

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

and

CHURCH RULES

WEM BAPTIST CHURCH
CONSTITUTION

We hereby certify this to be the Constitution adopted by the Members of Wem Baptist Church at a meeting of the Members held on the 14th March 2005 at Wem Baptist Church and amended at a meeting of the Members held on the 23rd November 2010 at Wem Baptist Church and amended at a meeting of the Members held on 4th March 2019 at Wem Baptist Church and amended at a meeting of the Members held on the 20th September 2022 at Wem Baptist Church.

Chairman: .....

Secretary: .....

1 DEFINITIONS

a) "Basis of Faith" shall mean the basis of faith of FIEC as adopted from time to time.

b) "the Church" shall mean the congregation established for the purposes set out in Clause 3 whose members are admitted pursuant to Clause 4 together with the property of the congregation.

c) "Church Rules" shall mean the rules governing the internal practices of the Church as may from time to time be adopted by the members of the Church. The rules must be consistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

d) "FIEC" shall mean The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, registered charity number 263354.

e) References to Clauses and Schedules are references to Clauses and Schedules within this Constitution.

f) References to legislation include all amendments, replacements or re-enactments and includes all regulations, determinations and directions made or given under it.

2 NAME

The Church shall be known as Wem Baptist Church.

3 PURPOSES

The purposes of the Church shall be: -

a) the advancement of the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith primarily but not exclusively within Wem and the surrounding neighbourhood; and

b) such other charitable purposes as shall, in the opinion of the members of the Church in general meeting further the work of the Church.

4 MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Church shall be open to such persons who profess the Christian faith in accordance with the Basis of Faith and have satisfied such other requirements as have been specified in the Church Rules.

The Managing Trustees must ensure that an accurate register of members is maintained at all times in accordance with the provisions contained in the Church Rules.

5 HOLDING TRUSTEE

a) If a Holding Trustee is required it is usually to be The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Limited subject to the acceptance by The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Limited of such appointment. However, if it is the wish of the members of the Church or if, for any reason, The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Limited is unwilling or unable to act as Holding Trustee then the Managing Trustees may make arrangements for the appointment of such alternative Holding Trustee as they shall think fit.

b) Subject to the approval of the members of the Church (by a simple majority at a properly convened members' meeting) the Managing Trustees shall have power to terminate the appointment of any Holding Trustee and to appoint such alternative Holding Trustee as they shall think fit.

c) i. The function of the Holding Trustee is to hold the legal title of real property and investments belonging to the Church and to ensure that the same is used only in furtherance of the purposes of the Church as set out in Clause 3.

ii. The Holding Trustee must act in accordance with all lawful instructions of the Managing Trustees unless to do so would give rise to a breach of trust.

iii. Unless the Holding Trustee concurs with any act involving a breach of trust it will not be liable for any act or default on the part of the Managing Trustees or any of them

d) The property listed in Schedule 1 to this Constitution is held by the Holding Trustee upon special trusts.

e) Subject to Clause 5(d), the Holding Trustee shall, in relation to any land which it holds, have all of the powers which would be available to it as if it were the absolute owner of such land.

f) The Managing Trustees shall pay to the Holding Trustee such sums of money as are required by the Holding Trustee in order to give effect to the lawful instructions of the Managing Trustees.

6 MANAGING TRUSTEES

The Managing Trustees of the Church are the persons appointed as church officers in accordance with the Church Rules provided that a person may not be appointed as a Managing Trustee if he is disqualified from being a trustee of any charity under section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 (as explained in Schedule 2) or any statutory extension, modification, amendment or re-enactment of that statute or under any regulations or orders made under it unless such disqualification has been waived by the Charity Commission. There shall be not less than 3 Managing Trustees.

Whenever a new Managing Trustee is appointed (s)he shall be provided with a copy of:

a) the latest annual report and accounts of the Church;

b) this Constitution and Church Rules;

c) any other relevant documentation relating to the property of the Church, including, in particular, details of any special trusts the property of which is held for special purposes of the Church by the Holding Trustee in accordance with Clause 5(e).

7 POWERS OF THE MANAGING TRUSTEES

In addition to any other powers they may have the Managing Trustees shall, in furtherance of the purposes set out in Clause 3 but no further, have the following powers:

a) Staff and Volunteers

i. subject to Clause 10, to employ staff or engage consultants and advisers who shall not be Managing Trustees on such terms as the Managing Trustees think fit and to provide pensions to staff, their relatives and dependents;

ii. to recruit or assist in recruiting and managing voluntary workers;

b) Property

i. to acquire, deal with and dispose of any real or personal property subject to Section 36 Charities Act 1993;

ii. to accept any real or personal property for special purposes of the Church;

c) Holding Trustee

i. subject to the approval of the members of the Church, to appoint a Holding Trustee to hold land and investments belonging to the Church and property subject to trusts held for the special purposes of the Church and, subject to the approval of the members of the Church, to remove any Holding Trustee so appointed.

d) Borrowing

i. to borrow and, subject to Section 38 Charities Act 1993, give security for loans;

e) Grants and Loans

i. to make grants, donations or loans, to give guarantees and to give security for those guarantees;

f) Fund Raising

i. to raise funds, to invite and receive contributions provided that the Managing Trustees shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activity;

g) Publicity

i. to hold, conduct or promote meetings, conferences, lectures, exhibitions or training courses and to disseminate information to publicise the work of the Church and other organisations operating in similar fields;

h) Research

i. to promote or carry out research and publish the results of it;

i) Contracts

i. to co-operate with and enter into contracts with any person;

j) Bank or Building Society accounts

i. to draw, make, accept, endorse, discount, execute and issue bills, cheques and other instruments and to operate bank or building society accounts in the name of the Church;

k) Investments

i. to invest the money of the Church in any investments, shares, securities or property (real or personal) of any nature (including investments involving liability and those not producing income) and in any location that the Managing Trustees decide;

l) Insurance

i. to insure the assets of the Church to such amount and on such terms as the Managing Trustees decide, to pay premiums out of income or capital and to use any insurance proceeds as the Managing Trustees decide (without necessarily having to restore the asset

unless it is a requirement of a special trust);

ii. to insure and to indemnify employees and voluntary workers from and against all risks incurred in the proper performance of their duties;

iii. to take out insurance to protect the Church and property and those who use premises owned by or let or hired to the Church;

iv. to take out indemnity insurance to cover the liability of the Managing Trustees for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the Church but this insurance may not extend to:

i. any claim arising from any act or omission which a Managing Trustee knew was a breach of duty or breach of trust or which was committed by a Managing Trustee in reckless disregard of whether it was a breach of duty or breach of trust or not; or

ii. the costs of an unsuccessful defence to a criminal prosecution brought against a Managing Trustee in his capacity as a Managing Trustee of the Church.

m) Other Organisations

i. to establish, promote, assist or support (financially or otherwise) any charitable trusts, charitable companies, charitable industrial and charitable provident societies, charitable associations or charitable institutions whose purposes include any of the purposes of the Church;

ii. to co-operate or join with any charity, voluntary body or public or statutory authority or any other organisation in any location whatsoever in furthering the purposes of the Church or allied charitable purposes, to exchange information and advice and to undertake joint activities with them;

iii. to affiliate to, register with, subscribe to or join any organisation whose purposes promote, support or are in sympathy with the purposes of the church;

n) Reserves

i. in accordance with an agreed policy, to accumulate income in order to set aside funds for special purposes or as reserves against future expenditure for such period not exceeding that permitted by law;

o) General

i. to make in consultation and with the approval of the members of the Church in general meeting rules and regulations consistent with this Constitution for the management of the Church and to agree the charitable purposes of the Church in accordance with Clause 3(b);

ii. to do anything else within the law which promotes or helps to promote the purposes of the Church.

8 DUTY OF CARE AND EXTENT OF LIABILITY

a) When exercising any power in administering or managing the Church each of the Managing Trustees must use the level of care and skill that is reasonable in the circumstances, taking into account any special knowledge or experience that he/she has or claims to have ("the duty of care").

b) No Managing Trustee and no-one exercising any powers or responsibilities that have been delegated by the Managing Trustees shall be liable for any act or failure to act unless, in acting or failing to act, he/she has failed to discharge the duty of care.

9 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A Managing Trustee must absent himself/herself from any discussions of the Managing Trustees in which a conflict will or may arise between his/her duty to act solely in the interests of the Church and any personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest).

10 REMUNERATION OF MANAGING TRUSTEES

a) A Minister, assistant Minister, administrator and cleaner of the Church appointed in accordance with the Church Rules may receive reasonable compensation for carrying out their duties as officeholders and/or employees notwithstanding that they are or may be Managing Trustees of the Church or a person connected to a Managing Trustee of the Church ("Connected Person").

b) Any Minister, assistant Minister or church administrator receiving benefit pursuant to Clause 10(a) (or any Managing Trustee where the Minister, assistant Minister or church administrator receiving benefit pursuant to Clause 10(a) is a Connected Person in relation to them) must be absent from the part of any meeting at which the terms of stipend or (where applicable) employment of the Minister, assistant Minister or church administrator in question of the performance of his/her duties or (where applicable) any other matter in connection with his/her employment is being discussed or determined and must not vote on any such matter provided that in relation to discussions concerning the performance of his/her duties the Minster, assistant Minister or church administrator in question shall have the opportunity to address the meeting and respond to any points of concern which are raised.

c) At no time may a majority of Managing Trustees benefit directly or indirectly from payments made under Clause 10(a) or Clause 10(d). Where a payment to a Connected Person would represent an indirect benefit to the Managing Trustee and such payment would cause the number of Managing Trustees benefiting under Clause 10(a) or Clause 10(d) to be a majority of the Managing Trustees then the prior written consent of the Charity Commission to the proposed payment must be obtained.

d) In addition to the provisions of Clause 10(a) any other Managing Trustee or Connected Person may receive reasonable and proper remuneration for goods or services provided to the Church provided that:

   i. the goods or services shall actually be required by the Church;

   ii. the Managing Trustee shall have fully disclosed to the other Managing Trustees the interest which he or she may have in and any benefit which he or she may derive either directly or indirectly from the supply of goods or services;

   iii. the Managing Trustee or Connected Person shall not be present at or take part in any discussion relating to nor vote upon any matter connected with the supply of such goods or services; and

   iv. the arrangements shall be approved by a majority of the other Managing Trustees who must be satisfied that it is to the advantage of the Church to employ or contract with the Managing Trustee or Connected Person in question rather than someone who has no connection with the Church.

e) Any other payments to a Managing Trustee or Connected Person or arrangements involving the acquisition by a Managing Trustee or Connected Person for his own benefit of property belonging to the Church require the prior written approval of the Charity Commission unless authorised under statute from time to time.

f) For the avoidance of doubt nothing in this Clause shall prevent reimbursement to the Managing Trustees or Connected Person of reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses incurred in carrying out their duties and the reimbursement of the costs of purchases made on behalf of the Church, where such purchases have the prior authorisation of the Managing Trustees.

g) For the purposes of this Clause 10 "Connected Person" has the meaning set out in section 73B(5) of the Charities Act 1993 as inserted by section 36 of the Charities Act 2006 and any statutory extension, modification, amendment or re-enactment thereof (assuming for the purposes of this Constitution that all references to "trustee" in the section mean "Managing Trustee"). The relevant part of section 73B(5) of the Charities Act 1993 is set out in Schedule 3.

11 MANAGING TRUSTEES TO ACT JOINTLY

a) The Managing Trustees must exercise their powers jointly, at properly convened meetings.

b) Any matter requiring a decision of the Managing Trustees shall require a simple majority of those present and voting at a properly convened meeting.

c) In the event of an equality of votes the chairman of the meeting shall be entitled to a second or casting vote.

12 MANAGING TRUSTEES' MEETING

a) The Managing Trustees must hold at least 4 meetings in each 12-month period.

b) Meetings shall require at least 10 days' notice unless all of the Managing Trustees agree to a meeting being convened on shorter notice.

c) The chairman or any 2 of the Managing Trustees may call a meeting at any time.

13 CHAIRMAN

a) The Managing Trustees must elect one of their number to be chairman of their meetings and shall determine the period for which the person so elected is to continue as chairman.

b) The Managing Trustees present at a meeting must elect one of their number to chair that meeting if the chairman is not present, does not wish to act or the office of chairman is vacant.

14 QUORUM

No business may be transacted at a meeting of the Managing Trustees unless there are present at least one-half of the Managing Trustees for the time being or 3 Managing Trustees, whichever shall be the greater.

15 RECORDINGS OF MEETINGS

The Managing Trustees must keep proper written minutes of their meetings.

16 TERMINATION OF MANAGING TRUSTEESHIP

A Managing Trustee will cease to be a Managing Trustee if he or she:

a) is disqualified from acting as a trustee by Section 72 (1) Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision) unless such disqualification is waived by the Charity Commission pursuant to Section 72 (4) Charities Act 1993; or

b) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his own affairs; or

c) is absent without the permission of the Managing Trustees from all of their meetings held within a period of 12 months and the Managing Trustees resolve (with the approval of the members of the Church) that his or her office be vacated; or

d) gives not less than 1 months' notice in writing of his or her intention to resign (but only if at least 3 Managing Trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect); or

e) ceases in the reasonable opinion of a majority of the other Managing Trustees to hold the Basis of Faith and his or her removal is confirmed by the members of the Church in accordance with the Church Rules; or

f) ceases to be a church officer as provided in the Church Rules.

17 CHURCH MEETINGS

a) There shall be an annual general meeting of the Church in March of each year, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Managing Trustees shall present to the annual general meeting their report and the accounts of the Church for the preceding financial year.

b) The election or appointment of church officers other than the Minister(s) shall take place in accordance with the Church Rules at the annual general meeting or at a general meeting called specifically for the purpose.

c) Every matter not requiring a greater majority in accordance with the Church Rules must be decided by majority decision of those eligible members present and voting. The chairman of the meeting may cast a second or casting vote only if there is a tied vote.

d) There shall be such other meetings of the members of the Church in each year as laid down in the Church Rules.

e) Notice of each meeting must be given to the members of the Church at least 14 days before the meeting.

18 CLOSURE OF THE CHURCH

a) In the event that the number of members of the Church shall fall below 7 or if the Managing Trustees decide that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Church, they shall call a meeting of all members of the Church of which not less than 21 days' notice shall be given. The notice must state the terms of the resolution to be proposed. The resolution must be passed by a simple majority of the members of the Church present and voting at the meeting.

b) i. If a resolution to close the Church is passed in accordance with Clause 18(a); or

ii. if the members of the Church refuse or are unable to meet to pass a resolution pursuant to Clause 18(a); or

iii. if for any other reason the Church ceases to operate then the Managing Trustees shall have power, after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities, to transfer any remaining personal property to such other charitable organisation or organisations having purposes similar to the Church as the members of the Church shall have determined.

c) In the event that the Managing Trustees are prevented from complying with the provisions of Clause 18(b) because there are, for any reason, less than 3 Managing Trustees and no other person is prepared to act as a Managing Trustee then the Holding Trustee must apply to the Charity Commission to be appointed as trustee for all purposes for authority to act in the winding-up of the affairs of the Church.

19 AMMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

a) Subject to the provisions of this Clause, the Managing Trustees may amend the provisions of this Constitution.

b) Any amendment must be made under the authority of a resolution passed at a meeting of the members of the Church of which not less than 21 days' notice has been given. The notice of the meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the amendment proposed. The amendment must be approved by at least 75% of the members of the Church present and voting.

c) The Managing Trustees must not make any amendment which would:

i. enable them to spend permanent endowment of the Church;

ii. have the effect of making the Church cease to be a charity at law.

d) The Managing Trustees must obtain the prior written approval of the Charity Commission before making any amendment which would:

i. vary the Church's purposes; or

ii. vary Clause 10 (remuneration of Managing Trustees); or

iii. vary this Clause 19; or

iv. vary the name of the Church.

e) The Managing Trustees must promptly send to the Charity Commission and the Holding Trustee a copy of any amendments made under this Clause.

SCHEDULE 1
Property held on Special Trusts

None at present.

SCHEDULE 2
Section 72 Charities Act 1993

A person is disqualified from being a trustee under Section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 if:

a) he or she has been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or deception;

b) he or she has been adjudged bankrupt or sequestration of his/her estate has been awarded and (in either case) he/she has not been discharged;

c) he or she has made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, his/her creditors and has not been discharged in respect of it;

d) he or she has been removed from office of charity trustee by an order of the Charity Commissioners or of the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which he/she was responsible or to which he/she was privy, or which he/she by his/her conduct contributed to or facilitated;

e) he or she has been removed under Section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990 from being concerned in the management or control of any body;

f) he or she is subject to a disqualification order made under the Company Director's Disqualification Act 1986 or the Insolvency Act 1986.

SCHEDULE 3

Connected Persons
Section 73B(5) Charities Act 1993

The following persons are "connected" with a charity trustee or trustee for a charity –

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

b) the spouse or civil partner of the trustee or of any person falling within paragraph (a);

c) a person carrying on business in partnership with the trustee or with any person falling within paragraph (a) or (b);

d) an institution which is controlled –

(i) by the trustee or by any person falling within paragraph (a), (b) or (c), or

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

e) a body corporate in which –

(i) the trustee or any connected person falling within any of paragraphs (a) to (c) has a substantial interest, or

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

Note: The above is the actual wording from the Charities Act 2006.

English law provides that a Managing Trustee cannot benefit from his/her position as a Managing Trustee. This means that they cannot receive payment from the Church for employment or other services unless payment is authorised in the Model Constitution, in statute (see: Charities Act 2006) or by the Charity Commission or the Courts. This also means that people to whom they are connected ("Connected Persons") cannot receive similar payments where these would result in a benefit to the Managing Trustee, unless the payments are authorised in one of the ways mentioned above. An example of this would be where the Church paid the Minister's wife for work in connection with the Church. It would be said that the Minister (a Managing Trustee) was benefiting from the payment to his wife since it would increase their joint income. Therefore, such a payment must be authorised in the Model Constitution, in statute (see: Charities Act 2006) or by the Charity Commission or the Courts. The only payments to the Managing Trustees and Connected Persons authorised in this Constitution are those set out in Clauses 10(a) and 10(d) subject to the other provisions of Clause 10.

This note is by way of seeking to explain the situation of payments to the Managing Trustees and Connected Persons. If there is any doubt about such payments, then the Managing Trustees should seek the advice/approval of the Charity Commission before making any payment.

WEM BAPTIST CHURCH
CHURCH RULES

These rules were adopted by the Members of Wem Baptist Church on 14th March 2005.
They have subsequently been amended on 27th November 2012,
27th November 2017 and 18th March 2025.

Chair of Trustees: ……

Chair of Deacons: ……

1 MEMBERSHIP

a) Application for Full Membership shall be open to those who profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession. They must have confessed this faith in the ordinance of Believers' Baptism (except in the exceptional circumstances outlined in our Statement on Baptism) and be at least 18 years of age. They must agree to abide by the Membership Commitments found in Appendix A.

b) Application for Junior Membership shall be open to all between 16-18 years of age who profess repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession. They must have confessed this faith in the ordinance of Believers' Baptism, (except in the exceptional circumstances outlined in our Statement on Baptism). They must agree to abide by the Membership Commitments found in Appendix A. Junior Members shall be able to attend and speak at Church Meetings but are not eligible to vote. Junior Membership will automatically cease at 18 years of age, and they may then apply for Full Membership.

c) Those seeking Full or Junior Membership shall submit their applications to the Eldership who shall appoint two members of the Church to interview the candidates and report back concerning their Christian faith and conduct. The report, if satisfactory, shall be passed on to the Church Meeting for election to membership by a simple majority of members present and voting.

d) The Trustees will keep an accurate list of current Church Members, which will be revised annually.

e) Full or Junior Membership can be revoked due to breaking the Membership Commitments (Appendix A). This takes place at a Church Meeting by a simple majority of members present and voting.

f) INACTIVE MEMBERS ROLL

i. Members may be placed on the Inactive Roll when their circumstances mean, that they are unable, for a protracted period of time to participate in the business sessions of the Church. Members suitable to be considered for this roll might include students studying away from Wem, those living abroad or those whose health renders them unable to participate in Church Meetings.

ii. Members shall only be placed on the Inactive Roll with their full consent, and the agreement of a properly constituted Church Meeting.

iii. Those Members listed on the Inactive Roll shall not be counted in the calculations of any quorum.

iv. The expression "inactive" does not imply anything other than inability to attend Church Meetings. It is expressly not any form of Church discipline and does not in any way imply that the Member is "inactive" in other matters such as the ministry of prayer. Their concern and prayer are still greatly valued.

v. Members' names shall be removed from the Inactive Roll if their circumstances change enabling them to again fully participate in the life of the Church. Members whose names are on the Inactive Roll retain full rights as Church Members and if exceptionally are able to attend a Church Meeting shall have full voting rights and on that occasion be included in any quorum.

2 ORDINANCES

a) The Lord's Supper shall normally be observed at least twice a month and all Christian people are invited to share in this service.

b) The Ordinance of Believers' Baptism by immersion shall be administered as required. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to this ordinance, whether or not such candidates desire Church membership.

c) The presentation to the Lord of the infant children of believers, and the dedication of the parents, is an act of thanksgiving and prayer in which the Church delights to join and arrangements should be made with the Pastor.

3 CHURCH OFFICERS

The Church Officers are the Managing Trustees of the Church and consist of the offices of Pastor, Elders, and Deacons. Should any of the following cease to be a Church Officer, they would equally cease to be a Managing Trustee.

a) THE PASTOR

i. The Pastor shall be a baptised believer who teaches and practises the baptism of believers by immersion, and holds to the Basis of Faith and the Doctrinal Distinctives.

ii. He shall be appointed by a 75% majority of those present and voting in a Church Meeting on the nomination of the Eldership and Diaconate and on terms to be mutually agreed.

iii. The Pastor shall be ex-officio President of all organisations of the Church. Unless a matter or resolution is to be discussed and voted upon in which he has a personal interest, or unless the Church or Deacons meeting, by a 75% majority so determine, or at his discretion, the Pastor or an Elder shall normally be present at all Church Meetings and is entitled to attend meetings of organisations, but not necessarily as the Chairman.

iv. The Pastor's stipend shall be regularly reviewed and fixed by the Managing Trustees.

b) ELDERS

NB For the purpose of exercising Eldership, the Pastor is an Elder. But for the purposes of these Church Rules, the roles are differentiated.

i. The Eldership is responsible for the pastoral oversight of the spiritual care, conduct and teaching ministry of the Church.

ii. Elders shall serve for a period of five years from the date of appointment, after which time they are eligible for re-election. During their period of office, they can stand down, or must vacate their office on resigning from membership, or can be removed by dismissal. The number of Elders will depend upon and reflect the raising up of suitable men by the Holy Spirit.

iii. At any time, any Church Member may bring to the attention of the existing Eldership the name of any other Member whom they believe would be a suitable candidate for Eldership. Proposed names for appointment may be presented to the Membership at the discretion of the existing Eldership. Elders shall be appointed by secret ballot at an Ordinary or Special Church Meeting requiring a 75% majority vote of those present and voting.

iv. In addition to the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, and other scriptures, an Elder shall be 21 years of age or over and shall have been in membership with this church for more than 12 months.

v. All Elders shall be baptised believers holding to the Basis of Faith and the Doctrinal Distinctives.

c) DEACONS

i. The Diaconate is responsible for the administrative, financial, structural and practical aspects of the church.

ii. Deacons shall serve for a period of three years from the date of appointment, after which time they are eligible for re-election. During their period of office, they can stand down, or must vacate their office on resigning from membership, or can be removed by dismissal. There is no upper limit to the number of serving Deacons.

iii. Deacons shall be appointed by secret ballot, requiring a 75% majority of those present and voting. Nomination by proposer and seconder together with the nominee's consent is required at least three Sundays before the date of the appropriate Church Meeting. Nominations are subject to approval by the Managing Trustees. The proposed candidate's name should be announced on the two Sundays preceding the Church Meeting.

iv. In addition to the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3, and other scriptures, a Deacon shall be 21 years of age or over and shall have been in membership with this church for more than six months.

v. A quorum for all meetings of the Diaconate shall be four.

d) ELDERS AND DEACONS

i. These are separate offices, and no-one shall hold both offices at one and the same time. However, both Elders and Deacons shall:

1. meet separately to pursue their distinct functions.

2. co-opt others into their meetings when deemed necessary.

3. hold regular or convene specially requested joint meetings to ensure informed understanding and seek common guidance on overlapping aspects or special issues, and to deal with Trustees responsibilities.

ii. The minutes of Deacons meetings shall be open to the Eldership.

iii. In the event of the Diaconate becoming so low in number that it is no longer quorate, the Elders and Deacons shall perform the duties of the Diaconate jointly until more Deacons can be appointed.

iv. In the event of there being no Elders or Pastor in position, the Diaconate shall perform the legal duties of the Managing Trustees, whilst they seek to appoint new Elders as soon as possible.

v. In the event of such extreme circumstances arising where it is deemed necessary to dismiss the Pastor, an Elder or a Deacon from their office, such dismissal shall be by two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Special Church Meeting convened for that purpose. That meeting can only be convened following the Capability Assessment and Disciplinary Procedure being followed in full and only where the outcome of that procedure recommends a meeting be convened in accordance with that procedure,

following any appeal procedure being completed in full or the time for such an appeal to be sought has passed.

4 CHURCH MEETINGS

a) Ordinary Meetings shall normally be held in March, June, September and December. Notices of Church Meetings shall be given on two preceding Sundays at all services.

b) The December meeting shall be the meeting which shall:

   i. note the Trustees appointments of Chairman, Vice-chairman, Treasurer and Independent Examiner(s) for one year only. The Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall have a casting vote when in the chair.

   ii. appoint scrutineers who shall serve for a one-year period and are eligible for re-election.

c) The Annual General Meeting is the March meeting when all reports of officers and organisations are given for the previous year.

d) SPECIAL MEETINGS

   i. A Special Meeting may be called:

      1. by the Eldership, or

      2. by the Diaconate, or

      3. at the written request of four Members to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, or

      4. at the written request of any two Trustees to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

   ii. Notice of such a meeting shall be given on the two preceding Sundays at all services.

   iii. For the avoidance of doubt, a Special Church Meeting convened for the dismissal of an office holder will require two Trustees to call the meeting following the Capability Assessment and Disciplinary Procedure being fully followed and notices being given in line with the above.

e) A quorum at any Ordinary or Special Meeting shall be 40% of the total membership eligible to vote, to be present within 15 minutes of the appointed time for the commencement of the meeting. If a quorum shall not be reached, the meeting shall stand adjourned for 14 days from that date to the same time and place of the first appointed meeting when 20% of the total membership eligible to vote, if present within the time aforesaid, shall constitute a quorum.

f) Items for the agenda, in writing and seconded, should be given to the Chair of Deacons at least two weeks prior to the Church Meeting and will be included in the agenda at the discretion of the Managing Trustees. Items under 'Any Other Business' shall be allowed only at the discretion of the Chairman and given to him before the meeting, except under exceptional circumstances.

g) Voting by proxy is not permissible.

5 OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Appointments to posts of responsibility within the church shall be by the church on the recommendation of the Eldership and/or Diaconate.

6 ORGANISATIONS

a) All organisations are under the supervision of the Eldership and/or Diaconate acting for the church, and no organisation may be started without their approval.

b) Acting for the church, the Eldership and/or Diaconate have a right to intervene in any difficulty arising in connection with any church organisation.

7 GENERAL

a) The Church Members shall be responsible through the Diaconate for the heating, lighting and cleaning of the church and buildings.

b) All meetings and services on church premises shall only be held with the permission of the Eldership and/or Diaconate and upon such conditions as they may decide.

c) These Rules and Membership Commitments, a copy of which shall be given to each church member, cancel all those previously in operation, and shall be the Rules of the Church, subject only to modification by a 75% majority vote of members of the Church present and eligible to vote at a convened Special or Ordinary Church Meeting.

d) These Church Rules (along with the Church Constitution, the Capability Assessment and Disciplinary Procedure, and Grievance Procedures, as amended in accordance with these rules from time to time) are to be followed by all of the Members of the Church. When a Grievance or Disciplinary issue is highlighted, the Church will follow the above procedures and documents in handling and dealing with such matters.

Appendix A: MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS

As members of Wem Baptist Church, we are committed to the following 10 things:

Truth
We love and submit to God's Word. We trust in the good news of the Lord Jesus. We believe in the biblical truths outlined in our Basis of Faith. We are happy to be taught in line with the church's other doctrinal statements.

Love
We will love this church as our family which Christ died for. We will show this love through word and deed, caring for one another, forgiving one another, rejoicing and weeping with one another, as we pursue deep relationships of grace, seeking to encourage and build each other up as disciples of Christ.

Godliness
We will pursue personal holiness, seeking to live lives which bring glory to Jesus. We will encourage one another towards godliness and away from sin. We will welcome challenge and correction from others as an opportunity to repent and grow.

Peace
We will seek to preserve the unity of the church. We will work through difficulties together, extending grace. We will speak kindly to and about one another. We will avoid gossip and will honour the confidentiality of sensitive matters. When called upon to do so, we will play our part in decision-making prayerfully, thoughtfully and selflessly, seeking the good of the whole church. We will listen to one another, being especially ready to respect and follow the leadership of the elders.

Gathering
We delight to meet together for worship, teaching, prayer and mutual encouragement. As such, we will normally attend one or more of the Sunday services. We will also be present for other church gatherings, such as Prayer Meetings, Members' Meetings and Home Groups, as often as we can.

Prayer
We will pray for one another and for the work of the church, both individually and with others.

Service
We will use our gifts, time and energy to further the work of the church. We will do this informally through quiet acts of love and service to others. We will also seek to do this formally through involvement in a ministry of the church where possible.

Generosity
We will share with others the blessings we have received from the Lord. We will seek to contribute to the church's finances by giving regularly and proportionately according to our means, with grateful hearts.

Mission
We will play our part in spreading the good news of Jesus – personally, locally and globally. Whilst some have particular gifts in this area, we will all seek to support evangelism, welcome outsiders and take opportunities to speak of the hope we have in Christ.

Grace
We are saved by grace into a community of grace. We will not judge one another by these commitments but will support each other to live them out. If circumstances make keeping these commitments more difficult, we will seek and receive support, knowing that the elders and the whole church family are committed to one another and to growing together, to the praise of God's glorious grace.