

# **Governing Document for Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

## **1. Name**

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership (“the LEP” [Local Ecumenical Partnership]).

## **2. National location of principal office**

The principal office of the LEP is in England.

## **3. Object**

The objects of the LEP are, for the public benefit:

- (3.1) to advance the Christian faith in accordance with the principles and practices of the Participating Denominations in the Area of Benefit. In furtherance of this object, but not otherwise, the LEP may engage in a range of activities, either on its own or with others, including (but not restricted to):
- a) The celebration of public worship in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions set out in the Partnership Agreement entered into by the Participating Denominations;
  - b) The teaching of the Christian faith;
  - c) Mission and evangelism;
  - d) Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved; and
  - e) The provision of facilities with a Christian ethos for the local community, including (but not restricted to) the elderly, the young and other groups with special needs.
  - f) To advance the Christian faith in accordance with the principles and practices of the Participating Denominations by making grants to organisations in the UK and overseas.

## **4. Powers**

The LEP has power to do anything which is calculated to further its object or is conducive or incidental to doing so. In particular, the LEP’s powers include power to:

- (4.1) borrow money and to charge the whole or any part of its property as security for the repayment of the money borrowed. The LEP must comply as appropriate with sections 124 and 125 of the Charities Act 2011 if it wishes to mortgage land;
- (4.2) buy, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and to maintain and equip it for use;
- (4.3) sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any part of the property belonging to the LEP. In exercising this power, the LEP must comply as appropriate with sections 117 and 119-123 of the Charities Act 2011;
- (4.4) employ and remunerate such staff as are necessary for carrying out the work of the LEP. The LEP may employ or remunerate a charity trustee only to the extent that it is permitted to do so by clause 6 (Benefits and payments to charity trustees and connected persons) and provided it complies with the conditions of that clause;
- (4.5) deposit or invest funds, employ a professional fund-manager, and arrange for the investments or other property of the LEP to be held in the name of a nominee, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as the trustees of a trust are permitted to do by the Trustee Act 2000.

## **5. Application of income and property**

- (5.1) The income and property of the LEP must be applied solely towards the promotion of the object.
- (a) A charity trustee is entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the LEP or may pay out of such property reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the LEP.
- (b) A charity trustee may benefit from trustee indemnity insurance cover purchased at the LEP's expense in accordance with, and subject to the conditions in, section 189 of the Charities Act 2011.
- (5.2) None of the income or property of the LEP may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the LEP. This does not prevent a member who is not also a charity trustee receiving:
- (a) a benefit from the LEP as a beneficiary of the LEP;
- (b) reasonable and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the LEP.
- (5.3) Nothing in this clause shall prevent a charity trustee or connected person receiving any benefit or payment which is authorised by Clause 6.

## **6. Benefits and payments to charity trustees and connected persons**

### **(6.1) *General provisions***

No charity trustee or connected person may:

- (a) buy or receive any goods or services from the LEP on terms preferential to those applicable to members of the public;
- (b) sell goods, services, or any interest in land to the LEP;
- (c) be employed by, or receive remuneration from, the LEP;
- (d) receive any other financial benefit from the LEP;

unless the payment or benefit is permitted by sub-clause (2) of this clause, or authorised by the court, or the prior written consent of the Charity Commission ("the Commission") has been obtained. In this clause, a "financial benefit" means a benefit, direct or indirect, which is either money or has a monetary value.

### **(6.2) *Scope and powers permitting trustees' or connected persons' benefits***

- (a) A charity trustee or connected person may receive a benefit from the LEP as a beneficiary of the LEP provided that it is available generally to the beneficiaries of the LEP.
- (b) A charity trustee or connected person may enter into a contract for the supply of services, or of goods that are supplied in connection with the provision of services, to the LEP where that is permitted in accordance with, and subject to the conditions in, section 185 to 188 of the Charities Act 2011.

(c) Subject to sub-clause (3) of this clause a charity trustee or connected person may provide the LEP with goods that are not supplied in connection with services provided to the LEP by the charity trustee or connected person.

(d) A charity trustee or connected person may receive interest on money lent to the LEP at a reasonable and proper rate which must be not more than the Bank of England bank rate (also known as the base rate).

(e) A charity trustee or connected person may receive rent for premises let by the trustee or connected person to the LEP. The amount of the rent and the other terms of the lease must be reasonable and proper. The charity trustee concerned must withdraw from any meeting at which such a proposal or the rent or other terms of the lease are under discussion.

(f) Subject to sub-clause (4) of this clause a charity trustee or connected person who is an appointed minister of the LEP duly appointed by one or more of the Participating Denominations may receive a stipend or other remuneration from the LEP for acting as such.

(g) A charity trustee or connected person may take part in the normal trading and fundraising activities of the LEP on the same terms as members of the public.

(6.3) *Payment for supply of goods only – controls*

The LEP and its charity trustees may only rely upon the authority provided by sub-clause (2)(c) of this clause if each of the following conditions is satisfied:

(a) The amount or maximum amount of the payment for the goods is set out in a written agreement between the LEP and the charity trustee or connected person supplying the goods (“the supplier”).

(b) The amount or maximum amount of the payment for the goods does not exceed what is reasonable in the circumstances for the supply of the goods in question.

(c) The other charity trustees are satisfied that it is in the best interests of the LEP to contract with the supplier rather than with someone who is not a charity trustee or connected person. In reaching that decision the charity trustees must balance the advantage of contracting with a charity trustee or connected person against the disadvantages of doing so.

(d) The supplier is absent from the part of any meeting at which there is discussion of the proposal to enter into a contract or arrangement with him or her or it with regard to the supply of goods to the LEP.

(e) The supplier does not vote on any such matter and is not to be counted when calculating whether a quorum of charity trustees is present at the meeting.

(f) The reason for their decision is recorded by the charity trustees in the minute book.

(g) A majority of the charity trustees then in office are not in receipt of remuneration or payments authorised by clause 6.

(6.4) *Payment of a stipend or other remuneration – controls*

The LEP and its charity trustees may only rely upon the authority provided by sub-clause (2)(f) of this clause if each of the following conditions is satisfied:

- (a) The amount or maximum amount of the stipend or other remuneration is set out in a written agreement between the LEP and the charity trustee or connected person concerned (“the minister”).
- (b) The amount or maximum amount of the stipend or other remuneration does not exceed what is reasonable in the circumstances.
- (c) The minister is absent from the part of any meeting at which there is discussion of his or her appointment as minister or the terms of that appointment.
- (d) The minister does not vote on any such matter and is not to be counted when calculating whether a quorum of charity trustees is present at the meeting.
- (e) The reason for their decision is recorded by the charity trustees in the minute book.
- (f) A majority of the charity trustees then in office are not in receipt of remuneration or payments authorised by clause 6.

(6.5) In sub-clauses (2), (3) and (4) of this clause:

- (a) “the LEP” includes any company in which the LEP:
  - (i) holds more than 50% of the shares; or
  - (ii) controls more than 50% of the voting rights attached to the shares; or
  - (iii) has the right to appoint one or more directors to the board of the company;
- (b) “connected person” includes any person within the definition set out in clause 30 (Interpretation).

## **7. Conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty**

A charity trustee must:

- (7.1) declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which he or she has in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the LEP or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the LEP which has not previously been declared; and
- (7.2) absent himself or herself from any discussions of the charity trustees in which it is possible that a conflict of interest will arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the LEP and any personal interest (including but not limited to any financial interest).

Any charity trustee absenting himself or herself from any discussions in accordance with this clause must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum in any decision of the charity trustees on the matter.

## **8. Liability of members to contribute to the assets of the LEP if it is wound up**

If the LEP is wound up, the members of the LEP have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

## **9. Membership of the LEP**

### **(9.1) *Membership***

The members of the LEP will be:

- (a) any minister of the LEP duly appointed by one or more of the Participating Denominations.
- (b) Those persons who are members of any of the Participating Churches.  
The members of the Church of England Parish of Stantonbury and Willen shall be those persons who are listed on the Electoral Roll for Stantonbury and Willen in accordance with the Church of England's Church Representation Rules in force from time to time.

Corporate bodies may not be members of the LEP. A member must be an individual.

### **(9.2) *Transfer of membership***

Membership of the LEP cannot be transferred to anyone else.

### **(9.3) *Duty of members***

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

### **(9.4) *Termination of membership***

Membership of the LEP comes to an end if:

- (i) in the case of a minister, the minister ceases to be a minister of the LEP duly appointed by one or more of the Participating Denominations; or
- (ii) in the case of any other members, the member ceases to be a member of any of the Participating Churches or the person ceases to be listed on the Electoral Roll for the Parish of Stantonbury and Willen in accordance with the Church of England's Church Representation Rules in force from time to time.
- (iii) the member dies.

### **(9.5) *Provision of services to non-LEP members residing in the ecclesiastical parish of Stantonbury and Willen***

Any person who is resident in ecclesiastical parish of Stantonbury and Willen is entitled to attend all worship held by the LEP and to be baptised, confirmed, married and have their funeral held by the LEP and to vote in the election of church wardens for the PCC of the ecclesiastical parish of Stantonbury and Willen, whether or not they are a member of the LEP.

## **10. Members' decisions**

(10.1) *General provisions*

Except for those decisions that must be taken in a particular way as indicated in sub-clause (3) of this clause, decisions of the members of the LEP must be taken by vote at a general meeting as provided in sub-clause (2) of this clause.

(10.2) *Taking ordinary decisions by vote*

Subject to sub-clause (3) of this clause, any decision of the members of the LEP may be taken by means of a resolution at a general meeting. Such a resolution may be passed by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting.

(10.3) *Decisions that must be taken in a particular way*

(a) Any decision to remove a trustee must be taken in accordance with clause 15(2).

(b) Any decision to amend this constitution must be taken in accordance with clause 28 of this constitution (Amendment of Constitution).

(c) Any decision to wind up or dissolve the LEP must be taken in accordance with clause 29 of this constitution (Voluntary winding up or dissolution). Any decision to amalgamate or transfer the undertaking of the LEP to one or more other LEPs must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011, and is subject to the approval of the Appropriate Authority for each Participating Denomination.

**11. General meetings of members**

(11.1) *Types of general meeting*

There must be an annual general meeting (AGM) of the members of the LEP. The first AGM must be held within 18 months of the registration of the LEP, and subsequent AGMs must be held at intervals of not more than 13 months. The AGM must:

(a) receive the annual statement of accounts (duly audited or examined where applicable) and the trustees' annual report;

(b) review the life and witness of the LEP;

(c) elect trustees as required under clause 13; and

(d) consider any other business put before it by the charity trustees.

Other general meetings of the members of the LEP may be held at any time, and must be convened on at least three occasions in each calendar year.

All general meetings must be held in accordance with the following provisions.

(11.2) *Calling general meetings*

(a) The charity trustees:

(i) must call the annual general meeting of the members of the LEP in accordance with sub-clause (1) of this clause, and identify it as such in the notice of the meeting; and

(ii) may call any other general meeting of the members at any time.

(b) The charity trustees must, within 21 days, call a general meeting of the members of the LEP if:

(i) they receive a request to do so from at least 10% of the members of the LEP; and

(ii) the request states the general nature of the business to be dealt with at the meeting, and is authenticated by the members making the request.

(c) If, at the time of any such request, there has not been any general meeting of the members of the LEP for more than 12 months, then sub-clause (b)(i) of this clause shall have effect as if 5% were substituted for 10%.

(d) Any such request should include particulars of a resolution that may properly be proposed, and is intended to be proposed, at the meeting.

(e) A resolution may only properly be proposed if it is lawful, and is not defamatory, frivolous or vexatious.

(f) Any general meeting called by the charity trustees at the request of the members of the LEP must be held within 28 days from the date on which it is called.

(g) If the charity trustees fail to comply with this obligation to call a general meeting at the request of its members, then the members who requested the meeting may themselves call a general meeting.

(h) A general meeting called in this way must be held not more than 3 months after the date when the members first requested the meeting.

(i) The LEP must reimburse any reasonable expenses incurred by the members calling a general meeting by reason of the failure of the charity trustees to duly call the meeting, but the LEP shall be entitled to be indemnified by the charity trustees who were responsible for such failure.

### (11.3) *Notice of general meetings*

(a) The charity trustees, or, as the case may be, the relevant members of the LEP, must give at least 14 clear days' notice of any general meeting to all of the members

(b) If it is agreed by not less than 90% of all members of the LEP, any resolution may be proposed and passed at the meeting even though the requirements of sub-clause (3) (a) of this clause have not been met. This sub-clause does not apply where a specified period of notice is strictly required by another clause in this constitution, by the Charities Act 2011 or by the General Regulations.

(c) The notice of any general meeting must:

(i) state the time and date of the meeting;

(ii) give the address at which the meeting is to take place;

(iii) give particulars of any resolution which is to be moved at the meeting, and of the general nature of any other business to be dealt with at the meeting;

(iv) if a proposal to alter the constitution of the LEP is to be considered at the meeting, include the text of the proposed alteration; and

(v) include, with the notice for the AGM, the annual statement of accounts and trustees' annual report, details of persons standing for election or re-election as trustee, or where allowed under clause 22 (Use of electronic communication), details of where the information may be found on the LEP's website.

(d) Proof that an envelope containing a notice was properly addressed, prepaid and posted, or that an electronic form of notice was properly addressed and sent, shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. Notice shall be deemed to be given 48 hours after it was posted or sent.

(e) The proceedings of a meeting shall not be invalidated because a member who was entitled to receive notice of the meeting did not receive it because of accidental omission by the LEP.

#### (11.4) *Chairing of general meetings*

The person nominated as chair by the charity trustees under clause 19(2) (Chairing of meetings), shall, if present at the general meeting and willing to act, preside as chair of the meeting. Subject to that, the members of the LEP who are present at a general meeting shall elect a chair to preside at the meeting.

#### (11.5) *Quorum at general meetings*

(a) No business may be transacted at any general meeting of the members of the LEP unless a quorum is present when the meeting starts.

(b) Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 20% or three members.

(c) If the meeting has been called by or at the request of the members and a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the starting time specified in the notice of the meeting, the meeting is closed.

(d) If the meeting has been called in any other way and a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the starting time specified in the notice of the meeting, the chair must adjourn the meeting. The date, time and place at which the meeting will resume must either be announced by the chair or be notified to the LEP's members at least seven clear days before the date on which it will resume.

(e) If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the start time of the adjourned meeting, the member or members present at the meeting constitute a quorum.

(f) If at any time during the meeting a quorum ceases to be present, the meeting may discuss issues and make recommendations to the charity trustees but may not make any decisions. If decisions are required which must be made by a meeting of the members, the meeting must be adjourned.

#### (11.6) *Voting at general meetings*

(a) Any decision other than one falling within clause 10(3) (Decisions that must be taken in a particular way) shall be taken by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting. Every member has one vote.



(b) A resolution put to the vote of a meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, unless (before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands) a poll is duly demanded. A poll may be demanded by the chair or by at least 10% of the members present in person at the meeting.

(c) A poll demanded on the election of a person to chair the meeting or on a question of adjournment must be taken immediately. A poll on any other matter shall be taken, and the result of the poll shall be announced, in such manner as the chair of the meeting shall decide, provided that the poll must be taken, and the result of the poll announced, within 30 days of the demand for the poll.

(d) A poll may be taken:

(i) at the meeting at which it was demanded; or

(ii) at some other time and place specified by the chair.

(e) In the event of an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or on a poll, the chair of the meeting shall have a second, or casting vote.

(f) Any objection to the qualification of any voter must be raised at the meeting at which the vote is cast and the decision of the chair of the meeting shall be final.

#### (11.7) *Adjournment of meetings*

The chair may with the consent of a meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting) adjourn the meeting to another time and/or place. No business may be transacted at an adjourned meeting except business which could properly have been transacted at the original meeting.

## **12. Charity trustees**

### (12.1) *Functions and duties of charity trustees*

The charity trustees shall manage the affairs of the LEP and may for that purpose exercise all the powers of the LEP.

In appointing trustees, due consideration should be given to ensuring that there is participation from each of the Participating Churches.

It is the duty of each charity trustee:

(a) to exercise his or her powers and to perform his or her functions as a trustee of the LEP in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the LEP; and

(b) to exercise, in the performance of those functions, such care and skill as is reasonable in the circumstances having regard in particular to:

(i) any special knowledge or experience that he or she has or holds himself or herself out as having; and

(ii) if he or she acts as a charity trustee of the LEP in the course of a business or profession, to any special knowledge or experience that it is reasonable to expect of a person acting in the course of that kind of business or profession.

(12.2) *Eligibility for trusteeship*

(a) Every charity trustee must be a natural person.

(b) No one may be appointed as a charity trustee:

(i) if he or she is under the age of 16 years; or

(ii) if he or she would automatically cease to hold office under the provisions of clause 15(1)(f).

(c) No one is entitled to act as a charity trustee whether on appointment or on any re-appointment until he or she has expressly acknowledged, in whatever way the charity trustees decide, his or her acceptance of the office of charity trustee.

(d) At least one of the trustees of the LEP must be 18 years of age or over. If there is no trustee aged at least 18 years, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.

(12.3) *Number of charity trustees*

(a) There should be:

Not less than 6 nor more than 6 elected trustees;

Not less than 2 nor more than 5 ex officio trustees; and

Not less than 1 nor more than 3 nominated trustees.

(b) There must be at least three charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining charity trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee.

(c) The maximum number of charity trustees that can be appointed is as provided in sub-clause (a) of this clause. No trustee appointment may be made in excess of these provisions.

(d) Any person whose name is entered on the register of members of the LEP may be elected as an elected trustee or nominated as a nominated trustee.

(12.4) *First charity trustees*

The first charity trustees of the LEP are –

Mrs Sharron Marland

Dr Adrian Prisk

Revd Dr Paul Smith

Revd Canon Chukwuemeka Iwuagwu

Mrs Margaret Prisk

Ms Diana Stammers

Mr Stephen Fletcher  
Mr David Preston  
Mrs Mary Kennedy

These have now been superseded by trustees elected at the AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### **13. Appointment of charity trustees**

#### **(13.1) *Elected charity trustees***

(a) Elected trustees shall hold office from the end of the Annual General Meeting at which they are elected until the end of the third such meeting after their appointment, but shall be eligible for re-election at that meeting, subject to the limits specified in clause 16 (Reappointment of Charity Trustees).

(b) The members may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed in accordance with clause 15 (Retirement and removal of charity trustees), or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit specified in clause 12(3) on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded.

(c) A person so appointed by the members of the LEP shall retire in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (a) of this clause.

#### **Elected 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023:**

**Mr David Preston (Chair)**  
**Dr Adrian Prisk (Treasurer)**  
**Mrs Anne Slee (Secretary)**  
**Ms Diana Stammers**  
**Mr Stephen Fletcher**

#### **(13.2) *Ex officio charity trustees***

Every minister duly appointed by one or more of the Participating Denominations to the LEP shall automatically, by virtue of holding that office, be a charity trustee.

**Rev Dr Paul Smith**  
**Rev Dr Sam Muthuveloe**  
**Rev Canon Chukwuemeka Iwuagwu**  
**Rev David Haseldine (from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023)**

#### **(13.3) *Nominated Charity Trustees***

(a) The Parochial Church Council of the ecclesiastical parish of Stantonbury and Willen (“the PCC”) may appoint one nominated charity trustee.

(b) Any appointment must be made at a meeting held according to the ordinary practice of the PCC

(c) Each appointment must be for a term of 3 years.

(d) The appointment will be effective from the later of:

- (i) the date of the vacancy; or
- (ii) the date on which the LEP is informed of the appointment.

(e) The person appointed need not be a member of the PCC's Electoral Roll, but must be a member of the LEP.

(f) A trustee appointed by the appointing body has the same duty under clause 12(1) as the other charity trustees to act in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the LEP.

(g) Other Participating Denominations should be represented amongst the charity trustees as described in clause 12 (1).

### **Mrs Penny Miller**

## **14. Information for new charity trustees**

The charity trustees will make available to each new charity trustee, on or before his or her first appointment:

- (a) a copy of this constitution and any amendments made to it; and
- (b) a copy of the LEP's latest trustees' annual report and statement of accounts.

## **15. Retirement and removal of charity trustees**

(15.1) A charity trustee ceases to hold office if he or she:

- (a) retires by notifying the LEP in writing (but only if enough charity trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation takes effect to form a quorum for meetings);
- (b) is absent without the permission of the charity trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated;
- (c) dies;
- (d) ceases to be a member of the LEP in accordance with clause 9;
- (e) in the written opinion, given to the LEP, of a registered medical practitioner treating that person, has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a director and may remain so for more than three months;
- (f) is removed by the members of the LEP in accordance with sub-clause (2) of this clause; or
- (g) is disqualified from acting as a charity trustee by virtue of section 178-180 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).

(15.2) A charity trustee shall be removed from office if a resolution to remove that trustee is proposed at a general meeting of the members called for that purpose and properly convened in accordance with clause 11, and the resolution is passed by a two-thirds majority of votes cast at the meeting.

- (15.3) A resolution to remove a charity trustee in accordance with this clause shall not take effect unless the individual concerned has been given at least 14 clear days' notice in writing that the resolution is to be proposed, specifying the circumstances alleged to justify removal from office, and has been given a reasonable opportunity of making oral and/or written representations to the members of the LEP.

## **16. Reappointment of charity trustees**

A charity trustee who has served for three consecutive terms must not be reappointed for a fourth consecutive term but may be reappointed after an interval of at least one year.

## **17. Taking of decisions by charity trustees**

Any decision may be taken either:

(a) at a meeting of the charity trustees; or

(b) by resolution in writing or electronic form agreed by all of the charity trustees, which may comprise either a single document or several documents containing the text of the resolution in like form to each of which one or more charity trustees has signified their agreement.

## **18. Delegation by charity trustees**

- (18.1) The charity trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee or committees, and, if they do, they must determine the terms and conditions on which the delegation is made. The charity trustees may at any time alter those terms and conditions, or revoke the delegation.

- (18.2) This power is in addition to the power of delegation in the General Regulations and any other power of delegation available to the charity trustees, but is subject to the following requirements -

(a) a committee may consist of two or more persons, but at least one member of each committee must be a charity trustee;

(b) the acts and proceedings of any committee must be brought to the attention of the charity trustees as a whole as soon as is reasonably practicable; and

(c) the charity trustees shall from time to time review the arrangements which they have made for the delegation of their powers.

## **19. Meetings and proceedings of charity trustees**

### **(19.1) *Calling meetings***

(a) Any charity trustee may request a meeting of the charity trustees.

(b) Subject to that, the charity trustees shall decide how their meetings are to be called, and what notice is required.

### **(19.2) *Chairing of meetings***

The charity trustees may appoint one of their number to chair their meetings and may at any time revoke such appointment. If no-one has been so appointed, or if the person appointed is unwilling to preside or is

not present within 10 minutes after the time of the meeting, the charity trustees present may appoint one of their number to chair that meeting.

**(19.3) Procedure at meetings**

(a) No decision shall be taken at a meeting unless a quorum is present at the time when the decision is taken. The quorum is two charity trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total number of charity trustees, whichever is greater, or such larger number as the charity trustees may decide from time to time. A charity trustee shall not be counted in the quorum present when any decision is made about a matter upon which he or she is not entitled to vote.

(b) Questions arising at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of those eligible to vote.

(c) In the case of an equality of votes, the chair shall have a second or casting vote.

**(19.4) Participation in meetings by electronic means**

(a) A meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

(b) Any charity trustee participating at a meeting by suitable electronic means agreed by the charity trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants shall qualify as being present at the meeting.

(c) Meetings held by electronic means must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

**20. Saving provisions**

(20.1) Subject to sub-clause (2) of this clause, all decisions of the charity trustees, or of a committee of charity trustees, shall be valid notwithstanding the participation in any vote of a charity trustee:

(a) who was disqualified from holding office;

(b) who had previously retired or who had been obliged by the constitution to vacate office;

(c) who was not entitled to vote on the matter, whether by reason of a conflict of interest or otherwise

if, without the vote of that charity trustee and that charity trustee being counted in the quorum, the decision has been made by a majority of the charity trustees at a quorate meeting.

(20.2) Sub-clause (1) of this clause does not permit a charity trustee to keep any benefit that may be conferred upon him or her by a resolution of the charity trustees or of a committee of charity trustees if, but for clause (1), the resolution would have been void, or if the charity trustee has not complied with clause 7 (Conflicts of interest).

**21. Execution of documents**

(21.1) The LEP shall execute documents by signature. A document is validly executed by signature if it is signed by at least two of the charity trustees.

**22. Use of electronic communications**

(22.1) *General*

The LEP will comply with the requirements of the Communications Provisions in the General Regulations and in particular:

- (a) the requirement to provide within 21 days to any member on request a hard copy of any document or information sent to the member otherwise than in hard copy form;
- (b) any requirements to provide information to the Commission in a particular form or manner.

(22.2) *To the LEP*

Any member or charity trustee of the LEP may communicate electronically with the LEP to an address specified by the LEP for the purpose, so long as the communication is authenticated in a manner which is satisfactory to the LEP.

(22.3) *By the LEP*

- (a) Any member or charity trustee of the LEP, by providing the LEP with his or her email address or similar, is taken to have agreed to receive communications from the LEP in electronic form at that address, unless the member has indicated to the LEP his or her unwillingness to receive such communications in that form.
- (b) The charity trustees may, subject to compliance with any legal requirements, by means of publication on its website –
  - (i) provide the members with the notice referred to in clause 11(3) (Notice of general meetings);
  - (ii) give charity trustees notice of their meetings in accordance with clause 19(1) (Calling meetings); and
  - (iii) submit any proposal to the members or charity trustees for decision
- (c) The charity trustees must:
  - (i) take reasonable steps to ensure that members and charity trustees are promptly notified of the publication of any such notice or proposal;
  - (ii) send any such notice or proposal in hard copy form to any member or charity trustee who has not consented to receive communications in electronic form.

**23. Keeping of Registers**

The LEP must comply with its obligations under the General Regulations in relation to the keeping of, and provision of access to, registers of its members and charity trustees. The register of members must also include denominational affiliation.

**24. Minutes**

The charity trustees must keep minutes of all:

- (24.1) appointments of officers made by the charity trustees;
- (24.2) proceedings at general meetings of the LEP;
- (24.3) meetings of the charity trustees and committees of charity trustees including:
  - (i) the names of the trustees present at the meeting;
  - (ii) the decisions made at the meetings; and
  - (iii) where appropriate the reasons for the decisions; and
- (24.4) decisions made by the charity trustees otherwise than in meetings.

## **25. Accounting records, accounts, annual reports and returns, register maintenance**

- (25.1) The charity trustees must comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 with regard to the keeping of accounting records, to the preparation and scrutiny of statements of accounts, and to the preparation of annual reports and returns. The statements of accounts, reports and returns must be sent to the Charity Commission, regardless of the income of the LEP, within 10 months of the financial year end.
- (25.2) The charity trustees must comply with their obligation to inform the Commission within 28 days of any change in the particulars of the LEP entered on the Central Register of Charities.

## **26. Rules**

The members of the LEP may from time to time make such reasonable and proper rules or bye laws as they may deem necessary or expedient for the proper conduct and management of the LEP, but such rules or bye laws must not be inconsistent with any provision of this constitution or Schedule, and must be approved by the Appropriate Authority of each Participating Denomination. Copies of any such rules or bye laws currently in force must be made available to any member of the LEP on request.

## **27. Disputes**

If a dispute arises between members of the LEP about the validity or propriety of anything done by the members under this constitution, and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation by a process agreed by the appropriate authorities of the Participating Churches before resorting to litigation.

## **28. Amendment of constitution**

As provided by clauses 224-227 of the Charities Act 2011:

- (28.1) This constitution can only be amended:
  - (a) by resolution agreed in writing by all members of the LEP; or
  - (b) by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of votes cast at a general meeting of the members of the LEP.

Any amendment must have the approval of the Appropriate Authority of each of the Participating Denominations.



- (28.2) Any alteration of clause 3 (Objects), clause 29 (Voluntary winding up or dissolution), this clause, or of any provision where the alteration would provide authorisation for any benefit to be obtained by charity trustees or members of the LEP or persons connected with them, requires the prior written consent of the Charity Commission.
- (28.3) No amendment that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Charities Act 2011 or the General Regulations shall be valid.
- (28.4) A copy of any resolution altering the constitution, together with a copy of the LEP's constitution as amended, must be sent to the Commission within 15 days from the date on which the resolution is passed. The amendment does not take effect until it has been recorded in the Register of Charities.

## **29. Voluntary winding up or dissolution**

- (29.1) The LEP may be dissolved only with the approval of the Appropriate Authority of each of the Participating Denominations. As provided by the Dissolution Regulations, the LEP may be dissolved by resolution of its members. Any decision by the members to wind up or dissolve the LEP can only be made:
- (a) at a general meeting of the members of the LEP called in accordance with clause 11 (Meetings of Members), of which not less than 14 days' notice has been given to those eligible to attend and vote by a resolution passed by a 75% majority of those voting, or
  - (b) by a resolution agreed in writing by all members of the LEP.
- (29.2) Subject to the payment of all the LEP's debts, and with the approval of the Appropriate Authority for each Participating Denomination:
- (a) any resolution for the winding up of the LEP, or for the dissolution of the LEP without winding up, may contain a provision directing how any remaining assets of the LEP shall be applied;
  - (b) if the resolution does not contain such a provision, the charity trustees must decide how any remaining assets of the LEP shall be applied; and
  - (c) in either case the remaining assets must be applied for charitable purposes the same as or similar to those of the LEP.
- (29.3) The LEP must observe the requirements of the Dissolution Regulations in applying to the Commission for the LEP to be removed from the Register of Charities, and in particular:
- (a) the charity trustees must send with their application to the Commission:
    - (i) a copy of the resolution passed by the members of the LEP;
    - (ii) a declaration by the charity trustees that any debts and other liabilities of the LEP have been settled or otherwise provided for in full; and
    - (iii) a statement by the charity trustees setting out the way in which any property of the LEP has been or is to be applied prior to its dissolution in accordance with this constitution;

(b) the charity trustees must ensure that a copy of the application is sent within seven days to every member and employee of the LEP, and to any charity trustee of the LEP who was not privy to the application.

(29.4) If the LEP is to be wound up or dissolved in any other circumstances, the provisions of the Dissolution Regulations must be followed.

### **30. Interpretation**

In this constitution:

“charity trustee” means a charity trustee of the LEP.

“the Communications Provisions” means the Communications Provisions in Part 9 of the General Regulations.

“connected person” means:

(a) a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother or sister of the charity trustee;

(b) the spouse or civil partner of the charity trustee or of any person falling within sub-clause (a) above;

(c) a person carrying on business in partnership with the charity trustee or with any person falling within sub-clause (a) or (b) above;

(d) an institution which is controlled –

(i) by the charity trustee or any connected person falling within sub-clause (a), (b), or (c) above; or

(ii) by two or more persons falling within sub-clause (d)(i), when taken together

(e) a body corporate in which –

(i) the charity trustee or any connected person falling within sub-clauses (a) to (c) has a substantial interest; or

(ii) two or more persons falling within sub-clause (e)(i) who, when taken together, have a substantial interest.

“the Dissolution Regulations” means the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (Insolvency and Dissolution) Regulations 2012.

“the General Regulations” means the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012.

“the LEP” means the local ecumenical partnership described in the Partnership Agreement dated February 2022 or the date of any subsequent approved revision.

“the Participating Denominations” means the Baptist Union, the Church of England, the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the United Reformed Church ;

“the Participating Churches” the Church of England Parish of Stantonbury and Willen; The Stantonbury Methodist Church; the Stantonbury Baptist Church; the Stantonbury United Reformed Church.

“poll” means a counted vote or ballot, usually (but not necessarily) in writing.

Section 118 of the Charities Act 2011 apply for the purposes of interpreting the terms used in this constitution.