

ST. ANDREW'S WITH CASTLE GATE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CHURCH MEETING, ELDERS & ELDERS' COUNCIL

PREAMBLE

At a specially convened meeting held on 23rd May 2018 the Church Meeting resolved to adopt the URC constitution. The main consequence of this decision is the transfer of the responsibility of trusteeship from the Management Committee to an Elders' Council; furthermore, it also agreed that Terms of Reference should be prepared.

This document sets out in detail Terms of Reference for the operation of the future governance of St. Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church. It has been completed in the context of the Church Meeting as the decision-making body of the Church.

In addition to establishing an Elders' Council and outlining how this relates to Church Meeting, the new governance arrangements include the establishment of Sub Groups supporting the work of and reporting to the Elders' Council (and Church Meeting as appropriate). The Sub Groups have been charged with creating terms of reference for their areas of responsibility and having these ready to share with Church Meeting by the Church AGM in 2020.

The St. Andrew's with Castle Gate United Reformed Church Constitution is available to all members of the church and can be found on the web-site or, on request, from the church secretary. Any questions about the document should be addressed to the church secretary (secretary@standrewswithcastlegate.org.uk).

This document was adopted by Church Meeting on Sunday 20th January 2019.

It should be reviewed at or before the Church AGM in 2020.

ST. ANDREW'S WITH CASTLE GATE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE – CHURCH MEETING

1. THE CHURCH MEETING

The Church Meeting is one of the principal Councils of the United Reformed Church and its functions are described in the Manual of the United Reformed Church, Section B part 2, which sets out the composition and functions of the Councils of the Church.

2. COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH MEETING AS SET OUT IN THE URC MANUALⁱ

Church Meeting

2.(1) The Church Meeting of the Local Church shall consist of those persons who have been admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of the United Reformed Church and whose names are included on the membership roll of such Local Church. The Church Meeting may invite other persons who regularly worship with the Local Church but whose names are not on the membership roll to attend and speak at its meetings on particular occasions but no such person shall have the right to vote. In the Church Meeting which shall meet at least once a quarter and at which the minister or one of the ministers shall normally preside, the members have opportunity through discussion, responsible decision and care for one another, to strengthen each other's faith and to foster the life, work and mission of the Church.

Functions:

Concerning the outgoing of the Church:

- (i) to further the Church's mission in the locality;*
- (ii) to develop local ecumenical relationships;*
- (iii) to further the Church's compassionate ministry in the locality and throughout the world;*
- (iv) to consider and support the wider work of the Church at home and abroad;*
- (v) to consider public questions in relation to the Christian faith;*
- (vi) to bring concerns for consideration by the Elders' Council and wider councils of the church.*

Concerning the nurture of the fellowship:

- (vii) to call a minister or church related community worker (CRCW) with the concurrence of the synod(s);*
- (viii) to elect elders and officers, determining their number and period of service, and representatives to wider councils;*

(ix) to admit and transfer members, to maintain standards of membership, and to suspend or remove names from the membership roll, always on advice from the elders' meeting;

(x) to consider, always on advice from the elders' meeting, any application for recognition as a candidate for the ministry or for service as a CRCW and to transmit it, if approved, to the synod;

(xi) to adopt financial reports;

(xii) to receive reports and proposals from the elders' meeting, District Council, synod and General Assembly and to authorise appropriate action;

(xiii) on the recommendation of the elders' meeting to make or provide for the making of arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the Local Church.

And generally:

(xiv) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

3. PROCEDURE FOR THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEETING AND AGM AT ST. ANDREW'S WITH CASTLE GATE URC

- 1.1. Members wishing to introduce business must notify the Church Secretary prior to the Meeting or at the beginning of the Meeting at the chairman's discretion.
- 1.2. Church Meeting has agreed not to adopt a fixed Quorum. However, if those present recognise that attendance on a particular occasion means that the meeting is not representative of the membership, then decisions should be deferred. It has been agreed that the Church Meeting should consider this matter before taking significant decisions.
- 1.3. In the absence of the minister or interim moderator, one of the Elders, as appointed by the meeting, may preside.
- 1.4. Dates for ordinary Church Meetings planned for a year will normally be agreed at or before the last Church Meeting of the previous calendar year. Extra-ordinary Church Meetings may only be called after a notice period of at least fourteen days including notice at worship on two Sundays.
- 1.5. A statement of Church Accounts and verification in accordance with applicable law shall be submitted to the members for approval at the Church Annual General Meeting.
- 1.6. Written reports shall be presented by all church organisations and representatives on outside bodies at least annually.
- 1.7. The names of all officers of the church organisations and of Church representatives on outside organisations shall be submitted for ratification at least annually.
- 1.8. At least fourteen days' notice should be given of proposed changes to Terms of Reference or Standing Orders or to a proposal to rescind the Constitution.

ST. ANDREW'S WITH CASTLE GATE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE – ELDERS AND ELDERS' COUNCIL

1. ELDERS

- 1.1. The Eldership of the Church shall consist of elders elected by the Church Meeting and inducted to serve the congregation of St. Andrew's with Castle Gate. All members of the Church may be eligible for service as an elder, providing they have been on the Church Roll for at least one year or that they have held office as an elder in another church of the URC and have been commended on this basis. All the elders are members of a team and are responsible for the delivery of the Mission of St. Andrew's with Castle Gate.
- 1.2. The office of elder is one of vital importance in the United Reformed Church. Elders are the trusted and honoured representatives of their fellow church members and are partners with the minister in the leadership and pastoral care of the congregation. They also share with the minister in roles within the wider Councils of the Church. Being an elder means a commitment of time, energy and a sharing and giving of self. Some are gifted in one way, others in another.
- 1.3. Elders in the United Reformed Church are ordained for life and, at St. Andrew's with Castle Gate, are inducted to serve as Pastoral Elders. They may also be elected and inducted to serve as members of the Elders' Council.

2. PASTORAL ELDERS

- 2.1. The whole eldership at St. Andrew's with Castle Gate embodies the church's continuity of wisdom and witness in Christian discipleship. Each elder is normally entrusted with a 'district' of St. Andrew's with Castle Gate congregants for whom they are to be diligent in providing pastoral care.
- 2.2. The United Reformed Church has established guidelines for the conduct and behaviour for elders (URC General Assembly 2012, Appendix 3c: pp 219 - 220).
- 2.3. All elders are expected to participate in:
 - 2.3.1. Regular worship on Sundays and festivals, and regular private devotions;
 - 2.3.2. Church Meetings;
 - 2.3.3. Encouraging others to attend and participate in worship;
 - 2.3.4. The meeting which precedes the monthly morning Communion Service;
 - 2.3.5. An annual Elders' Conference;
 - 2.3.6. Sunday duties as they are able, allocated by rota (Vestry, Communion, Door, Welcoming etc).

3. ELDERS' COUNCIL

- 3.1. The Elders' Council shall normally comprise a maximum 12 elders plus church officers comprising the Minister or Interim Moderator, Church Secretary, the Treasurer, and other officers elected by the Church Meeting. The elders serving on the council will undertake this role in addition to that of Pastoral Elder.

- 3.2. The Elders' Council fulfils the function of the Elders' Meeting in accordance with the United Reformed Church Manual and assumes the role of charity trustees of the St. Andrew's with Castle Gate Nottingham United Reformed Church Charity.
- 3.3. The trustees are required to ensure the Church:
 - 3.3.1. is carrying out its purposes for the public good;
 - 3.3.2. complies with the governing document and the law.
 - 3.3.3. The Trustees must:
 - 3.3.3.1. act in the charity's best interests;
 - 3.3.3.2. manage the charity's resources responsibly;
 - 3.3.3.3. act with reasonable care and skill;
 - 3.3.3.4. ensure the charity is accountable.

4. ELDERS ELECTED TO SERVE ON THE ELDERS' COUNCIL

- 4.1. Each elder elected to the Elders' Council shall serve for three years and on retirement shall be eligible for re-election for a further three years, after which the Elder must take one year's sabbatical.ⁱⁱ
- 4.2. The Elders' Council will be chaired by the Minister failing which the Interim Moderator, or another elder nominated by the meeting.
- 4.3. Meetings will be conducted under the standing orders in Section 7.

5. FUNCTIONS OF THE ELDERS' COUNCIL

The functions of the Elders' Meeting as set out in the Manual of the United Reformed Church Part B, section 2.(2)ⁱⁱⁱ are as follows:

- 5.1. *(i) to foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter - church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole Church;*
- (ii) to see that public worship is regularly offered and the sacraments are duly administered, and generally to promote the welfare of the congregation;*
- (iii) to ensure pastoral care of the congregation, in which the minister is joined by elders having particular responsibility for groups of members;*
- (iv) to nominate from among its members a Church secretary (or secretaries), to be elected by the Church Meeting, to serve both the Church Meeting and the elders' meeting;*
- (v) to arrange for pulpit supply in a vacancy;*
- (vi) to keep the roll of members (see paragraph 2 (1)) and (as an aid to the discharge of the congregation's pastoral and evangelistic responsibility) lists of names of adherents and children attached to the congregation, and in consultation with the Church Meeting to maintain standards of membership and to advise on the admission of members on profession of faith and by transfer, on the suspension of members, and on the removal of names from the roll;*

(vii) to be responsible for the institution and oversight of work among children and young people and of all organisations within the congregation;

(viii) to call for the election of elders and advise on the number required;

(ix) to consider the suitability of any applicant for recognition as a candidate for the ministry or for service as a CRCW and to advise the Church Meeting about its recommendation to the synod;

(x) to recommend to the Church Meeting arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the Local Church;

(xi) to act on behalf of the Church Meeting and bring concerns to the wider councils of the United Reformed Church;

(xii) to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the Church.

In respect of paragraph xii above, the following additional specific functions and responsibilities are identified:

- 5.2. to establish arrangements to ensure proper pastoral care for the minister;
- 5.3. to ensure representation at the East Midlands Synod (EMS) meetings;
- 5.4. to liaise with EMS Pastoral Group regarding the provision of ministry for our church;
- 5.5. to encourage support and establish arrangements as a Resource Church for the South Nottinghamshire Area;
- 5.6. to ensure worship leader supply;
- 5.7. to seek to ensure effective communication with members and others by: reviewing and developing communication strategies; making good use of and helping groups within the Church make effective use of the newsletter, website, social media, posters and displays and other means of communication;
- 5.8. to establish Sub Groups (each to include at least one member of the Elders' Council) to support its work, delegating powers to them as and while it sees fit;
- 5.9. to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of Charity Trustees (excepting individuals legally ineligible to serve in that capacity) of the St. Andrew's with Castle Gate Nottingham United Reformed Church Charity;
- 5.10. to ensure that an Annual Report is prepared;
- 5.11. to approve the accounts and Annual Report;
- 5.12. to submit the accounts and Annual Report to the Charity Commission and inform it of any changes of trustees;
- 5.13. to nominate a Treasurer for election by the Church Meeting;
- 5.14. to be the Data Controller for the church;

- 5.15. to keep and maintain essential policies and procedures for the proper running and administration of the church, including those legally required and agreed best practice including
 - 5.15.1. an up to date Health and Safety Policy;
 - 5.15.2. an up to date Safeguarding Policy for children and vulnerable adults;
 - 5.15.3. policies and procedures to comply with the data protection legislation;
- 5.16. to employ or contract with persons to carry out such things as may be necessary for the operation and functioning of the church.

6. ELECTIONS

Elections of Elders, elections to the Elders' Council and election of Church Officers will normally take place at the Church Annual General Meeting, but vacancies may be filled at quarterly or other Church Meetings.

6.1. Election as Pastoral Elder

- 6.1.1. From time to time, the Elders' Council or Church Meeting may decide that further Pastoral Elders are needed to ensure the appropriate level of pastoral care for members of the congregation and will make a recommendation to Church Meeting giving an indication of the number of elders needed. The Church Meeting will act by resolution to hold an election of Pastoral Elders.
- 6.1.2. Church Members will be invited to make recommendations of members of the church to become Pastoral Elders, based on their knowledge of the individuals. Members are asked not to seek people's permission to nominate them and not discuss nominations with others to avoid possible subsequent embarrassment or hurt. There should be a minimum of 6 weeks for the nomination process. Those nominations should be made in confidence to the Minister or Church Secretary.
- 6.1.3. The names of members receiving wide support across the congregation will be shared with the Elders' Council. The Minister, Church Secretary or elder designated by the Elders' Council, will approach the members who have recommendations showing the widest support across the congregation to see if they are willing to stand for election to the Eldership.
- 6.1.4. The Elders' Council will agree the names of those to be brought to Church Meeting for election. The names should be made available to the congregation at least two Sundays prior to the Church Meeting at which the election will take place.
- 6.1.5. The Church Meeting may, if it so agrees unanimously, decide to elect the candidates for the Eldership *en bloc* otherwise the elections should proceed by secret ballot.

6.2. Election to the Elders' Council

- 6.2.1. The Church Secretary will advise elders on the Elders' Council approaching the end of their three-year term of office and will establish, from those who have served one term, if they wish to seek re-election for a second term. The Church Secretary will inform the Elders' Council of the number of vacancies falling on the date of the forthcoming church AGM.
- 6.2.2. Members are invited to make nominations of Pastoral Elders to become members of the Elders' Council, based on their knowledge of the individuals. Members are asked not to seek any nominee's permission and not to discuss nominations with others to avoid possible subsequent embarrassment or hurt. There should be a minimum of 6 weeks for the nomination process that will be communicated in the morning worship notices and in the Newsletter. Nominations should be made in confidence in writing and given to the Minister or Church Secretary.
- 6.2.3. The names of those receiving two or more nominations will be brought to the Elders' Council. The Minister, Church Secretary or elder designated by the Elders' Council will approach those so nominated to see if they are willing to stand for election.
- 6.2.4. Election to the Elders' Council at church meeting will normally proceed by secret ballot. Voting papers with the names of the nominees shall be distributed at the meeting at which the election is to take place. If there are more nominees than open positions, there will be two ballots: the first will be used to select (on a first-past-the-post basis) which nominees will be considered for the positions; the second ballot will elect the nominees selected. If there are fewer candidates than required, or exactly the same number, Church Meeting (if it so agrees unanimously) may decide to elect the candidates *en bloc*.
- 6.2.5. A member of the Elders' Council who does not attend at three consecutive ordinary meetings of the committee without giving an acceptable reason to the Council, will be deemed to have retired but may seek re-election at a subsequent Church Meeting.

7. PROCEDURE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE ELDERS' COUNCIL MEETINGS

7.1. Meetings

Normally meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month. All meetings are to be called by giving notice during morning worship and providing an agenda that shall include the date, time and location of the meeting and schedule of the items of business. Meetings are open meetings, although visitors will not be allowed to be present during discussions of confidential matters.

7.2. Quorum and taking decisions

To be quorate the meeting must have a minimum of one-third of the total number of charity trustees plus one, e.g. 10 charity trustees will have a quorum of 4. If a meeting does not have a quorum, it cannot make any decisions but may make recommendations for consideration at a forthcoming meeting.

Decisions are normally made by consensus but may be made by majority voting when consensus is not achieved. The number of votes needed for different types of decisions will normally be achieved by consensus. Church Meeting will be advised when resolutions from Elders' Council have not been agreed unanimously.

7.3. Chair

The Elders' Council will be chaired by the Minister or in his/her absence or during an interregnum, a duly appointed Interim Moderator, or another elder nominated by the meeting.

7.4. Urgent Business

If a matter needs to be decided before the next scheduled meeting, an Emergency Meeting may be called after Sunday Worship to consider single issues. If this is not practical, then a decision about business of an urgent nature may be made by the Church Secretaries and Minister having circulated details about the matter to all members of the Council (normally by group email) and receiving the confirmed support of at least half of the charity trustees for the suggested course of action. The decision will be reported to Council members as soon as possible (again by group email) with all decisions to be recorded in the minutes of the following meeting.

7.5. Conflict of interest

At the beginning of a meeting every charity trustee will declare any private interest which he or she has^{iv} in an agenda item to be discussed, and must do this before debate of any such item.

Trustees may not vote on resolutions concerning matters in which they or members of their direct family have a pecuniary interest. The meeting will consider whether it is appropriate for a member of the Council to be present when a matter in which they have such an interest is discussed.

7.6. Keeping Minutes

Accurate minutes are to be kept of all meetings. The minutes do not need to be a word-for-word record but need to record information that is important to the charity. It should be noted that the formal minutes, once approved and signed as an accurate record by the chairman, form the only legal record of the business of the meeting. An appropriate summary of the minutes is shared with the congregation through the newsletter and all Elders of the church may receive a full copy of the minutes.

7.7. Payments to trustees

Any member of the Elders' Council engaged in any profession or business shall be entitled to be paid all usual professional or proper charges for business transacted, time expended or acts done by him/her or any partner of him/her in connection with the St. Andrew's with Castle Gate Nottingham United Reformed Church Charity including acts which a trustee not being in any profession or business could have done personally, subject to any necessary prior approval of the Charity Commission.

ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

Officers serve for a three-year term of office after which they may be eligible for re-election.

Church Secretary and Assistant Church Secretaries

The Church Secretary is elected by the Church Meeting from amongst the elders of the church. Normally, the elders will make a recommendation to Church Meeting from amongst their number, although this is not a requirement in the United Reformed Church Manual. The Assistant Church Secretaries are appointed in the same way as the Church Secretary.

Church Treasurer

The Church Secretary will notify the Church of the need for an election to the post. The Elders' Council will invite nominations, taking advice from the Finance & Buildings Sub Group or other relevant Sub Group. The Elders' Council will consider all nominations and advice received before making a recommendation to Church Meeting, normally the AGM.

Other officers

The Elders' Council will nominate Sub Group Convenors, a Buildings Convenor, a Domestic Convenor and a Convenor for the Finance Committee as appropriate. These officers will be elected by Church Meeting, normally the AGM.

SUB-GROUPS

Membership of Sub Groups other than the Pastoral Sub Group is open to any member of the congregation and is not restricted to members of the church. These groups and our Sunday Duty Teams provide opportunities for members of the congregation to involve themselves more fully in the work of the church and offer their time, skills and abilities to further its mission. The Elders' Council will ensure that members of the congregation are reminded regularly of these opportunities and encourage them to volunteer to contribute by becoming members of a Sub Group and/or Sunday Duty Team.

The Pastoral Sub Group will comprise a small group of Elders, as elected by the Elders' Council. The Minister and Church Secretary are *ex-officio* members of all Sub Groups.

ⁱ Quoted from the URC Manual Section B as published on the URC website December 2018 and as last revised 16.05.2017

ⁱⁱ If there are fewer nominations than vacancies for the Elders' Council, Church Meeting may re-elect a member due to take a year's sabbatical. This election should normally be for a term of one year. Should this situation arise over a number of years, Church Meeting may also consider whether to reduce the number of members serving on the Elders' Council.

ⁱⁱⁱ Quoted from the URC Manual Section B as published on the URC website December 2018 and as last revised 16.05.2017

^{iv} This will include such interests of a trustee's spouse, dependents or close family.