local church congregation should be led by a plurality of suitably gifted Elders. Whilst God created men and women in absolute equality, he also ordained that leadership in the family, within the context of marriage, and in the church, should be the functional responsibility of men. For this reason, in obedience to the Word of God, the Elders of Christchurch Market Harbourough are required to be male.

The duly appointed Elders of the church are the under-shepherds of Christ, and they must exercise their leadership of the local church in accordance with the character of Christ's own leadership of the Universal Church. They are to love the members of the church and to give themselves in their service, working to present them to Christ as holy and blameless. In turn the members of the church are required to submit

themselves to the leadership of the Elders, in so far as such leadership is exercised in accordance with the Scriptures. Also in accordance with the pattern of Scriptures, male and female members of the church with appropriate gifts may be set apart as Deacons to serve particular needs arising in the life of the church.

10. Every Member Ministry

Christchurch Harborough believes that each and every member of the church is called by God to utilise his or her gifts, whatever they may be, by ministering to other members of the church. The provision of teaching and pastoral care within the life of the church is not the sole responsibility of the Elders and Deacons. The church does not believe that there is any scriptural justification for a distinction amongst believers between clergy and laity, but affirms that every believer is a priest who enjoys direct access to God and is able to minister to others. The Elders and Deacons of the church are not qualitatively distinguishable from other members of the church, but are believers who have been appointed by the members of the church to provide pastoral leadership of the congregation, in recognition that they are suitable in character and gifts to undertake such responsibilities.

Ethical Statements: Marriage

Our Basis of Faith sets out that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of belief and practice and the Members of the Church agree that the teaching of the Bible is that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33) and that all sexual practices outside of marriage between a man and a woman are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) regardless of whether or not homosexual marriage is permitted by the laws of England and Wales.

The Bible also teaches that we must not be actively or passively complicit in sin (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:8-16; 1 Timothy 5:22) and that

faith without works is dead (James 2:17). It is therefore part of our doctrine that in relation to any activities of this Church we must in no way condone, promote, assist or encourage adulterous or extra-marital sexual practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.



Appendix C

Church Membership

This Appendix comprises the membership requirements of the Church Handbook referred to in the Church Constitution.

1. Eligibility for membership

Membership of this local church is open to all those who:

- Are publicly professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and are seeking to live as one of His disciples.
- Are in full agreement with the church's Basis of Faith (attached in Appendix A).
- Are prepared to accept the Doctrinal Distinctives & Ethical Statements of the church (attached in Appendix B).
- Have regularly attended the church for six consecutive months, or is transferring from membership of another church where he or she has been a member for more than six months.
- Commit themselves to serve Christ in united corporate fellowship and solidarity with the other members of the church.
- Agree to submit themselves to the leadership of the Elders of the church.
- Is not currently under discipline of any local church, unless in the determination of the Elders the application of such discipline was considered to be inappropriate and in contravention of Scripture.
- Fully accept the responsibilities and obligations of church membership (outlined in Section 3 below).

2. Categories of membership

2.1 Full Adult members

Anyone aged eighteen years or above, who fulfils the other membership criteria, may become a full adult member of the church.

Full adult members are not allowed to hold a concurrent equivalent membership of any other church (unless, in exceptional cases such as mission partners, or students, the Elders agree to this).

2.2 Junior members

Anyone aged between fourteen and seventeen years, who fulfils the other membership criteria, may become a junior member of the church.

Junior members are encouraged to attend and participate in discussions at church members' meetings, but are not allowed to vote.

3. Privileges and responsibilities of members

Membership of the church brings with it privileges and responsibilities. The privileges include being identified as part of this local church of God, being able to take part in discussing and agreeing the way in which the church should move forward and benefitting from the pastoral care of the church leaders and other members.

The responsibilities of church membership include submitting to the authority and leadership of the Elders of the church in accordance with the provisions of this Church Handbook and the Church Constitution, participating in the work of the church and its activities, attending meetings regularly, serving and bearing each other up before the Lord in prayer, and sharing in the financial needs of the church.

Church members are expected to demonstrate their commitment to serving Christ as part of this church through:

- Seeking to live a life which is consistent with the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ which we profess.
- Regular private prayer for the work and ministry of the church and regular personal Bible reading and study.
- Regular attendance at Sunday services, mid-week opportunities for prayer and Bible study and other church meetings and events, as individual circumstances allow.

- Ministering to one another, and the wider community, in accordance with their gifting.
- Active participation in the Gospel outreach of the church.
- Attendance at church members' meetings.
- Submission to the authority and leadership of the Elders of the church.
- Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)
- Regular financial contribution to the work of the church, and the Lord's work in general, in accordance with their means.

The Church Constitution sets out the legal duties of church members. These are:

"It is the duty of each member of the church to exercise his or her powers as a member of the church in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the church".

4. Applying for membership of the church

Anyone meeting the eligibility criteria outlined above is encouraged to become a member of the church. The procedure for applying for membership is as follows:

- Anyone interested in applying for membership of the church should firstly speak to one of the Elders.
- They will then be asked to fill in a short application form.
- Where a person applying for membership was previously a member of another church, the Elders are likely to request a reference from the leaders of that church regarding the applicant's suitability for membership.
- The Elders will then consider whether the applicant is eligible for membership. This will normally involve arranging to meet with the applicant to discuss their application and any queries they may have.
- Where the Elders agree that an applicant meets the qualifications for membership, the applicant will be informed. Notice will then be given to the membership in writing that they intend to recommend the applicant

for admittance to membership of the church a month before the calling of a church business meeting.

- Prior to the holding of the church business meeting, any member of the church may bring to the attention of the Elders any matters which they feel would render the applicant unsuitable for admission as a member of the church.

- If any member of the church raises such a matter of concern the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the applicant would be suitable for admission as a member of the church.

- If the Elders intend to proceed to recommend the admission to membership of an applicant in respect of whom a member of the church has raised a matter of concern which has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

- An applicant shall be admitted to membership of the church if the recommendation of the Elders is supported by 65% of the adult members of the church attending the church business meeting.

- Applicants for membership of the church will be invited to attend the Members' Meeting at which it is proposed that they be admitted to membership. They will be only permitted to participate in and vote at the meeting after the resolution for their admission as members has been passed.

- New members of the church will be encouraged to attend all church members' meetings after being admitted to membership and full members will be entitled to vote on any matter.

5. Service in the church

Only full adult church members may be appointed to key roles of service in the church, as agreed by the Elders. There may be exceptions, at the discretion of the Elders.

6. Resignation of members

A member of the church may resign their membership at any time by giving written notice to the Elders.

7. Joining another church

A member of the church will be treated as having resigned from membership of the church if they become a member of another church. There may be exceptions, at the discretion of the Elders.

8. Moving out of the area

If a member moves out the geographical area served by this church, it will be assumed that they resign their membership, unless there are exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Elders.



Appendix D

Appointment of Elders

1. Introduction

The Elders are the church officers and trustees of the church. In Scripture elders are the pastors (under-shepherds) of the local flock entrusted to their oversight and care by the Lord Jesus, the Chief Shepherd. From time to time one of the elders may be designated Pastor or Senior Pastor, as he is set apart as “first among equals” with the other elders, to give his full time to teaching and preaching God’s Word and the pastoral leadership of the church. A Pastor or Senior Pastor set apart in this way may be paid a stipend to enable him to fulfil this role.

All Elders must fully subscribe to the Church Constitution, Basis of Faith, the Doctrinal Distinctives, the Ethical Statements and the Covenant of Care of the church. The Elders are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral oversight of the church. The Elders oversee all church meetings and all church activities. Elders must be men qualified by the Holy Spirit in character and experience (as described in 1 Timothy 3: 1 – 7 and 11; Titus 1: 5 – 9 and 1 Peter 5: 2 – 3) and must be church members.

The number of Elders is not fixed, however there has to be a minimum of three, with the majority not being paid a stipend or remunerated by the church.

2. Appointment of Elders

Nominations for a new Elder (or the re-appointment of an existing Elder) are made by the body of Elders. Nominations will be communicated to church members in writing, who will then be asked to vote on the

appointment at a church members' meeting with at least one month's notice.

Prior to the holding of the church members' meeting, any member may bring to the attention of the Elders any matter which they feel would render a proposed Elder unsuitable for office. If any member raises such a matter of concern, the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the proposed Elders would be suitable. If they intend to proceed with the proposed appointment and the matter of concern has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

The vote will be by secret ballot and 65% of the members present and voting must vote in favour.

A newly appointed Elder will usually be commissioned into office at a subsequent Sunday service of the church. He shall be required to declare publicly his full agreement with the Basis of Faith, the Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements of the church and that he will faithfully discharge the duties of his office with the help of God.

3. Re- Appointment of Elders

With the exception of an elder called to be a full-time Pastor or Senior Pastor, all elders are appointed for an initial appointment of one year and are then eligible for re-appointment for terms of three years.

The proposal to re-appoint an Elder will be communicated to church members in writing, who will then be asked to vote on the appointment at a church members' meeting with at least one month's notice.

Prior to the holding of the church members' meeting, any member may bring to the attention of the Elders any matter which they feel would render the Elder concerned unsuitable for ongoing office. If any member raises such a matter of concern, the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the proposed Elders would be suitable. If they intend to proceed with the proposed re-appointment and the matter of concern has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

A vote for re-appointment of an elder will be by secret ballot at the church members' meeting and 65% of the members present and voting must vote in favour.

4. Appointment of a full or part-time Pastor or Senior Pastor

The church may call an Elder to serve in a full or part-time capacity with the designation of Pastor or Senior Pastor. He may either be one of the existing elders or be appointed from outside of the church.

It is the responsibility of the Elders to propose the calling of an Elder to serve in this specific way and such a proposal will follow the procedures for the appointment of any other elder as set out above.

Where a Senior Pastor or Pastor is called to serve in this way, the church will pay him an appropriate financial package commensurate with his value and status as a teacher and leader of the church. The church will seek to support him to a level equivalent to the remuneration payable to a secondary school teacher of similar experience in the state sector.

The Elders will enter into an Individual Memorandum of Understanding with a Pastor/Senior Pastor setting out the arrangements for their role.

For the avoidance of doubt, a duly appointed Pastor/Senior Pastor will not require to be re-appointed after one year or subsequent terms of three years. However, the other elders will aim to conduct an annual appraisal with him in order that any matters of concern can be raised.

5. Elders' Meetings

The Elders normally meet formally once a month and at other times for prayer.

No Elder can speak against a matter at a church members' meeting, or elsewhere, which has been formally agreed at an Elders' meeting.

The Elders will appoint from among themselves a Chairman of the Elders and a Church Secretary.

- The Chairman of the elders will chair the Elders' Meetings and Church Members' Meetings.
- The Church Secretary is responsible for overseeing the corporate governance of the church. This includes managing the Church Constitution and Church Handbook, the documentation around the

employment of church staff and the arrangements for church members' meetings. The Church Secretary is also responsible for minuting Elders' meetings, which are required in the Church Constitution, as the Elders are the charity trustees of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO); and keeping an accurate record of the membership of the church.

6. Removal of Elders from office

An Elder may be removed from office at any time if 51% of the full adult membership of the church vote in favour of a proposal for his removal in a public ballot conducted at a church business meeting. The 51% threshold is because if an elder has lost the confidence of half of the membership it is untenable for them to continue.

7. Removal of an Elder by Exercise of Church Discipline

An Elder may be removed from office in the church on any of the following grounds:

- (a) He errs in doctrine so that he no longer fully subscribes to the Statement of Faith, the Doctrinal Distinctives and the Ethical Statements of the church
- (b) He errs in conduct by the commission of open sin which brings the church into disrepute
- (c) He has failed to fulfil his responsibilities as an Elder
- (d) He is no longer able to fulfil his responsibilities as an Elder due to illness or incapacity but is unwilling to resign

Where any such allegation is made against an Elder it shall be thoroughly investigated by the Elders and Deacons of the church in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:19-20. They will submit a report to the members of the church assessing the weight of the allegations raised and stating whether they believe there are sufficient grounds for the Elder to be removed from office.

An Elder against whom such an allegation has been made shall be given every opportunity to answer the allegation at a church business meeting.

An Elder against whom an allegation has been made will be removed from office if at a duly called business meeting a proposal for his removal receives the support in a public ballot of 51% of the full adult members

of the church in attendance at the meeting, provided that a majority of the full members of the church have voted in favour of the proposal.

Where an Elder removed from office in accordance with these procedures is employed by the church, his removal from office shall automatically terminate his employment. In such an event, the Elder removed shall be entitled to receive whatever compensation for his dismissal as is required by his Memorandum of Understanding, current legislation, or such greater sum as the members of the church determine to give him



Appendix E

Covenant Of Care

Statement of ideals

- As the elders and the members of Christchurch Harbourough we willingly enter into this Covenant of Care for the glory of God's name, the well-being of Christ's Church, and the mutual welfare of the elders, their families, and of the congregation.
- We accept that the fundamental nature of the relationship between elders and people is that of a mutual covenant, rather than an employment contract, a formal agreement or an authority arrangement.
- It is a partnership for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ. On this basis, we recognise that we have mutual responsibilities of care and accountability, each to the other, for the common good.

Mutual Responsibilities

- a. We acknowledge that the church belongs not to the elders, nor to the people, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not "our" church but "his" church;
- b. We accept that we each have a responsibility towards each other – in intention, attitude, behaviour, and word – to follow Christ's fulfilment of the law, which is love (Romans 13:10);
- c. We agree that in matters of conflict we will submit ourselves to the principles of biblical wisdom as expressed in Matthew 18:15-20, Matthew 5:23-26 and 1 Timothy 5:19-20, and as expressed in the church's dispute resolution procedures;
- d. We aim that our communication with each other will be honest, transparent and candid (2 Corinthians 4:1-2). We reject gossip, innuendo, suspicion and manipulation;

e. We agree to ongoing, annual review of how this Covenant of Care is working out, in practice and reality, across the life of this congregation; and

f. We accept the responsibility to pray for and seek practically each other's good.

Responsibilities of the people to the elders

a. We affirm that our elders are called to lead this congregation, and to equip its people for the work of mission and ministry;

b. If any of them are either set apart to serve the church full-time or employed by the church, we accept our legal and spiritual responsibility to honour them by providing appropriately for their physical, emotional and financial needs and those of their families in order that they may follow God's calling without undue concern for these matters;

c. We agree to respect appropriate boundaries of time, space and emotional demands, with regard to our elders' family and personal lives; and

d. If we have issues about our elders or their ministry, we will take them first directly to them, or use appropriate channels within the leadership team to deal openly and honestly with our concerns.

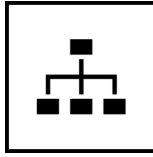
Responsibilities of the elders to the people

a. We acknowledge that our role individually and collectively is to pastor this congregation through prayer and the ministry of the word and to lead it in following Jesus' call to make disciples; it is our responsibility to serve and equip the believers, not to lord it over them (Acts 6:1-7; Mark 10:35-45; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11- 16);

b. We agree to hold ourselves appropriately accountable to our fellow leaders in the church for our lives and ministries;

c. If we have issues or disagreements with a fellow church leader or member of the congregation, we will speak directly to that person; and

d. We accept that our position as elders brings with it various kinds of authority. We will use this authority, under God, to serve and bless this congregation.



Appendix F

Appointment of Deacons & Church Staff

1. Introduction

Deacons are adult church members to whom the Elders have delegated key leadership responsibilities for both the practical affairs of the church and the regular activities of the church. These will include key areas of finance, administration, teaching, care and outreach. Deacons must be men or women qualified by the Holy Spirit in character and experience (as described in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3: 8 – 13). They must be in full agreement with the Statement of Faith and agree to abide by the Doctrinal Distinctives of the Church.

2. Appointment of Deacons

Deacons are proposed by the Elders to the membership at a Church Members' Meeting for appointment.

Nominations will be communicated to church members in writing, who will then be asked to vote on the appointment at a church members' meeting with at least one month's notice.

Prior to the holding of the church members' meeting, any member may bring to the attention of the Elders any matter which they feel would render a proposed Deacon unsuitable for office. If any member raises such a matter of concern, the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the proposed Deacon would be suitable. If they intend to proceed with the proposed appointment and the matter of concern has not been withdrawn, the Elders must

bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

The vote will be by secret ballot and 65% of the members present and voting must vote in favour.

3. Term of Appointment

A deacon is appointed for an initial term of service of one year and may then be reappointed for further terms of two years.

4. Teams lead by Deacons

The Deacons may propose additional leaders and helpers to serve with them. These appointments must be approved in advance by the Elders. Such leaders and helpers must be church members.

5. Meetings of Elders with Deacons

The Deacons normally meet termly with the Elders for discussion and prayer about the mission and direction of the church. No Deacon can speak against a matter at a church members' meeting which has been formally agreed at an Elders and Deacons meeting.

6. Church Staff

Church staff are appointed by the Elders. The establishment of new church staff posts which have significant financial implications will be taken to a church members' meeting for agreement. Church Staff may be deacons who will be appointed in accordance with the general appointment procedures for any deacon.



Appendix G

Church Members' Meetings

1. Arrangements for Church Members' Meetings

All church members are encouraged to attend church members' meetings whenever possible. These are opportunities to hear about the Lord's work in the church, to discuss and take decisions about extending the work and to pray and praise God together.

All church members will be given at least 14 days advanced notice of church members' meetings by the Church Secretary, via the Church Office. Copies of the agenda and minutes of the last church members' meeting will be made available to members by the Church Secretary.

Members should advise the Church Secretary of any items they propose to raise under 'Any Other Business' at a church members' meeting at least seven days in advance of the meeting, in order to allow it to be considered.

The full provisions for church members' meetings are set out in the Church Constitution.

2. Frequency

The Church Constitution requires one formal church Annual General Meeting (AGM) per year to consider the church annual accounts for the preceding year. In addition to the AGM, the church normally holds two other church members' meetings each year, arranged so that there is one members' meeting each school term.

3. Quorum

In order to be quorate, at least 25% of the current full adult church membership must be present at a church members' meeting. If there are not enough members present to be quorate, the meeting may be postponed, or may go ahead, but no decisions may be made.

4. Voting on decisions

Most decisions made at church members' meetings only require a majority of those members present and voting (i.e. 51% or more) to be carried. In these cases, votes will normally be indicated by a show of hands and no votes by proxy will be available.

A greater majority is required for decisions about significant issues or matters of a contentious nature. In these cases, a secret ballot of members may be held.

The voting requirements in these situations are set out below, with the reference to the relevant part of the Church Constitution or Church Handbook.

Church members' meetings voting requirements for significant decisions /contentious issues:

- To allow a church members' meeting to proceed at short notice (i.e. without due notice being given)(Constitution - 11.3.2)

90% of all church members

- To amend the Church Constitution (Constitution - 27.1)

90% of church members voting at a church members' meeting

- To amend the Church Handbook (Handbook – Appendix J)

75% of church members voting at a church members' meeting

- To amend the Basis of Faith (Constitution - 27.3)

80% of all church members

- To wind up the church (Constitution - 28)

75% of church members voting at a church members' meeting

- Acceptance of New Members (Handbook – Appendix C)

65% of the members voting at a church members' meeting

- Appointment & Re-appointment of an Elder (including a Pastor)(Handbook – Appendix D)

65% of church members voting at a church members' meeting

- Removal of an Elder (Handbook – Appendix D)

51% of church members voting at a church members meeting provided that it is a majority of the church members.

- Appointment of a Deacon (Handbook – Appendix F)

65% of church members voting at a church members' meeting

- Exercise of Church Discipline (Handbook – Appendix H)

65% of church members voting at a church members' meeting

- Other significant decisions or contentious issues (Including, but not limited to, the purchase or sale of church property, or the establishment of a new staff post)

65% of church members voting at a church members' meeting



Appendix H

Church Family Discipline

1. Reasons for church discipline

A member of the church may be subject to church discipline, potentially including removal from membership, for any of the following reasons:

- They err in doctrine so that they no longer affirm the Statement of Faith of the church (see Appendix A).
- They are no longer willing to accept the practices and doctrinal positions in the church's Doctrinal Distinctives and Ethical Statements (see Appendix B).
- They err in conduct by committing open sin which brings the Lord Jesus, His Gospel and / or the church into disrepute.
- They have consistently failed to fulfil the responsibilities of a member of the church.
- They refuse to repent of sin committed against another church member which has been drawn to their attention.
- They have made false and malicious allegations against another member(s) of the church.
- They are causing division or dissension in the church.
- They are no longer living in submission to the leadership and authority of the Elders of the church.

2. Forms of church discipline

A member of the church may be disciplined by the church in any of the following ways:

- (a) A member of the church may be excluded from participation in the Lord's Supper
- (b) A member of the church may be suspended from membership of the church
- (c) A member of the church may be dismissed from membership of the church
- (d) A member of the church may be dismissed from membership of the church and the remaining members of the church instructed not to have any association with them.

3. Process for church discipline

a) The Elders must be informed as soon as possible where it is believed that any of the reasons set out in Section 1 above apply to a member of the church. Where concerns about a member are raised by another member (who they believe they have been sinned against) that member should normally raise the issue first with the person concerned and only report it to the Elders if the two members concerned are unable to resolve the matter between themselves.

- Where the Elders are informed, or they themselves believe that any of the reasons set out in Section 1 above apply to a member, at least two of the Elders will meet informally with the member to discuss the matter and seek resolution, in line with Biblical principles.

- The Elders looking into the matter will then report back to the Elders to decide whether it is necessary for a formal discussion at a future Elders' meeting and what additional steps they should take (if any).

- During the process of looking into such a matter, the Elders may decide that it is appropriate to temporarily suspend the member from church membership, while the issue is being reviewed and a clear conclusion reached.

- If the Elders conclude that the member in question has acted in a

manner warranting the exercise of church discipline, they shall give the member concerned opportunity to repent and seek forgiveness, whether of the church in general, or of such individuals as have been affected by his or her conduct.

- Where the member in question repents and seeks such forgiveness, the Elders shall take no further action.

- Even in cases where there has been genuine repentance, the Elders may still be required to report certain issues to the relevant secular authorities. In such cases, the Elders will give the member concerned all the pastoral and practical support that is appropriate for a member who is genuinely repentant.

b) If the member in question fails to take the opportunity to repent and seek forgiveness, the Elders shall submit a written report to the members of the church stating the allegation raised against the member concerned, why they believe there are sufficient grounds for the exercise of church discipline, and what disciplinary action they consider would be appropriate in the circumstances.

- Following the submission of such a report, the Elders shall call a church members' meeting to discuss the allegations made against the member concerned, and to determine whether any disciplinary action should be taken.

- At such a church members' meeting the member in question must be given the opportunity to answer the allegations brought against him or her.

- A member against whom an allegation has been made will be subjected to a disciplinary proposal put to a public ballot of the members of the church at a duly called members' meeting which receives the support of 65% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting, provided that a majority of the full members of the church have voted in favour of the proposal.

c) If the recommended disciplinary proposal is that a member be removed from membership :

- The Elders will have made every effort to address the issue, as outlined in Section 3 above, in order to allow the member to continue in membership if possible.

- If the Elders are formally considering whether or not to remove the member from membership, they will confirm in writing to the member why their removal from membership is being considered. The Elders will invite the member to make formal representations to them, either in writing prior to an Elders' meeting, or at an Elders' meeting if they wish to (either directly themselves or with a representative), giving them at least 21 clear days' notice of the meeting in writing. If the member does choose to make a representation, the Elders will take the representation into account when deciding whether to recommend the member should be removed from membership.
- If the Elders intend to propose a resolution to the church that the member be removed from membership, they shall submit a written report to the members of the church stating the allegation raised against the member concerned, why they believe there are sufficient grounds for exercising church discipline, and what disciplinary action they consider appropriate in the circumstances.
- Following the submission of such a report, the Elders shall call a church members' meeting to discuss the allegation and to consider the proposed removal from membership. At such a members' meeting the member in question must be given the opportunity to answer any allegations brought against them.
- The proposal to remove a member from membership requires the support of 65% of the full adult members of the church in attendance and voting, provided that a majority of the full members of the church have voted in favour of the proposal
- Anyone who has been removed from membership may re-apply for membership in the normal way and will be welcomed back into church membership if their application for membership is agreed by the Elders.

4. Additional disciplinary measures

If someone is removed from membership, the Elders may also impose any of the following additional measures:

- A restriction from attending or taking part in any or all of the meetings of the church, including meetings or activities that are normally open to the public.
- The remaining members may be asked not to have any association

with the person who has been dismissed from membership in accordance with specific guidance from the Elders.

Any of the above measures may be removed later by the Elders and reported to the members at a members' meeting.



Appendix I

Safeguarding

Safeguarding matters to us because people matter. They matter to God and they matter to us. Our safeguarding policy, adopted by the leaders and members of the church and reviewed regularly, sets out the expectations and processes that are followed to make sure children and vulnerable adults are safe in our church. All our children's groups leaders and helpers are required to have current clear government Disclosure and Barring Service certificates and are regularly trained.

If you have any questions or wish to make a comment or complaint, please contact our church safeguarding officer, [Ursula Stevens](#).

Our safeguarding policy is available at <https://christchurchharborough.org.uk/safeguarding>



Appendix J

Amendments to Church Handbook

The Church Handbook can be amended by the Elders under the authority of a resolution of the members of the church approving the change at a church members' meeting, provided that the proposed amendment would not cause the church to lose its charitable status or cause this Church Handbook to be inconsistent with the Church Constitution.

A majority of 75% of those members present and voting at the church members' meeting is required to approve a proposed amendment to the Church Handbook.

Notice of any proposed amendment, together with the specific wording of the proposed change, must be given in writing to all church members in advance of the members' meeting at which the proposal will be put to the vote.



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