

MEADOWS COMMUNITY CHURCH
Constitution Adopted 3rd March 2015

1. NAME

The Meadows Community Church (hereinafter referred to as the Church) is a non-profit distributing body and shall be the name of the group of individuals who have become members of the Church, in accordance with clause 3 of this constitution.

2. OBJECTS

The Church is established to advance religion (evangelical Christianity) and to further other charitable purposes as the elders in their discretion determine, including where it is for the protection of the environment the provision, maintenance, repair, restoration or improvement of a building or other structure which is for the benefit of the local and wider global community in accordance with the church's statement of faith. The building the church meets in:

1. is a place of worship
2. is open to the public
3. is situated in the vicinity of a landfill site.

3. MEMBERSHIP

a. Eligibility

The membership of the Church shall be open to all who profess repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and whose lives witness to this fact. They must fully subscribe to the statement of faith (see appendix) and wish to express their commitment to the Church in accepting the responsibilities of membership (see 3 c below). A list of members shall be kept on a roll of members, and kept under the oversight of the eldership. Inclusion on that roll shall be evidence of Church membership.

b. Procedure For Admission

Individuals wishing to become members of the Church, should clearly indicate this intention to the eldership or a person(s) appointed by them for such a task. This request shall then be discussed by the eldership and agreed upon as per the eligibility criteria outlined in 3a. The decision will be minuted and the individual's name entered on the Church's roll of members.

c. Responsibilities

Members are expected to demonstrate their commitment to the Church, with active participation in such activities of the Church that will, by the grace and mercy of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, promote godliness in their lives, bear active witness to the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ and recognise their mutual responsibility to build each other up, expressed in the following ways:

(i) Corporate worship and prayer. Regular attendance with the wider church family on Sundays.

(ii) Being part of a 'Life group.' This is any small group within the larger church who are regularly in fellowship together.

(iii) Serving. Members will be active in service at various times both within and outside the Church community.

(iv) Giving. The support of the work of the church, both locally and globally, shall be members' collective responsibility through participation, prayer and voluntary donations. Each member should give of their resources, according to the gifts they have received, cheerfully and with a clear conscience before God so that the Church has the resources to do things well and show God's generosity in what it gives away to others.

(v) Members must also recognise the authority of the eldership of the Church.

d. Associate Membership

Members who are unable to fulfil the responsibilities of active membership due to geography or for other reasons, but who wish to remain linked to the church family, can ask the eldership to become associate members of the Church. Associate membership shall be on the same terms as ordinary members, including the right to speak, but not to vote at Church meetings.

e. Church Discipline

In the event of a member's conduct causing serious concern within the Church, the eldership shall deal with the matter in accordance with the scriptural principles of Church discipline, with a view to restoring the member concerned and thereby regaining the harmony of the fellowship. If all efforts to resolve such matters by counselling and correction are unsuccessful, the elders shall remove the name of that member from the roll of members.

4. ELDERSHIP

a. Appointment

Nominations for eldership shall be made by the elders, and be submitted, with the nominee's prior consent, to the Church for consideration as a resolution by secret ballot at a Church Meeting. The quorum for such a meeting will be one third of the membership. The resolution shall be passed at a quorate meeting by two thirds of the members present and voting thereat. Elders shall be elected for a period of five years. An elder must fully subscribe to the statement of faith and accept the responsibilities of membership of the church.

b. Appointment of a Lead Elder

When the person being proposed for the position of lead elder is not already a serving elder, their appointment will follow the same procedure as clause 4a. When the person being proposed for the position of lead elder is already an elder, then the appointment will be made by the other elders after seeking God and discussion with the church.

c. The Elders' Responsibilities

- (i) The eldership team will have responsibility for leading and overseeing the Church in humility and love.
- (ii) The eldership will be the charity trustees for the church and be responsible for appointing the holding trustees for the building.
- (iii) The elders shall be responsible for appointing and removing ministry leaders.

d. Meetings

Meetings of the eldership shall be held regularly, with no more than three months elapsing between any two meetings, at mutually convenient times. A meeting may be called by any two of the elders. The quorum of any meeting shall be half the membership of the eldership, with a minimum attendance of two. The Chair of any particular meeting shall be agreed by the elders at a previous meeting or by the majority of those present at any particular meeting.

e. Minutes

An accurate record of the substantive business of each meeting shall be kept as minutes. The Chair of the meeting shall be responsible for ensuring that the minutes are a correct record of the previous meeting and shall sign the minutes as testimony to this fact. Such a minute shall be evidence of eldership decisions.

f. Resolutions

Resolutions of the eldership shall be passed, in a vote, by a two-thirds majority of members present at a quorate meeting.

g. Remuneration

The elders may pay reasonable remuneration to an elder for work undertaken, notwithstanding that the person is a trustee of the charity, provided that they withdraw from any meeting of the elders whilst their remuneration is being discussed.

h. Removal

The elders will investigate any matter which suggests there may be a substantial reason for an elder not to continue in the role. If they are of the opinion that a substantial reason exists the elder may be dismissed from the role and the members shall be informed.

5. EMPLOYED STAFF

The eldership may appoint paid members of staff to assist the work of the church, following discussion with the members. The elders may pay reasonable remuneration to any person holding office in the Church, for the work undertaken whilst holding that office.

6. SECRETARY AND TREASURER

The eldership shall be responsible for electing and periodically reviewing the appointment of a secretary/administrator and a treasurer from amongst the members of the Church.

7. CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

a. Calling of Meetings

The eldership shall call Church members' meetings periodically. One such meeting shall be an Annual General Meeting at which the membership shall review the work of the Church and approve the accounts for the previous financial year. No more than fifteen months shall elapse between any two Annual General Meetings. An Extraordinary Church Meeting may also be requested in writing by twelve members of the Church. The request must state the nature of the business that is to be discussed. If the eldership fails to call a meeting in response to such a request the twelve members may do so themselves in accordance with Clause 7b below.

b. Notice Of Meeting

The time and place of a church meeting will be publicised at least 3 weeks in advance.

c. Quorum

The quorum for any Church meeting at which voting is undertaken shall be one third of the membership.

d. Chair

The Chair of the meeting shall normally be a member of the eldership or their nominee.

e. Minutes

An accurate record of the substantive business of each meeting shall be kept. The Chair of the meeting shall be responsible for ensuring that the minutes are a correct record of the previous meeting and shall sign the minutes as testimony to this fact.

8. GENERAL

a. Leaders of Church Activities

All leaders of church activities, including youth and children's work, will be members of the Church except in very exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the eldership.

b. Church Accounts

The accounts of the Church before being presented at the Annual General Meeting shall be submitted for independent examination as per the requirements of charity law.

c. Land and Buildings

(I) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause (II) of this clause, the eldership shall cause the title to:

(i) all land held by or in trust for the Church which is not vested in the official custodian for charities: and

(ii) all investments held by or on behalf of the Church to be vested either in a corporation entitled to act as a Custodian trustee or in not less than three individuals (not being elders) appointed by them as holding trustees. Holding trustees may be removed by the eldership at their pleasure and shall act in accordance with the lawful directions of the eldership. Provided they act only in accordance with the lawful directions of the eldership, the holding trustees shall not be liable for the acts and defaults of its members.

(II) If a corporation entitled to act as custodian trustee has not been appointed to hold the property of the charity, the eldership may permit any investments held by or in trust for the Church to be held in the name of a clearing bank, trust corporation or any stockbroking company which is a member of the International Stock Exchange (or any subsidiary of any such stockbroking company) as nominee for the eldership, and may pay such a nominee reasonable and proper remuneration for acting as such.

d. Borrowing

(i) Subject to the provisions of the Charities Act 1993 and any act for the time being amending or replacing the same, and subject to any consents required by the law, the Church may from time to time by mortgage or otherwise obtain such advances on the security of the land or any part thereof as may be required for purchasing maintaining extending or improving the same or any part thereof or erecting any building thereon or for the work carried on therein and may continue or may repay in whole or in part any existing mortgage or charge on the Church land.

(ii) The holding trustees shall exercise such powers of mortgaging Church land as they shall be lawfully directed so to do by the eldership. Provided that all liability in respect of any borrowings by the Church secured by the Church land shall be that of the Church and not of the holding trustees personally and the holding trustees shall be fully indemnified from Church funds against any personal liability.

e. Constitution

All applicants for membership shall be given an electronic or paper copy of the Church Constitution, according to their preference.

f. Not for Profit

The Church shall not distribute profits and shall apply all of its income to the furtherance of the objects set out in clause 2.

9. ALTERATIONS AND AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be altered at a quorate meeting of the Church by a resolution passed by two thirds of the members present and voting thereat. The resolution for the alteration of the constitution must be circulated to the members of the Church at least 21 days before the meeting at which it is proposed. At least 14 days' notice of such a meeting must be given, and must include notice of the alteration proposed. Provided that no alteration to clause 2 (objects), clause 4(c) (the elders' responsibilities), clause 10 (dissolution) or this clause shall take effect until the approval in writing of the Charity Commissioners or other authority having charitable jurisdiction shall have been obtained; and no alteration shall be made which would have the effect of causing the Church to cease to be a charity in law.

10. DISSOLUTION

If the eldership decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Church it shall call a meeting of all members of the Church, of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by two thirds majority of those present and voting, the eldership shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Church. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Church as the members of the Church may determine or failing that shall be applied for some other charitable purpose. A copy of the statements of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Church must be sent to the Charity Commissioners.