

Operating Procedures for Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

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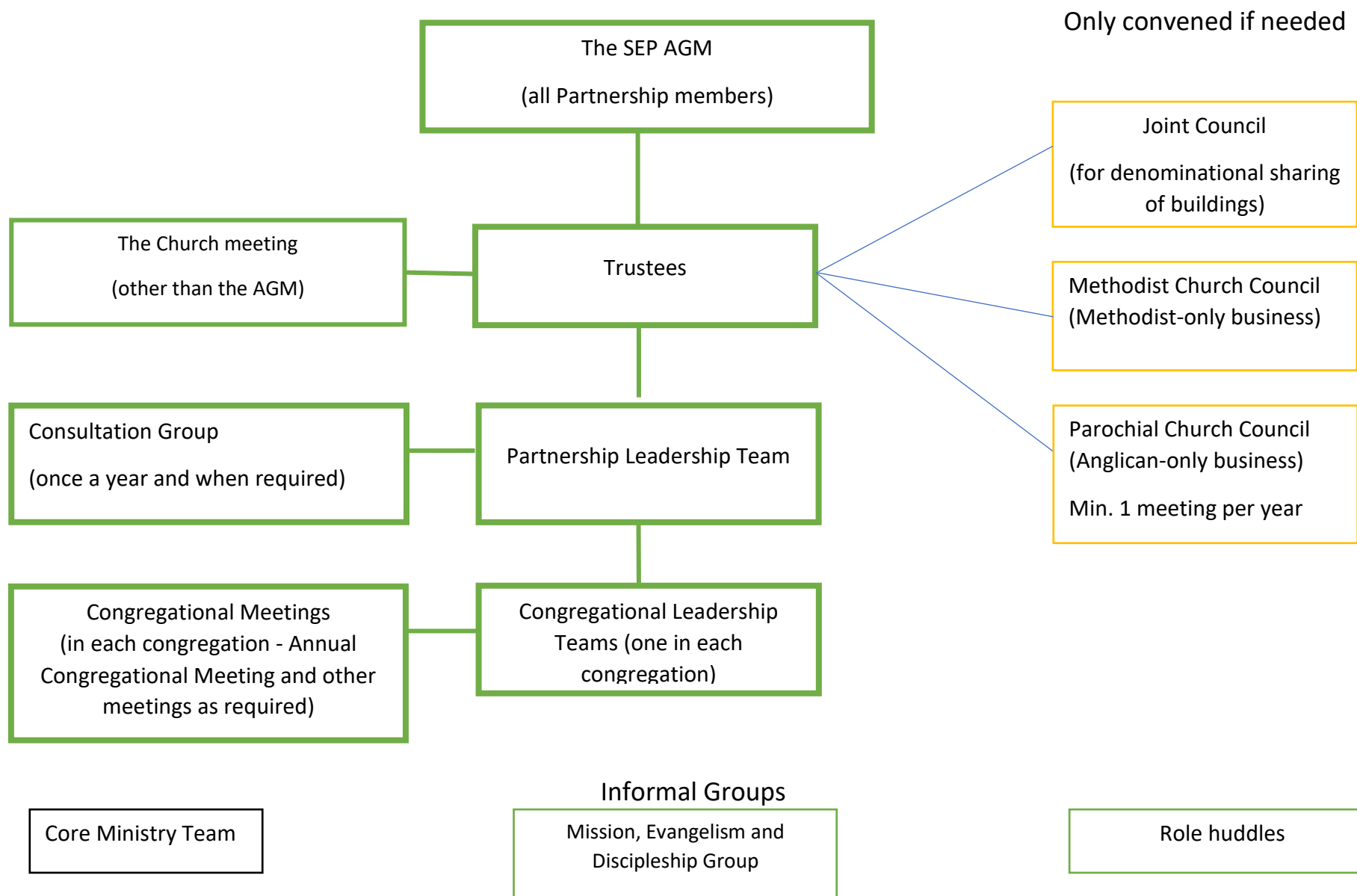
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Structure diagram

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership structures May 2026



1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document describes how the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership (SEP) is organised on a day-to-day basis. It provides the core of the SEP's Operating Procedures. It is based on draft Operating Procedures used by Local Ecumenical Partnerships across Milton Keynes. It should be read alongside the Constitution of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the SEP, the Church Partnership Agreement (CPA), the Sharing Agreements, and the requirements of the participating denominations. It must not contradict the CIO Constitution, the Church Partnership Agreement or the Sharing Agreements. The Constitution – or Governing Document – is the final point of reference in case of any question about the Operating Procedures.
- 1.2. This document was adopted by the SEP in April 2023, following approval by the Ecumenical Officers Group (EOG), which represents the denominations in Milton Keynes. Any proposed changes must be submitted to the Trustees and EOG for advice and approval. The EOG will review the Operating Procedures every five years, with the next review due in 2028. The Operating Procedures were reviewed in 2025 and changes agreed incorporated in this version, following approval by the EOG.
- 1.3. These Operating Procedures cover the interconnected strands of governance, leadership and management with ecclesiological diversity taken into account at every level.

- a) **Governance:** Governance is concerned with the long-term direction of the charity, including its objectives or purposes. The Trustees are ultimately responsible for and oversee all governance and ensure that the organisation complies with legal requirements and exercises financial probity, and they are accountable to those with an interest or 'stake' in the charity. Good governance should happen throughout the SEP. The trustees are responsible for good governance, but it relies on many different people to be able to govern well: staff, volunteers, advisors and stakeholders. Reporting to the Trustees, the Partnership Leadership Team is responsible for implementing policies and activities to achieve the agreed objectives.

The denominational membership means care should be taken to make sure that the appropriate denominational requirements are met. The Trustees will exercise their responsibilities alongside the formal denominational groups; detailed under Structures (page 3).

- b) **Leadership:** Leadership involves establishing a clear vision; sharing that vision with others so that they will take action; providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision, while balancing the differing interests of all members and stakeholders. Leadership is distributed throughout the SEP since the Holy Spirit is at work in all of God's people. The Trustees must play a role in leadership, but there is a need for leadership to happen in a coordinated, coherent and consistent way.

Leadership in the Church is shared between lay and ordained members and is particularly seen in the work of the Trustees, Partnership Leadership Team and Congregational Leadership Teams.

- c) **Management:** Management is the task of coordinating the work of the SEP as it seeks to accomplish its desired vision, goals and objectives. Management includes the ability to plan, organize, monitor and direct groups and individuals. Management is distinct from governance in that it focusses on implementation rather than strategy.

Alongside people and groups with ongoing responsibility for management (see structures below), the constitution of the CIO allows for the creation of formal Management Committees which are responsible, on behalf of the Trustees, for specific tasks (finance, buildings, projects, etc...) These committees should have one trustee on them and must report to the trustee board. The remit of

Management Committees will need to be agreed with the trustees, with a time limited period of authorisation which can be renewed. Informal groups are likely also to be established within the structures.

2. Structures

- 2.1. There are a number of elements which enable the SEP to function. Each element will, at all times, endeavour to discern the will of God in governance, leadership and management.

SEP Level Bodies

- 2.2. **The Church Meeting (CM):** The Church Meeting – a meeting to which all members are invited - is the assembly of God's people which seeks the Mind of Christ in community. Some of our denominations, namely the Baptist and United Reformed Churches, regard the Church or Congregational Meeting as the decision-making body. There will be a Church Meeting (CM) of the whole Partnership at least four times per year. One of these meetings will act as the AGM for the CIO. (See Appendix 1 for terms of reference).
- 2.3. **The Charity Trustees:** The CIO is the registered charity which enables the partnership to hold property, employ staff and manage resources. It is a legal entity with trustees and committees which have delegated functions. Trustees are accountable for the probity of the charity, particularly financial and legal matters. The trustees will show leadership in the way they set the overall vision of the SEP, delegating to the **Partnership Leadership Team** as appropriate (see Appendix 2 to these Operating Procedures for terms of reference; see also the Constitution for more detail).
- 2.4. **The Partnership Leadership Team (PLT):** The Partnership Leadership Team has delegated authority from the Trustees for development of strategic direction, setting policies and overseeing communications. It is also responsible for collective leadership of spiritual and practical matters across the SEP including worship and ministry, written communication and other activities. Individual members may be assigned to specific responsibilities or work with local congregations on the agreement of the trustees. (see Appendix 3 for terms of reference including membership and appointment).
- 2.5. **A Consultative Forum:** this is a group of representatives of the congregations which is consulted on strategic development, new strategic initiatives and other proposed major changes (see Appendix 4).
- 2.6. **(i) The Mission, Discipleship and Evangelism Team:** This is a less formal group which will co-ordinate Partnership-wide Mission and Evangelism activities, encourage new worshipping communities within the Partnership, nurture emerging leaders and people wishing to reach out to others beyond our existing members and congregations, co-ordinate nurture courses and provide discipleship material and identify and publicise training opportunities.
- (ii) Other groups or teams may be set up by the Trustees and Partnership Leadership Team as required to ensure initiatives are carried out.

Denominational Bodies at SEP level:

- 2.7. **The Parochial Church Council:** The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has responsibility in law for the Anglican Parish. The PCC has a very specific role, which covers various things as set out in the Parochial Church Council Measure 1956, with membership set out in the Church Representation Rules. Please also refer to the Church Partnership Agreement (CPA) for the avoidance of any doubt. (see Appendix 5 for terms of reference.) Within the SEP, the PCC is expected to focus on Anglican-only matters.

- 2.8. **The Methodist Church Council:** The Methodist Church Council has very specific responsibilities, some of which (if the right Standing Order is in effect) can be delegated to the SEP Trustees. (see Appendix 6 for terms of reference.)
- 2.9. **The Joint Councils:** The Joint Councils (JC) provide a mechanism for the relevant denominations to make decisions together about buildings and assets. The determination of the Joint Council is made by the Sharing Agreement. The Joint Councils must be properly appointed and renewed at each Annual Meeting of the CIO. (see Appendix 7 for terms of reference of the Joint Councils.)

Congregation Level

- 2.10. **Congregational Gathering:** The members of the local congregation will gather regularly to discern the mind of Christ and to shape the Mission and Ministry of the congregation primarily through an Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) but also through other meetings as required. (see Appendix 8 for more detail).
- 2.11. **Congregational Leadership Teams (CLT):** All our traditions recognise the role of church members in leadership and ministry. Each congregation will have a Congregational Leadership Team (CLT) which focusses on local pastoral care, mission, etc. The CLT will include one or more authorised ministers. (see Appendix 9 for details including membership and appointment).

The trustees may delegate the management of a building or funds to a CLT. In these instances, the CLT will need to be designated as a formal 'Management Committee' with delegated authority to act on behalf of the trustees (see above).

Meeting denominational requirements

- 2.12. The ways in which individual requirements of the four denominations formally involved in the Partnership are met through the above structures are set out in Appendix 10.

Election and voting procedures

- 2.13. Many of the bodies described above include elected members. In the case of uncontested nominations, as long as nominated and seconded correctly, the person is elected unopposed. Contested elections are usually voted on by secret ballot.
- 2.14. Votes on other matters are usually taken by show of hands.

3. Suggested Pattern of Meetings through the Year

- 3.1. Other than the Trustee Board itself, the overall anticipated pattern of meetings will be agreed by the Partnership Leadership Team and reported to the trustees and should be appropriate to local needs and requirements. It is suggested that meetings should be scheduled in a way that enables good flow of information and decisions. The following pattern is anticipated as a starting point:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Church Meeting/AGM	✓				✓ (AGM)				✓		✓	
2. CIO Trustees – min. 3 meetings per year (any trustee can call an additional meeting if required)			✓				✓			✓		
3. Partnership Leadership Team		✓		✓		✓			✓		✓	
4. Consultation group (at least once per year but can be called at any time)				✓								
5. PCC (one to face to face meeting, one email meeting and other email meetings as required)	✓						✓ (face to face)					
6. Congregational Leadership Team (suggested timings)		✓		✓		✓			✓			✓
7. CG- ACM (other meetings to be held if required or desired)			✓									

4. Finances

- 4.1. The CIO is the legal unit in terms of charity registration and financial accountability. This means that the trustees are responsible for the finances of the SEP as a whole, and this includes each church building and congregation.
- 4.2. The trustees will be responsible for the budget, annual review and the submission of accounts.
- 4.3. They are responsible for the employment of staff and administration of the payroll and tax and National Insurance deductions.
- 4.4. They must ensure that necessary payments are made to denominational bodies for ministry costs and membership fees and the appropriate dispersal of fees for service.
- 4.5. There may be a number of management committees, working groups or other bodies which have responsibility for specific areas of work, and these groups will be ultimately accountable to the trustees.

4.6. It is possible to have multiple bank accounts, but ultimate responsibility and accountability rests with the trustees, so there will need to be rules on how much can be spent by each group. This will largely be set by the remit given to each management committee or working group. The Trustees have overall responsibility for the management of assets across the partnership which will require regular consolidation of the accounts.

5. Team Leadership

- 5.1. The Team Leader is an officer of the partnership with a role in governance, leadership and management. The role of Team Leader is open to ministers of any denomination and could include those in a part-time or self-supporting position.
- a) **Role:** The Role Description will be set by the trustees in consultation with the Partnership Leadership Team and Ecumenical Officers Group. This Role Description will take account of administrative support and training requirements. (A draft role description is provided as Appendix 9).
 - b) **Appointment:** The Team Leader will be appointed by the Trustees, after consulting the Partnership Leadership Team and the congregations, and following any denominational procedures. The Decision will be made by majority vote.
 - c) **Process of Appointment:** The Partnership Leadership Team may submit the name of a member of the Core Ministry Team among their number to the Trustees who will consider the nomination. The Trustees may either confirm the candidate or request further discussion. If there is no agreement on a Team Leader, the Trustees will have the final decision.

If there is a vacancy for a Lead Minister or other member of the Core Ministry Team, the Partnership Leadership Team and Trustees may wish to consider the possibility that the new minister could also be appointed as the Team Leader. The role of Team Leader will be added to the Role Description and advertised accordingly. The appointment will then be made by the appropriate denominational process. In such cases, the Trustees approve the advertised role and recruitment, rather than the resulting appointee.

- d) **Term:** The term of appointment will be three years, with the possibility of renewal for one more term in consultation with the Partnership Leadership Team. An Interim Team Leader could be appointed for a shorter period, for instance, when a new appointment is pending.
- e) **Review:** The Team Leader and the Role Description should be reviewed periodically by the Partnership Leadership Team and Trustees, with particular awareness that expectations must be realistic. Any changes should be agreed with the Trustees and the Partnership Leadership Team.

6. Ministry arrangements

- 6.1. Ministry arrangements for each congregation will be determined by the Trustees in consultation with the Partnership Leadership Team, the congregation and relevant denominational leadership, and overseen by the Trustees. Each congregation will have a designated Lead Minister (who may also be Lead Minister at one or more other congregations) who will work with other members of the Core Ministry Team and with the wider team of lay and non-stipendiary ordained ministers available to the congregation. The Lead Minister has pastoral charge of the congregation, including overall responsibility for worship within their congregation(s).

7. Register of Members

- 7.1. Members' names and contact details will be kept on a secure register. In addition to members provided for in the Partnership Agreement, individual baptised Christians whose tradition is aligned with the Churches Together in England statement of belief¹ and who wish to be a member of the Partnership, will be welcomed. Those who have been admitted to membership by baptism or confirmation at an ecumenical

¹ Churches Together in England Statement of Belief 2025 <https://cte.org.uk/about/about-cte/basis-of-cte/>

service are recorded as ecumenical. Other members may choose to join as ecumenical rather than identifying themselves solely with one denomination.

- 7.2. When a member leaves the Partnership, for any reason, they will be removed from the Register of Members as soon as is practicable. A less detailed and separate list is kept of former members in case of queries about membership participation in decisions, subject to denominational/Partnership Retention Policies. Information may be kept for a maximum of 10 years after leaving, in line with General Regulations for charities.

8. Interpretation, disputes and their resolution

- 8.1. The Operating Procedures are a working document and may be changed by the Stantonbury Trustees with the agreement of the Ecumenical Officers Group (EOG).
- 8.2. If a dispute arises during a meeting concerning the interpretation of the Procedures the following process shall be adopted:
 - i) a member of the body concerned, being present, may indicate that there is a dispute.
 - ii) the chair of that meeting shall have a second or casting vote in any proposal to move forward provisionally
 - iii) the matter shall be presented to the Trustees, who may use a subcommittee to recommend a way forward.
 - iv) the decision of the Trustees shall be binding unless over-ridden by the EOG.

Glossary of terms

Joint Council: A legal body established by a Sharing Agreement when a building is in shared use by more than one denomination. The Joint Council is crucial for decisions about shared assets, including the building, particularly in the case of a conflict. The membership of the Joint Council should be reviewed at each Annual Meeting, so that it is possible to call a meeting if it should be required.

Sharing Agreement: A legal agreement which enables two or more denominations to share the use of a building. This can also determine the amount of capital investment that each partner has. This is an important document, should decisions need to be made about usage, development, or disposal of assets.

Operating Procedures: Terms which set out the procedures of the LEP. The term “Standing Orders” has not been used to avoid confusion with the Standing Orders in use by the Methodist Church.

Standing Committee or Group: a small group of Trustees or officers on the Partnership Leadership Team respectively, which is responsible for the effective running of the Trustee body or Partnership Leadership Team respectively and for handling urgent business between meetings

Church: with reference to the Partnership Agreement paragraph 33, it is understood that the word “church” may mean “local congregations” in higher level documents.

Congregational Leadership Teams: a group of key people for each congregation providing the strategic link between wider strategy and vision and the local members

Congregational Gatherings: A regular gathering of members of an individual congregation to promote involvement in the local congregation and the wider Partnership

Core Ministry Team: those ministers duly appointed by a participating denomination to serve in the Partnership, including the Team Leader and the Vision Enabler.

Lead Ministers: Ministers from the Core Ministry Team duly appointed by a participating denomination and assigned to individual congregations, to have pastoral charge of that congregation, acting as leader for worship, stewardship and pastoral care.

Ministers: except where additional qualification is provided in the text, this means authorised ministers including lay preachers, readers etc and retired supernumerary ministers

Parochial Church Council (PCC): the PCC is the executive committee of a Church of England Parish and is legally responsible for the financial affairs of the C of E parish and the maintenance of its assets. In the SEP, the Trustees take responsibility for financial matters in view of its cross-denominational nature. There is one parish and therefore one PCC. The PCC is elected at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and consists of Church Wardens, Anglican Office holders, Deanery Synod Members and Elected Members.

Worship Planning: Arrangements for worship during the year, including special services.

Pastoral Care: to build relationships, equip people for ministry, support people in crisis, encourage personal evangelism, and offer specific and personal prayer for the local church members (in this context).

Appendix 1. The Church Meeting

Purpose and responsibilities

The Church Meeting is a crucial element in some of our traditions. The Partnership is regarded as one “church” so there needs to be a members’ meeting for the whole partnership.

The Church Meeting is there to strengthen the faith, life and mission of local church members through discussion, responsible decision-making and care for one another. It is a forum in which members seek the mind of Christ together, and it will sometimes act as an advisory body to the Trustees and the Partnership Leadership Team. This is particularly important in the case of URC and Baptist appointments.

The Annual Meeting is a special case of Church Meeting. *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* [from SEP CIO governing document]. It must include the following business:

1. Presentation of an Annual Report by the Trustees
2. Presentation of Examined Accounts for the previous year
3. Election of Charity Trustees according to the terms of the CIO Constitution
4. Appointment of Joint Councils
5. A review of the life and witness of the LEP
6. Consideration of any other business put before it by the charity trustees including business to meet the requirements of the constitution.

At the same meeting, the Church of England Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Annual Meeting of Parishioners will be held. Any formal Church-wide meetings required by other denominations, may be held at the same time.

Membership

All members of the Partnership

Mode of operation

There will be at least four Church Meetings per year. One of these meetings will act as the Annual Meeting of the Partnership (i.e. the charity).

Appendix 2. The Charity Trustees

Purpose and responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for the Governance, compliance and overseeing strategic direction towards meeting the vision of the SEP, specifically:

- i. To oversee the governance and operation of the Partnership
- ii. To ensure compliance with legal and denominational requirements including safeguarding
- iii. To ensure financial probity for the SEP
- iv. To approve strategic direction of the Partnership and policies to this end, developed by the Partnership Leadership Team.

The following responsibility is delegated to the Partnership Leadership Team, with oversight from the Trustees:

- v. To oversee communication between the denominations, any city-wide ecumenical body and the congregations within the Partnership.

As noted in the CIO's governing document, *"the charity trustees shall manage the affairs of the LEP and may for that purpose exercise all the powers of the LEP"*. These powers are set out in the Constitution and relate to money, assets and employment of staff.

Membership

a) Appointment of Trustees:

Trustees will be appointed according to the rules set out in the governing document of the CIO.

- i. **Elected Trustees:** There will normally be a total of 6 elected trustees. Section 13.1 in CIO constitution sets out the minimum and maximum possible. After the first AGM, these Trustees should not generally be holders of other offices in the Partnership or its Congregations. They are elected at the Partnership's Annual General Meeting following nomination by two members of the Partnership. There is no requirement for a particular spread across Congregations as these are not representative roles.
- ii. **Ex Officio Trustees:** Every minister of the SEP duly appointed by one or more of the Participating Denominations to the SEP ("an office holder") shall automatically, by virtue of holding that office ("ex officio"), be a charity trustee.² If the number exceeds the number of Elected and Nominated Trustees together, a General Meeting will be called to determine an increase in the number in other categories so that Ex Officio trustees are not in the majority and to ensure compliance with clauses 6.3g and 6.4f of the CIO Governing Document [which state Trustees in receipt of remuneration or payment as permitted by clause 6 must not be in the majority].
- iii. **Nominated Trustees:** 1 trustee may be nominated by the PCC; 1 trustee may be nominated by the Methodist Church Meeting; 1 trustee may be nominated by the Church Meeting for Baptist or United Reformed Church representation purposes. Not less than 1 nor more than 3 nominated trustees.

b) Terms of office

As stated in the Governing Document, elected and nominated trustees usually serve for a period of three years before retiring. They may be re-elected twice before being required to take a break from service of at

² These are the ministers who form the Core Ministry Team (see Glossary).

least one year. A pattern of rotation by thirds is followed, as recommended by the Charities Commission, to reduce the likelihood of large numbers of trustees retiring at the same time.

- i. At the first annual general meeting of the members of the CIO all the elected or nominated [interim] charity trustees shall retire from office;
- ii. At that same first annual general meeting, elected trustees and, separately, nominated trustees, shall draw lots to determine the length of their initial appointment. One third will be appointed for 1 year, one third for 2 years, one third for 3 years.
- iii. Thus, at every [subsequent] annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the elected charity trustees shall retire from office.
- iv. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled as provided in clause v below;
- v. The members or the charity trustees 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 of the Governing Document (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. Casual vacancies arising between meetings will be filled for the remainder of the retiring trustee's appointment period in order to keep the pattern of rotation in place and will be considered a full term when calculating their total service. So, for example, a replacement trustee might only serve a total of 7 years (1 year plus 3 years plus 3 years) before needing a year's break (see Governing Document clause 16).

c) Trustee Officers / Standing Committee of the Trustee Board

With the exception of the Team Leader, the officers are elected by the trustee board from among their members, serving for a period of three years before having to stand for re-election.

- **Chair**
- **Vice Chair [if desired]**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **SEP Team Leader**

These officers form the Trustees' Standing Committee of the CIO. The Trustees' Standing Committee will meet as required to coordinate the trustee meetings and ensure that the policies and decisions of the trustees are implemented. The Trustees' Standing Committee exists to serve the trustees, but may need to make decisions between trustee meetings, particularly in unexpected circumstances. When this happens, the decisions should be made in accordance with the strategy, vision and policies of the trustees, and will need to be ratified at a full trustee meeting.

Mode of operation: the Trustee Meetings

The governing document of the CIO will define how the charity will be run. The following will also be observed:

- i. The Trustees will meet at least three times a year and hold the AGM of the CIO before the end of May each year.
- ii. Dates of meetings will be published for the year ahead allowing Leadership Team meetings and Church and Congregational Gatherings to take place at appropriate times.

- iii. The agenda should be published at least [two weeks] before meetings and circulated to all trustees.
- iv. Minutes should be published within two weeks of the meeting and circulated to the trustees. The minutes should be made available to members on request, as a password-protected pdf, via the Partnership website.
- v. The Trustees' Standing Committee will deal with any business between meetings and will draw up the agenda for the next meeting. They will usually meet [three] weeks before trustee meeting.
- vi. Apologies for absence should, wherever possible, be notified to the secretary in advance of the meeting.
- vii. Proposals for financial expenditure exceeding [£N] should be notified in writing to the secretary at least one week in advance of the meeting to allow papers to be circulated to the Trustees. [May 2026 - *arrangements for approval of significant expenditure at Partnership and Congregational level are under consideration by the Trustees*].
- viii. All AOB should, where possible, be notified to the Secretary the day before the meeting and is at the discretion of the Chair.

Committees:

The trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee or committees, according to the rules set out in the governing document of the CIO. Note that at least one member of each committee must be a trustee. These committees include the Partnership Leadership Team.

In order to oversee the operation of delegated powers and the operation of the Partnership more widely, the Trustees will receive the minutes from each meeting of the Partnership Leadership Team and any other management committees to which they have delegated powers at each of their meetings. The Trustees may request papers from any meeting or a more detailed report on any matter of concern.

The Trustees will conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the Partnership Leadership Team and any other management committees to which they have delegated powers.

More detail on the Trustees is available in the SEP CIO governing document.

Appendix 3 The Partnership Leadership Team

Purpose and responsibilities

The Partnership Leadership Team reports to the Trustees and is subject to denominational procedures, and is responsible for:

- a) Seeking vision and discerning God's way forward as a Church through conversation, exploration of scripture and prayer
- b) Development of the strategic direction of SEP for approval by the Trustees
- c) Setting the policies of SEP for approval by the Trustees
- d) Implementing policies and activities to achieve agreed objectives
- e) Overseeing communications between denominations, any city-wide ecumenical body, and congregations within the Partnership (delegated by Trustees)
- f) Co-ordinating missional activity within the Church in consultation with the Trustees
- g) Ensuring that the ministerial tasks and requirements of the Partnership are fulfilled through collaborative working
- h) Encouraging and supporting each congregation and minister
- i) Considering outcomes of the Church Meeting and distilling possible actions as proposals to the Trustees.
- j) Coordinating the expected pattern of meetings throughout SEP (Church Meeting, Ministry Team meetings, Congregational Leadership Meetings, Congregational Gatherings).

Membership

Ex officio

- 1) Every minister duly appointed by one or more of the Participating Denominations to the ministry team of the LEP [i.e. the members of the Core Ministry Team].
- 2) Two Church Officers from each congregation (i.e. the two people holding the combined role of Anglican Churchwardens, Baptist Deacons, Methodist Stewards and United Reformed Church Elders – see Congregational Leadership Teams below). If no Church Officer from a congregation is able to attend a meeting, they are required to send another member of the CLT to the meeting.
- 3) The SEP Treasurer.

Elected

A lay co-chair, elected by the Annual General Meeting (for a three-year term).

In attendance (i.e. invited to attend and contribute but not voting members)

- 4) All those approved ministers in the Partnership, including retired clergy and lay ministers, who are not members of the Partnership Leadership Team.
- 5) The preaching /worship plan coordinator from a congregation, if not already a member, may attend PLT meetings if they wish.
- 6) Any Trustee not otherwise a member may attend if they wish.

Mode of operation including relationship with Trustees

- 1) The Team will meet at least six times per year.
- 2) The Team is usually chaired by the Team Leader and the elected co-chair.
- 3) The Team will appoint a Secretary – this may be an employee of the Partnership or from amongst its membership.

- 4) The Secretary will take minutes of every meeting and circulate draft minutes to members. Minutes will be approved at the subsequent meeting.
- 5) The Trustees are ultimately responsible for decisions on matters delegated to the Partnership Leadership Team and will receive minutes from every Team meeting (which will address these areas and the Team's other business).
- 6) As part of their role for oversight of the Partnership operation, the Trustees may request Partnership Leadership Team papers or a more detailed report – in writing or verbally – on any matter.
- 7) The Partnership Leadership Team may raise concerns or queries with the Trustees at any time and are required to escalate issues relating to legal or financial probity as soon as possible after they become known.
- 8) The Trustees will conduct an annual review of effectiveness of the Team.

Partnership Leadership Team Standing Group

The Partnership Leadership Team will set up its own Standing Group to meet as required to coordinate the Team meetings and to make decisions between Team meetings, particularly in unexpected circumstances. When this happens, the decisions should be made in accordance with the strategy, vision and policies of the Partnership and will need to be ratified at a full Team meeting. Membership of the group will be agreed by the Partnership Leadership Team but will include the Chair, the Treasurer, the Team Leader (if not otherwise involved) and the Secretary to the Team.

Appendix 4. Consultation Group

Purpose and responsibilities

To represent the views of congregations in strategic development and new strategic initiatives/ideas.

Membership

Two representatives from each congregation (usually, members who do not hold another office in the congregation or Partnership) elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting for a term of three years.

Mode of operation

The Group will meet at least once a year, and when asked to provide input to strategic development at other times.

Members will consult with their congregations prior to each meeting.

One of the members of the group will be elected by the group as convenor of the meetings. This person will feed back outcomes of each meeting to the Partnership Leadership Team.

Appendix 5 The Parochial Church Council

Purpose and responsibilities

Many of the usual functions of a Parochial Church Council (PCC) are common to our four participating denominations in the SEP and are therefore addressed by Trustees or the Partnership Leadership Team on the PCC's behalf. Therefore, the SEP PCC is charged with Anglican-only business, especially that relating to maintenance of the Anglican church buildings and churchyards. It is also expected to maintain awareness of the business conducted by SEP Trustees and the Partnership Leadership Team with a view to ensuring that other standard PCC functions are being addressed appropriately elsewhere in our cross-denominational structures.

The Church of England descriptions of PCC functions are set out here.

Under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 the PCC has the following functions:

- a) co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;*
 - b) the consideration and discussion of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question;*
 - c) making known and putting into effect any provisions made by the diocesan synod or the deanery synod, but without prejudice to the powers of the council on any particular matter;*
 - d) giving advice to the diocesan synod and the deanery synod on any matter referred to the council;*
 - e) raising such matters as the council consider appropriate with the diocesan synod or deanery synod.*
- In the exercise of its functions the parochial church council shall take into consideration any expression of opinion by any parochial church meeting.*

The Synodical Government Measure 1969 states:

It shall be the duty of the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council to consult together on matters of general concern and importance in the parish.

It then goes on to set out a number of functions of the PCC, of which perhaps the most important, and certainly the widest, is: *co-operation with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.... The incumbent and the PCC each have their own particular rights and responsibilities in the life of the church but the important theme here is partnership and co-operation.*

The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the church buildings and churchyard, and, with the incumbent, for deciding how the church's money is to be spent. The PCC is formally the employer of any paid workers [this would be the SEP Trustees in our context]. The PCC has the right to be consulted about major changes to the forms of worship used in the parish and about the appointment of a new incumbent. It is also consulted about any pastoral scheme affecting the parish.

PCC membership will include one or more members of the deanery synod, who have an important role in linking the parish into the wider structures of the church.

Membership

The Church Representation Rules M15 states the following:

The members of the PCC are –

- (a) every [Anglican] clerk in Holy Orders who is beneficed in or licensed to the parish,
- (b) any [Anglican] clerk in Holy Orders who is authorised to chair meetings of the PCC under [Rule M26](#),

- (c) any [Anglican] deaconess or lay worker licensed to the parish,
- (d) if the parish is in the area of a benefice for which there is a team ministry, every [Anglican] member of the team,
- (e) the churchwardens of the parish,
- (f) any person chosen as a churchwarden of the parish but not yet admitted to office as such,
- (g) any deputy churchwarden who is an ex officio member under a scheme under [Rule M34](#) or [M35](#),
- (h) if the annual meeting decides that one or more of the readers licensed to the parish or to an area including the parish whose names are on the roll of the parish should be members, the reader or readers in question,
- (i) every person whose name is on the roll of the parish and who is a lay member of a deanery synod, a diocesan synod or the General Synod, [*the Partnership is current allowed four representatives on the Deanery Synod*]
- (j) the elected representatives of the laity, with the number being determined under paragraphs (8) and (9) [see below], and
- (k) any clerk in Holy Orders, or any actual communicant aged 16 or over, whom the PCC decides to co-opt as a member, with the number being determined under paragraph (10).

Elected membership numbers: The Church Representation Rules set out the usual algorithm to determine the number of elected members. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting can agree the number of elected members. At the time of writing, the **agreed number of elected members on the Stantonbury and Willen PCC is six**, one from each congregation.

TERM OF OFFICE OF THE PCC

CRR 16 states that members of the PCC "... shall hold office from the conclusion of the annual meeting at which they were elected until the conclusion of the third annual meeting thereafter, one third retiring and being elected each year ... "

That said, a PCC member may resign his/her membership by notice in writing sent or given to the PCC Secretary and the resignation shall take effect on the date specified in the notice or, if no date is specified, on receipt of the note by the PCC Secretary.

More detailed information on membership is set out in the Church Representation Rules:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/church-representation-rules/part-9#sn2>

Mode of Operation

Detail of procedures for the operation of the PCC, including notice of meetings and quoracy, can be found in the Church Representation Rules M23 to M33: ~<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/church-representation-rules/part-9>

The Stantonbury and Willen PCC will meet in person at least once a year and otherwise is expected to conduct most of its business by correspondence (email). Procedures are set out in clause M29 of the Church Representation Rules.

The PCC reports to the Trustees and also provides minutes to the Partnership Leadership Team.

Appendix 6 The Methodist Church Council

The Methodist Church Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD) Volume 2, Book 3, Part 6, section 61 describes the purpose of the Methodist Church Council as follows:

The general oversight of the Local Church shall be undertaken by the Church Council, exercising leadership over the whole field of the church's concern.

In the SEP, this overall role is undertaken by the Partnership Leadership Team with oversight from the Trustees.

As with the Anglican PCC, there may be times when a Methodist-specific decision is required within the SEP. These are most commonly associated with Methodist buildings and so are rare. Thus, a specific SEP Methodist Council is only convened when required. It will comprise the membership below (drawing on the requirements of the CPD section 61 referred to above which allow for an existing Ecumenical Council or equivalent management body to act, with the addition of prescribed Methodist ministers). We also include some Methodist members of the SEP as our PLT does not include elected representatives.

See also <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/governance/cpd/>

Membership

The members of the Partnership Leadership Team (see Appendix 3)

A Circuit Steward, nominated by the Senior Circuit Steward

Methodist Ministers and Stewards as defined by the Methodist CPD at the time (currently listed in clause (4)(i) to (vi) of Standing Order 610)

Those Methodist members of the SEP willing to stand (with the aim of six representatives).

Mode of operation

The Council will be convened for as many meetings as required for the Methodist-specific business at that time.

The Chair of the Council will usually be the Minister appointed by the Milton Keynes Circuit to serve in the SEP. If there is no such Minister, advice should be sought from the Circuit Superintendent Minister.

The Council reports to the Trustees and also provides minutes to the Partnership Leadership Team.

Appendix 7 The Joint Councils

These screenshots are from the Cross and Stable Sharing Agreement, as an example. References to the number of churches involved and therefore members of the relevant Joint Council varies between sharing agreements: St Andrews and Bradwell sharing agreement refers to four churches; St James refers to five churches. Membership of the Joint Council varies accordingly.

Joint Council

4. There shall be a Joint Council of the Three Churches constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Schedule hereto which shall carry out the functions allotted to it by this Agreement

Powers and Duties of Joint Council

5. The Joint Council shall:-

- (a) receive any moneys contributed for the purposes of this Agreement (other than the contributions referred to in clauses 1 and 3 hereof) whether by the Three Churches or by any other person and out of such moneys to provide the Centre with any convenient appurtenances or equipment
- (b) pay all existing and future rates taxes assessments and other outgoings imposed or charged in respect of the Centre
- (c) repair and maintain the Centre and the fixtures furnishings goods and ornaments therein
- (d) reimburse the Board in respect of all sums spent by it in insuring the Centre against loss or damage by fire flood and other risks and special perils normally insured under a comprehensive insurance policy on property of the same nature as the Centre
- (e) be responsible for all other costs of management of the Centre including (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) the cost of heating lighting cleaning and caretaking and the provision of necessary amenities other than amenities (such as books for use in a particular form of service) which are peculiar to one or other of the Three Churches
- (f) to advise those responsible on behalf of the congregations of the Three Churches regarding financial questions and particularly regarding any exceptional expenditure
- (g) to organise or to consider and if thought fit to approve proposals for the raising of such common funds as are to be jointly raised by the congregations acting together
- (h) to settle any questions which may arise regarding the respective times at which the Three Churches are to have the use of the Centre
- (i) generally to facilitate joint action and to settle questions of detail which may arise in the carrying out of this Agreement

The Joint Council

1. The Joint Council shall consist of three members of each of the Three Churches

2. The members of the Joint Council who are members of the Church of England shall be the Incumbent (or a clergyman of the Church of England appointed by the Incumbent) and two lay members appointed from time to time by the P.C.C. who shall hold office so long as the P.C.C. shall determine

3. The members of the Joint Council who are members of the Methodist Church shall be the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit (or his appointed deputy) as Chairman of the Stantonbury Methodist Church Council and two lay members appointed from time to time by the said Methodist Church Council who shall hold office so long as that Council shall determine

4. The members of the Joint Council who are members of the United Reformed Church shall be the Minister in pastoral charge of the Centre or his appointed deputy and two persons (or such other number of persons as may be required to complete the number of members of the Joint Council who are members of the United Reformed Church) appointed from time to time by the Northamptonshire North Bedfordshire and North Buckinghamshire District Council of the United Reformed Church and shall hold office as long as that Council shall determine

5. (1) At its first meeting the Joint Council shall

elect a Chairman and a Vice Chairman from among its members who shall hold office until the conclusion of the first meeting of the Joint Council held after the following Easter

(2) At the first meeting of the Joint Council held after the Easter following its first meeting and in subsequent years at the first meeting of the Joint Council held after Easter the Joint Council shall elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman from among its members who shall hold office until the conclusion of the meeting at which their successors are elected

(3) The Chairman and Vice Chairman shall not be eligible for re-election to their respective offices for the immediately following term

(4) When the Chairman is not available to take the chair the Vice Chairman shall act as Chairman

(5) Should neither the Chairman nor the Vice Chairman be available to take the chair for any meeting then those present shall choose one of their number to be Chairman for that meeting

(6) The quorum at a meeting shall be three or such other number as the Joint Council shall determine but so that no meeting shall be deemed to have a quorum unless at least one member of each of the Three Churches is present

(7) A member may appoint a deputy either generally or for a particular meeting to act in his place at a meeting when he is not present in person. Such a member present by deputy shall be deemed to be present at a meeting and his deputy may at the meeting exercise all the rights which he might have exercised

(8) Every matter shall be determined by the majority of the members of the Joint Council present and voting on the question provided that in case of equality of votes the Chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote

(9) A casual vacancy in the membership of the Joint Council shall not invalidate its proceedings

(10) Subject to the foregoing provisions of this Schedule the Joint Council may from time to time regulate its own procedure and shall cause minutes to be kept of all its meetings

Appendix 8 Congregational Gatherings

Purpose and responsibilities

A regular gathering of members of each congregation to promote involvement in the local congregation and the Partnership, and particularly to:

- i. Discuss strategy and mission at local level
- ii. Discuss local worship arrangements
- iii. Discuss matters on which the Congregational Leadership Team seeks input
- iv. Provide a channel through which local congregation members can contribute to Partnership and wider church matters.

It is expected that these local discussions will feed into Partnership-level decision-making where appropriate, and vice versa.

Membership

All members of the relevant congregation and other regular worshippers in that congregation

Mode of operation

An Annual Congregational Gathering should take place with at least two weeks' notice, to precede and feed into the Partnership-wide Charity Annual General Meeting. Other Congregational Gatherings may be convened by the Congregational Leadership Team as desired through the year.

Appendix 9 Congregational Leadership Teams

Purpose and responsibilities

Local congregations play an active role in strategy and vision and in mission and outreach at both local and partnership-wide levels. This role is exercised primarily through local Leadership Teams which function as local management groups with responsibility delegated from the Partnership Leadership Team.

Congregational Leadership Teams have responsibility for the matters that relate to the day-to-day running of their church building or congregation without consulting the trustees, including but not limited to:

- Local Mission
- Routine maintenance
- Local pastoral care
- Local worship arrangements which do not impact on other churches
- Safeguarding arrangements and updates

Membership

Each Congregational Leadership Team will include:

- the Lead Minister and any other member of the Core Ministry Team assigned to the congregation
- two local leaders fulfilling all officer roles required by the denominations (i.e. the roles of Anglican churchwardens, Baptist Deacons, Methodist Stewards and United Reformed Church Elders)
- an elected local Treasurer
- up to three additional elected members who may be assigned specific roles.

Other members of the congregation may be invited to meetings as needed.

Mode of operation

Congregational Leadership Teams will be responsible for decisions at congregational level but should seek the advice of the congregation.

Appendix 10: Denominational Requirements

This following table indicates the specific elements that would be required by each denomination:

	Anglican	Baptist	Methodist	United Reformed
Governance	Parochial Church Council (PCC) or Bishops Mission Order (BMO)	Church Meeting of all members	Church Council (local) & Circuit meeting (circuit)	
Leadership	Shared between ministers, lay leaders and the PCC/trustees	Shared between ministers and Deacons	Shared between ministers, Church Council and Circuit meeting.	Shared between elders and ministers
Management	One minister must be "incumbent" with responsibility for specific Anglican business	Deacons and Minister(s) are the Managing Trustees of the church	Superintendent or delegated presbyter or deacon or suitably qualified lay person is chair of Managing Trustees. The Managing Trustees for local property are members of Church Council.	Trusteeship rests with the elders and church secretary. The eldership chooses a church secretary from within its number as a senior leadership role in the local church.
Membership	Electoral role renewed every three years	Members must be approved by the Church Meeting. Membership usually subject to periodic review	Annual review of membership	Membership may be reviewed annually by the elders. New members must be approved by the church meeting.
Church Officers	Two Church Wardens for each church building	Usually, Church Secretary and Church Treasurer elected by Church Meeting	A minimum of 2 stewards for each congregation are elected by the Annual Church Meeting.	Elected by annual general meeting.
Reporting	Annual Returns = Finance, Mission and Articles of Enquiry	Annual Returns submitted nationally, annually. Other reports may be requested by Regional Associations	Annual returns through Statistics for Mission, finance and property to Connexion.	Annual returns submitted to Synod.

Finance	Parish Share paid according to formula set by Deanery	Local churches provide stipend for ministry.	Contribution to Circuit assessment calculated by District.	Mission and Ministry Fund paid according to an agreed formula with the Synod.
Connections	Part of Deanery / Diocese/Province Need to elect Deanery Synod members every three years	Church belongs to geographical Regional Association, and national Baptist Union. There is an annual Baptist Assembly, to which the church is entitled to send delegates. Regional Associations hold regular gatherings.	Member of Circuit/ District/ Connexion. Need to elect Circuit representatives to District Synod every three years.	Part Synod and areas within Synod. Elected reps are asked to attend synod twice a year. URC members may have the opportunity to attend the annual national General Assembly.

Appendix 11 Draft Role Description for Team Leader

The Team Leader will:

- a) work with the Chair of Trustees to ensure that there is effective Governance, Leadership and Management.
- b) attend meetings of the trustees, the Partnership Leadership Team and any Standing Committees, working closely with the Chair of Trustees in setting agendas and ensuring that the business is properly conducted.
- c) convene meetings of the Partnership Leadership Team and ensure that these happen according to the terms of reference as laid out in the Operating Procedures.
- d) act as the main ministerial contact for external denominational and ecumenical bodies – unless denominational rules require otherwise.
- e) seek to develop the leadership and ministry of others, and will prioritise the support and nurture of collaborative ministry across the SEP.
- f) meet and work with individuals and groups in the pursuit of the objects and goals of the CIO.
- g) attend meetings for all Team Leaders organised by the Mission Partnership or the Ecumenical Officers Group.

The trustees must ensure that the expectations placed on the Team Leader are realistic and appropriate given the time and resources available and in cognisance of the required time, administrative support and additional expenses.

If no Team Leader is in place, the Core Ministry Team will agree how to share the responsibilities and activities of the role between them.