

HILLVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

1ST MARCH 2017

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

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CHURCH CONSTITUTION

1.0 THE NAME

The church is called HILLVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH. The church is Baptist in policy, is in membership with the Baptist Union of Scotland (Registered Scottish Charity Number SC020153) and subscribes to its Declaration of Principle (see 14.0 below).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The church's objectives are the advancement of the Christian faith primarily in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and also throughout Scotland and the rest of the world by all means consistent with the teachings of the Christian Bible including worship, ministry, mission, church planting, prayer, witness, education, community service and the support of agencies and individuals and other charitable organisations involved in Christian missionary work and the relief of hardship or other social needs.

3.0 GOVERNANCE

The church is congregational in its form of government. That is, important matters are decided by a vote of the membership, such as;

- the appointment of pastoral leaders and elders,
- changes to the constitution,
- matters of church discipline.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the church comprises full membership and associate membership. By joining the church, members ascribe to the Statement of Faith and the Members Covenant.

4.1 Full Membership

Full membership is available to persons professing a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and who:

- have been baptised by immersion as believers into His name. This is the practice of Hillview Community Church, or
- have been baptised by water pouring because they cannot on account of age or disability be baptised by immersion, or
- on account of age or disability cannot be baptised by immersion or water pouring, or
- have already undergone a water pouring baptism after believing and they maintain a conviction that baptism is only appropriate after they have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

4.2 Associate Membership

Associate membership is available to persons professing a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and who have never been baptised as a believer.

Associate Members may vote on all matters other than those relating to:

- changes to the Constitution
- the appointment of pastoral leaders and elders
- the church discipline of a member.

4.3 Receiving New Members

- In the first instance, a prospective applicant should make their interest known to one of the elders.
- Applicants are asked to complete a Membership Application Form as a basis for a guided discussion with the elders.
- The application for membership is communicated to members.

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- After a period of at least two weeks, two elders meet with the applicant and discuss their application, explore opportunities to serve the church and answer any pertinent questions.
- If the applicant is eligible for membership, the elders communicate their recommendation that the applicant be welcomed into membership on the following or next convenient, Sunday morning.

4.4 Member Records

The Elders maintain a record of the names of the members, showing whether they are full or associate members.

The elders may remove a member's name from the record if:

- that person moves away from the area without requesting that their membership is retained; or
- they notify the elders in writing of their desire to withdraw membership; or
- the church so votes as part of a church discipline process under the leadership of the elders.

On being removed from the record, that person ceases to be a member.

5.0 CHURCH POWERS

5.1 Pursuing Objectives

In pursuance of the objectives set out in clause. 2, the church has the following powers:-

- To carry on any other activities which further any of the objectives,
- To purchase, take on lease, hire, or otherwise acquire, any property or rights which are suitable for the church's activities,
- To sell, let, hire out, license, or otherwise dispose of, all or any part of the property and rights of the church,
- To borrow money, and to give security in support of any such borrowings by the church,
- To employ such staff as are considered appropriate for the proper conduct of the church activities, and to make reasonable provision for the payment of pension and/or other benefits for members of staff, ex-members of staff and their dependents,
- To engage such consultants and advisers as are considered appropriate from time to time,
- To invest any funds which are not immediately required for the church's activities in such investments as may be considered appropriate (and to dispose of, and vary, such investments),
- To establish and/or support any other charitable body, and to make donations for any charitable purpose falling within the objectives,
- To take such steps as may be deemed appropriate for the purpose of raising funds for the church's activities,
- To do anything which may be incidental or conducive to the furtherance of any of the objectives.

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6.0 CHURCH LEADERSHIP - ELDERS

Eligible (see 6.2) PASTORS are elders by their vocation and are elected by the church when it votes to proceed to make them an offer of employment (see 9.5).

The church also appoints eligible members (see 6.2) by election (see 6.5), to act as lay elders.

6.1 Elders Responsibilities

The elders;

- are the Office-Bearers of the church,
- are the church Trustees,
- appoint, support and oversee members as Service or Ministry Leaders accountable to the elders,
- ensure church practices such as, preaching, communion and baptism are maintained,
- elect a chairman.

6.2 Eligibility and Calling

Men who are full members and who meet the qualifications for an elder, as set down in 1 Timothy 3.1-7 and Titus 1.6-9, and who give full assent to the Statement of Faith are eligible for nomination as an elder.

A potential call to eldership can be identified, when an eligible man is demonstrating a commitment to positively advance the church in the direction of its objectives, vision and values.

6.3 Tenure – other than pastors

Members appointed as elders by election, are elected for a period of three years and thereafter are eligible for re-election every three years.

A member elected as an elder, ceases to be an elder if:

- they resign, or
- after their 3 year tenure they do not submit their name for re-election, or
- having submitted their name for re-election, they are not successful, or
- a motion of no confidence in them is passed by a simple majority of those members voting at a church meeting.

6.4 Annual Report

The elders must report at the AGM whether they consider the church leadership needs to be strengthened by the appointment of new elders. Factors to be considered include:

- Member recommendations. Members are encouraged to identify potential elders at any time throughout the year and communicate if they feel someone should be considered,
- Elder recommendations. Whether any member of the church is recognised by the elders as having the required qualities that could serve in church leadership,
- The number of elders currently leading the church, taking into account elder resignations and the number of elders completing their tenure and not seeking re-election,

The elders must report as follows:

- if/when an elder's tenure will expire in the coming year, thus triggering an elder re-election,

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- if/when any other elder election is likely to be initiated.

6.5 Elder Elections

Elder elections are initiated in the following circumstances:

- At any time when the elders consider the leadership can be strengthened.
- When an elder's 3 year tenure is over and they agree to submit to the church for re-election,
- As a result of the elders annual report.
- If the number of elders in the leadership team falls below three.

6.5.1. Election Process

When an elder election has been initiated, if the elders are satisfied that a person is eligible and suitable for the role, and that they are willing to serve as an elder, their name is placed on a ballot paper.

If there are less than three serving elders at the time, all those eligible and willing to serve must be placed on the ballot paper.

The election of Elders is conducted by secret ballot with each full member aged 16 years and over being entitled to vote. A candidate is elected as an elder if at least 75% of those voting approve his election and they accept the call.

7.0 CHURCH MEETINGS

7.1 Members' Meetings

Members' meetings may be called at the discretion of the elders or at the request of members, the chairman of elders or his delegate, presiding. The scheduled date of a members' meeting must be published at least 4 weeks prior to the meeting. Members may submit proposed items to be included in members' meeting agenda, by giving the elders at least two weeks' notice in writing.

7.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM is held no later than 31st May and is for members only. The date of the AGM must be publicised at least 6 weeks prior to the meeting.

The agenda must be communicated at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Members may propose items to be included in the AGM agenda. Proposals must be submitted in writing and be received by the elders at least 4 weeks before the meeting.

8.0 CHURCH ACCOUNTS

8.1 Disbursements

No part of the income or property of the church must be paid or transferred (either directly or indirectly) other than in pursuance of the church's charitable purposes, either in the course of the church's existence or on dissolution. The expression "charitable purpose" means a charitable purpose under Section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act, 2005 which is also regarded as a charitable purpose in relation to the Taxes Acts.

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8.2 Remuneration to a Trustee

Any remuneration paid to a Church Trustee must satisfy the criteria laid down in Section 67 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act, 2005 or any other legislation enacted thereafter.

8.3 The financial year

The financial year ends on 31st May. All church accounts must be examined after the financial year end by a qualified Independent Examiner appointed by the church.

8.4 Financial Statement

A financial statement is prepared annually and is made available to members.

9.0 RECRUITMENT

Allocation of finance for potential staffing changes should be approved by the church. If no provision has already been made, the recruitment teams (see below) should incorporate “allocation of finance” as the first step of the recruitment processes outlined below.

9.1 Lead Pastors

The elders present a proposed vacancy committee comprising the elders, ministry leader representatives and member representatives for approval by the membership.

The vacancy committee is responsible for implementing the recruitment process.

The elders appoint a chairman responsible for chairing vacancy committee meetings and church meetings relating to the recruitment process.

9.2 Pastors (other than Lead Pastor)

If the number of elders in the leadership team consists of more than three elders, they are responsible for implementing the recruitment process. The elders may seek the assistance of member representatives, at their discretion.

If the leadership team consists of less than four elders, a vacancy committee as in section 9.1 above is responsible for implementing the recruitment process.

9.3 Staff (other than pastors)

The elders are responsible for the appointment of non-pastoral staff.

9.4 Recruitment Process – Pastors

Where a need for a Pastor has been identified, either by vacancy or by the creation of a new post; the relevant recruitment team (vacancy committee in s.9.1 or elders in s.9.2) communicate the following to the church:

- a role description,
- details of how widely the role is to be communicated,
- a deadline for applications,
- the procedure to be followed by interested applicants.

Vetting applications and discussions/interviews with relevant parties are carried out by the recruitment team. They may, at their discretion, arrange for applicants to engage with other church members or activities, depending on the position being filled.

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When the recruitment team are satisfied they have identified the applicant they want to recommend to the church, they must notify the church at least two weeks before implementing the Approval to proceed -Voting process.

9.5 Approval to proceed - Voting

The approval to make an offer to a new Pastor is by secret ballot with each full member aged 16 years and over being entitled to vote. The recruitment team is approved to make an offer if the candidate receives the support of at least 75% of those voting.

9.6 Pastor – Tenure

A Pastor ceases to be an elder and ceases to be employed by the church if their contract of employment is terminated as a result of:

- the terms of their employment contract, or
- their retiral, or
- their resignation, or
- a church discipline process, or
- their removal from office by a motion of no confidence, passed by a simple majority of those members voting at a church meeting.

9.6.1. Removal of a Pastor by a motion of no confidence - Voting

Approval to remove a pastor by a church vote requires a simple majority of members voting, in a vote of no confidence at a church meeting arranged solely to discuss and vote on the matter

10.0 HERITABLE PROPERTIES

All heritable properties of the church are held for the church by the Office-Bearers of the church (i.e. the elders in post at the time).

11.0 THE CONSTITUTION

11.1 Administrative Rules

Administrative rules for the management of its affairs can be made and included as an amending addendum to the constitution.

11.2 Amendments to the Constitution

Any amendment to the constitution requires endorsement by a vote of two-thirds of Full members at a Members Meeting called for the purpose by intimation from the pulpit on two preceding Sundays at which the proposed amendment is presented for consideration.

The proposed amendment must be made available to the members by hard copy on such Sundays or by letter or email sent to each member.

The updated constitution, incorporating the amendment/addendum must be made available to the members by email or by letter sent to each member.

12.0 CHURCH DISSOLUTION

12.1 Winding Up

In the event of the church being dissolved or otherwise ceasing to exist, the Elders remain in office as trustees and are responsible for the winding up of the church affairs.

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13.0 STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in...

- The one true God who lives eternally in three persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.
- The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God—fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.
- The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.
- The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ—born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.
- The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.
- The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.
- The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
- The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers—given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
- The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

14.0 BAPTIST DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

That the Lord Jesus Christ our God and Saviour is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried and rose again the third day.

That it is the duty of every disciple to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.