

Churches Together in Spalding and District (CTSD)

THE CONSTITUTION

Established by vote of the Council on 20 October 2003

1. BASIS AND COMMITMENT

The Basis of CTSD shall be that of Churches Together in England, namely that it “unites in pilgrimage whose churcheswhich, acknowledging God’s revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures; and, in obedience to God’s Will and in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is His Body, and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.

CTSD are committed to the following covenant with each other:

We, the churches who have signed this covenant, hereby declare that we are united in pilgrimage as churches which acknowledge God’s revelation in Christ and confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures.

We recognise that we are bound by the love and will of Christ to respond to His prayer that, in the spirit of repentance for our divisions, we may be led by the Holy Spirit into fellowship and common purpose.

And we seek hereby to fulfil our common mission to the world by witness and service together in proclaiming the Gospel to the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All members of CTSD shall be invited to sign a copy of this covenant of membership, which shall then be appended to this Constitution. The Covenant should be read out publicly in all member churches from time to time, possibly on Preacher Exchange Sundays.

2. AIMS AND FUNCTIONS

a) To be a visible sign of the churches’ commitment to one another, in obedience to our Lord’s prayer “that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You; may they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (John 17, v21). (Pilgrims Together 1989, p28)

b) To examine the nature, purpose and unity of the Church in service and worship through such means as theological reflection, study and discussion of issues affecting Church and community and such expression of common faith and devotion as may from time to time be arranged, while still respecting individual denominations’ differing structures, practices and traditions.

- c) To enrich each member church's experience through shared worship, prayer, learning, insights, service and evangelism, as pilgrims together in the living and sharing of the Gospel.
- d) To promote and engage in practical means of serving the local community in areas of need, whether on CTSD's own initiative under the Lord's inspiration, or by working alongside other bodies involved in local projects, being involved in the spiritual and moral welfare of the whole community.
- e) To enable the member churches and the wider Church to respond to the needs of society in its wider national context at all levels.
- f) To enable the member churches and the wider Church to respond to the needs of the international community in spiritual and material issues.
- g) To be informed about the work of Churches Together bodies at local, intermediate, national and international levels and to support their progress.
- h) To co-operate in safeguarding each other's church members and attenders, encouraging all member churches to comply with statutory requirements on the protection of children, vulnerable adults etc.
- i) CTSD shall pursue these aims imaginatively and appropriately, possibly including by the Council inviting speakers to address meetings specially organised for the purpose, these meetings shall not normally be also meetings for business.
- j) CTSD hope that representatives (see section 4 below) will see their role as including keeping all their own church members fully informed of what CTSD are doing in their name, and endeavouring to engage them in the vision and commitment of every church with CTSD.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The business of CTSD shall be conducted, and policy decisions taken, by a Council, which shall consist of voting and non-voting members, all of whom may speak at meetings.

Voting members shall be:

- a) One clergyman, minister, elder or leader of each covenanting member church, to be appointed by the said church, the name thereof to be given to the secretary of CTSD at the AGM and at any time at which the appointee changes.
- b) Two lay representatives per 100 members or part thereof of each member church to a maximum of four, to be appointed by each church, the names thereof to be given to the secretary of CTSD in like manner.
- c) One annually elected convenor of the local branch of "Christian Aid", one annually elected convenor of "Bible Society Action Group", such members as qualify under 4(e), and one representative of each of any such groups as the CTSD shall annually elect.

Non-voting members shall be:

d) All clergy, ministers, elders and leaders of each covenanting church not members by virtue of 3(a) herein.

e) Such number of co-opted members as the Council shall determine, provided that they do not exceed one quarter of the representative members in number.

4. OFFICERS

a) The Council shall elect two Chairpersons, one from Group 3(a) and one from Group 3(b) or (c), a Treasurer and one or more Secretaries, to be elected at the AGM.

b) The Chairpersons shall serve for two years. They may be elected together or in alternating years, as the Council shall determine. In the AGM a year before a Chairperson from Group 4(b) or 4 (C) is to be installed the Council shall identify who will be that Chairperson and appoint him/her as Chairperson Elect with full authority to speak and vote in the Council, and Executive Committee if appointed (see section 13 below). The Chairpersons shall normally chair alternate meetings of the Council, and Executive Committee if appointed.

c) The Treasurer and Secretaries shall be elected annually. The said Officers may stand for re-election.

d) The Council may appoint from time to time officers for (i) Publicity, (ii) House Groups and any other relevant body deemed necessary.

e) All Officers of the Council shall normally be elected from the voting members of the Council. If an officer cannot be found from within the Council, it shall have the power to appoint a suitable person from outside the Council who shall thereby have the right to vote but shall not be counted as a representative of their church.

5. NEW MEMBERS

a) The voting membership of the Council shall determine the eligibility of new applicants for membership of CTSD. Approval will be deemed to be given upon the support of at least 75% of those voting. New members shall be assemblies, congregations or churches who accept the Basis and Commitment herein, the Constitution of CTSD in full, and the Christian integrity of all existing member churches; and have signed a covenant of membership in the form approved by CTSD.

b) Other Christian assemblies, congregations or churches who feel unable to sign the Basis and Commitment but nevertheless wish to be identified with CTSD may, by the same process of voting, be admitted as Associate Members. They shall not be eligible to vote but shall receive all papers and information and be encouraged to play as full a part as they are able in all the work of CTSD.

6. RESIGNATION AND EXPULSION

a) Any member church may withdraw from CTSD and shall inform the secretary in writing of its resignation.

b) The Council of CTSD may by vote expel any member from CTSD.

c) Where a motion is proposed in the Council, the effect of which, if passed, would be to remove a member church from membership of CTSD, no vote of the Council thereon shall take place until at least 28 days after the motion has been first proposed at a meeting of the Council.

d) No motion to the said effect shall be declared to be carried unless it is supported by at least 75% of those present and eligible to vote.

7. QUORUM

A quorum of the Council, which shall apply only to consideration and deliberation of motions concerning the admission of new members, the expulsion of members and changes in the constitution, shall be 50% of those eligible to vote.

8. ASSOCIATION

CTSD shall seek to be in association with Churches Together in England at national and at intermediate levels.

9. FINANCE

Each member church shall pay as annual subscription an amount to be determined by the Council at the AGM. Such subscriptions shall be payable on 1st March in each year. CTSD shall have power to accept gifts and bequests and to engage in such fund-raising as is agreeable to the needs of CTSD's interests and consistent with the Christian conscience of the member churches.

10. MEETINGS

The Council shall hold in each year no fewer than two meetings, of which one shall be the Annual General Meeting, at which the accounts shall be presented, reports submitted and officers elected. The AGM shall be held normally in January and in any case no later than 15th February. An extra-ordinary meeting may be called by written request signed by at least 10 voting members.

11. AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OTHER COMMITTEES

The Council shall have power to elect an Executive Committee consisting of the officers and such number of other members as may be necessary to give representation to all member churches and assemblies of CTSD, such other members being appointed by their church either for a year or for just a particular meeting. The role and responsibility of an Executive Committee shall be to carry out the business assigned to it by the Council and to take initiatives on behalf of the Council between meetings of the Council, provided that the executive shall be at all times accountable to the Council for such actions and report them to the Council at its next meeting.

An Executive Committee shall have power to co-opt up to three people of good standing to advise and support it in particular areas of its responsibility. Any co-option shall lapse at the Annual General Meeting, but those co-opted one year may be co-opted by subsequent Executive Committees.

The Council may also set up for special purposed other committees to which people may be co-opted from outside the membership of CTSD in order that expert and specialist advice may be obtained as required.

12 AMENDMENT

The Council shall have power to amend the constitution. No such amendment shall take place nor vote be taken until such time as is necessary has been allowed for member churches to consult after the amending resolution has been proposed, such time to be determined at the discretion of the Chairpersons but not less than 8 weeks (and note section 7 re Quorum).