

In this document, unless otherwise stated, the masculine includes the feminine and vice versa. TCinBW abbreviation of title is used throughout.

1. **The Standing Orders**

1.1 Preamble

These Standing Orders set down the way the church has agreed to govern itself and conduct its business, within the provisions of the Declaration of Intent and Constitution.

1.2 Amendments to these Orders

These Orders may be amended at a Church Members' Meeting.

Proposed amendments must be presented to the leadership team no less than thirty days before the meeting, and made available to church members at least two clear Sundays before the meeting

Amendments must be approved by at least two-thirds of all members qualified to vote.

2. **Membership**

2.1 Voting and Non-Voting Members

All Christians are members of God's Family.

Anyone who is involved with TCinBW and is baptised and has made a Public Declaration of Faith can take the step of showing that they belong to this church by becoming a Member of TCinBW. Appendix A gives full details.

New members are accepted into membership at a Sunday Morning Service.

All members of TCinBW commit themselves to the local church in ways that are outlined in a separate leaflet.

All members must decide to register as a Voter or non-Voter.

A decision can be changed at any time in writing to the Church Secretary

Voting Members accept the additional responsibility of making the church's business decisions, taking into account the views of all members and the wider church community.

Voting membership is defined in the church's Constitution, together with further details of responsibilities.

2.2 Membership Roll

The Membership Roll of TCinBW will be reviewed annually by the Leadership Team prior to the AGM, for the meeting's approval.

The review will incorporate into the Roll any changes within the past year:

- new members
- changes to members' voting status
- those no longer involved with TCinBW due to resignation, death, moving house or other reasons

Actions to be taken regarding any members who have not been in contact with TCinBW will be decided at the nearest Church Meeting.

2.3 Discipline and Restoration

My friends, if someone is trapped in sin, you who are spiritual should gently lead that person back to the right path. But watch out and don't be tempted yourself. (Galatians 6:1)

Very rarely, exceptional circumstances may arise where a church member's conduct or situation becomes incompatible with their church membership. The Minister together with the Leadership

Team will seek denominational guidance and backing on the matter, and will take careful and appropriate action, involving the Church Meeting as described in the following paragraphs.

Experience has shown that in such circumstances publicity within the church or the involvement of the Church Meeting can be seriously unhelpful for the church and for the individual concerned. Therefore, should such a case arise, the position of TCinBW is that those who are dealing with the matter will be trusted such that the matter will not be dealt with in a Church Meeting until a decision point is reached.

A variety of measures could be agreed with the member in question, always with the ultimate hope of "leading the person back to the right path" whether in our church or a different one. Such measures might include a short period away from the church or Church Meeting, or a temporary removal of voting responsibility, or a request that the member resigns.

For decisions short of ending membership, the Church Meeting will be informed of the decision without debate. Where the member has resigned following a request to resign, the Church Meeting will be told why, again without debate.

Sadly a situation might arise in which it is recommended that the Church Meeting removes an individual's membership. The Meeting will be told why and asked to vote to confirm the recommendation. Members may ask questions in order to satisfy themselves that best practice has been followed, but the issue itself will not be debated.

3. Church Members' Meetings

3.1 Types of Meetings

TCinBW will hold at least three Church Meetings (CM) each year, one of which will be the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held before the end of April.

An Extraordinary Church Meeting (ECM) may be called outside the normal schedule to deal with emergencies and special circumstances.

All meetings may transact any business as allowed by the Constitution.

3.2 Conduct of meetings

Meetings will normally be chaired by the Minister. Otherwise the meeting will appoint a chair.

3.3 How and when a meeting is called

Normally, all Meetings are called by the Minister, or in the Minister's absence by the Leadership Team.

3.3.1 AGM and CM

Notice must be given at all worship services on the three preceding Sundays and in Prayer Diaries or their equivalent from one month before the meeting.

Agendas and any other notes for the meeting must be provided to members at least two Sundays before the Meeting.

3.3.2 ECM

An ECM may be called if the Minister, or in the Minister's absence the Leadership Team, considers an emergency or special circumstance has arisen. An ECM must also be held within 30 days of receipt of a petition containing details of the matters to be covered, signed by the greater of:

- one-tenth of Voting Members
- OR ten Voting Members

Notice of an ECM must be given at all worship services on two preceding Sundays and, if possible, in one Prayer Diary or its equivalent.

Agendas and any other notes for the meeting must be provided to members at least seven days before the Meeting.

3.4 Who may attend Meetings

All members have the right to attend all meetings and contribute to the discussions on all business and elections.

Other people who attend church may also attend all meetings except those dealing with the appointment of a new Minister.

The Chair of the meeting has the discretion:

- to request any such non-member to withdraw from any meeting.
- to allow such non-members to contribute to specified discussions.

Only voting members may vote.

3.5 How many members must be present

3.5.1 Preamble

The quorum specifies the minimum number of Voting Members that must be present in order for a meeting to vote.

A quorum must strike a balance based on the total number of Voting Members and the ratio of Voting Members to the total number of all Members.

The quorum given is based on the relatively small number of current Voting Members, and will be reviewed when the church has a greater number of Voting Members.

It is stated as a percentage of Voting Members only.

3.5.2 The Quorum

The quorum for all business including all elections is **75%** of Voting Members. This is the minimum number of Voting Members that must be present in order for a meeting to take votes.

Inquorate meetings may consider any business set out on the Agenda but may only make recommendations to a future quorate meeting or to the Leadership Team.

3.6 Voting

3.6.1 Who may vote?

Voting is restricted to Voting Members, a list of whom shall be available for inspection at every meeting.

3.6.2 How many members must vote in favour?

There are different voting methods and requirements for different types of business.

These are defined below, for each different type of business.

3.6.3 Voting Requirements for Normal business

Any vote on normal business must be carried by a majority of at least 50% of all voting members regardless of the number at the meeting. Voting is by a show of hands unless otherwise agreed.

There is no casting vote

3.6.4 Voting Requirements for Elections to fill a vacancy which has one candidate

The church wants to demonstrate that elected church officers and leaders have the wide support of the church even if there is only one candidate for each vacancy. Therefore, when there is one candidate for a vacancy, the candidate will be elected by the following voting:

- **Leadership Team members** are elected using a secret paper ballot by the greater of:
 - a majority of all Voting Members regardless of their number attending
 - OR 2/3 of the Voting Members at the meeting
- **Other Church Officers** including Treasurer and Secretary are elected by a show of hands by:
 - a majority of all Voting Members regardless of their number attending

3.6.5 Voting Requirements for Elections to fill a vacancy which has more than one candidate

Where there is more than one candidate for a vacancy, voting members may cast one vote for their preferred candidate for each vacancy. Voting will be by secret paper ballot.

The candidate with the highest number of votes will then go forward as the single candidate for the vacancy, and a second vote will be taken as described in 3.6.4 above.

3.6.6 Voting Requirements for Changes to the Constitution or Approval of a new Minister

Any vote to change the Constitution or to approve the appointment of a Minister must be carried by a majority of no less than 2/3 of all Voting Members regardless of their number attending.

3.7 Conduct of Elections

Nominations for elections may be made from three Sundays before the meeting (AGM and CM) or two Sundays before (ECM), at which time the list of elections will be published.

Nominations must be seconded, and agreed by the nominee.

The closing date for nominations to be handed to the Secretary must be set to allow for publication and prayer at the Sunday Service prior to the Meeting.

Where votes are cast by secret paper ballot, the appointed Tellers are responsible for conducting the count and reporting the result to the chair.

4. Church Government

4.1 Structure

The government and leadership structure of the church consists of the Church Meeting, the Minister, and the Leadership Team under God and his vision for our church.

4.2 The Minister and the Leadership Team

4.2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Under the spiritual authority and chairmanship of the Minister, the role of the Leadership Team is to support the Minister in the oversight of every aspect of the church's life and to focus on vision and strategy. They will:

- inform the Church Meeting's discussions and decisions and act upon them.
- encourage individuals and activities that build up the Body of Christ, and co-ordinate individual skills and spiritual gifts
- meet at least monthly to share in overview and pray and consider vision, seeking a balance in worship, teaching, discipling, mission, new initiatives and pastoral needs.
- keep minutes of their meetings which are confidential
- seek to promote effective two-way communication with all members and attenders
- be open to suggestions and criticisms from any member or attender
- maintain their individual membership of church fellowship and prayer groups
- make decisions as authorised by the Church Members' Meeting, including financial decisions as defined in the Financial section of these Standing Orders.

4.2.2 Decision Making

Leadership Team decisions are made by consensus of all members including the Minister unless there are exceptional reasons why any member could or should not be contacted.

Care should be taken with any decisions made by an incomplete team, where possible by establishing prior agreement by the full team or a Church Members' Meeting on the scope of decisions that can be made during the anticipated absence of a member. If there is any doubt, proposals should be referred for decision to the next Church Members' Meeting.

The Leadership Team may not make a decision that would result in personal benefit to Leadership Team member(s). Such proposals must be put before a Church Members' Meeting.

Decisions will be shared at the next Church Members' Meeting except decisions that come under confidentiality guidelines or the *Discipline and Restoration* or *Pastoral Support* sections in these Standing Orders.

4.2.3 Personal support of the Minister

It is desirable that the Leadership Team offers the Minister personal support alongside their leadership and oversight of the church, in addition to the Minister's denominational and private spiritual guidance.

4.2.4 Confidentiality

The Minister will share congregational pastoral matters with the Leadership Team where necessary and appropriate. A separate policy statement concerning confidentiality guidelines, including reference to Child Protection matters, is provided at Appendix B below.

4.2.5 Composition and Term of Office

The Leadership Team has five members plus the Minister.

Leadership Team members must be Voting Members of TCinBW. They are elected for a three year term. On completion of one term of three years a member may be re-elected for a further three years. On completion of two consecutive terms of three years, a member must have one year off. If several members' terms are due to end at the same time, retirement can be staggered by agreement within their terms of office to maintain continuity on the team.

Elections may be held at Church Meetings or Extraordinary Church Meetings to fill one or more vacancies between AGMs. The term of office of a member elected at such a meeting is reckoned from the preceding AGM.

For specific purposes, the Leadership Team may recommend additional members to be elected to the team during the year until the next AGM. Such elections have the same voting requirements as Normal Business (see section 3.6 above).

The Minister should be given three months sabbatical leave every seven years, and will be freed from any role within the church for this period.

4.2.6 Balance

It is especially important that someone on the Leadership Team has a denominational background that is different from the Minister. That is, an Anglican when we have a Baptist Minister, and a Baptist when we have an Anglican Minister.

To have at least one person with a background in each of the two partner denominations is highly desirable for the insights into the traditions and principles of their denomination that they can bring.

It is desirable that the Leadership Team has a gender and age balance.

4.2.7 Leader Development and Reviews

Leadership Team members should receive adequate training regarding church business and any particular projects or initiatives, and should also develop their individual abilities and corporate performance.

It is desirable that the Minister and the Leadership Team conduct regular reviews of their performance, to answer the question "How are we doing?" Areas to be reviewed include their accountability to the church and to each other, and their working together to fulfil their roles and responsibilities (see 4.2.1).

External resources and guidance may be required.

4.2.8 Review of Team Composition and Roles

The composition and roles of the Leadership Team and its members are likely to need to change as the Church develops. For this reason, holding a review of those areas should be considered between LEP Reviews or if there are significant changes in the make-up of the church.

4.3 Other Church Officers

4.3.1 Treasurer

The position of treasurer is not a position on the Leadership Team.

It is essential that the treasurer is involved by the Leadership Team in any proposal involving finance over and above any Leadership Team budget agreed by the Church Meeting.

The treasurer may request to meet with Leadership Team.

The treasurer is a Member of TCinBW and elected annually by the AGM.

The specific role and tasks of the church treasurer are:

- to be responsible to the Church Meeting for maintaining the day to day finances of the church
- to manage and report on the Church Accounts in accordance with the recommendations of the Charity Commissioners
- to safeguard the financial position of the church and advise the Church Meeting on financial matters and decisions
- to encourage the church to work towards forward planning on budgets

It is desirable that more than one church member understands the church finances and is able to support the treasurer and act as deputy when required.

It is desirable that the treasurer is not also on the Leadership Team because of the size of their job. If the treasurer is elected to the Leadership Team, then another church member should be trained to take over the treasurer's job.

4.3.2 Secretary

The position of secretary is not a position on the Leadership Team.

The secretary is a Member of TCinBW and elected annually by the AGM.

The specific role and tasks of the church secretary are:

- to be named on church notices, and to receive and respond to external enquiries received
- to be named in denominational lists as Church contact point additional to the Minister
- to maintain the Church Membership roll and file
- to conduct and file correspondence that may be requested by the Minister or Leadership Team
- to assist the Minister in compilation of the Annual Report and other Church documentation
- to undertake other Church administrative activity as may be requested

The secretary is not necessarily responsible for taking minutes for either Leadership Team or Church Meetings.

Letters to outside organisations should always be co-ordinated through the Minister and Secretary.

4.3.3 Safeguarding Administrators

Whilst not strictly an officer of the church, the **Child Protection Administrator** administers the church's child protection policy and may advise the Minister and Leadership Team from time to time concerning this policy and any incidents within the church. See the separate Policy document, *Safe from harm – Safe to Grow* for the CPA role and responsibilities.

Likewise the **Safeguarding Adults Administrator** administers the church's adult protection policy. See the separate policy document *Safeguarding Adults* for the SAA role and the church's responsibilities.

5. Financial

5.1 Formal

An Independent Examiner will be appointed by a Church Meeting to comply with the Charity Commission's regulatory requirement for external examination of the church's annual accounts. The church accounts for the previous year will be approved by the Annual General Meeting.

5.2 Financial Planning

The Annual General meeting will agree a budget for the current year.
A Church Meeting may revise the budget if necessary.

5.3 Authorisation to spend

5.3.1 General

Expenditure covered by the following authorisations must fall into the first category allowed by the Constitution: "The expenses of ministry and of the administrative costs of the Partnership."

The remaining two categories must be authorised by a Church Members Meeting:

- Financial obligations to the central and other funds of the participating Churches/denominations
- Gifts to other societies and charities.

5.3.2 Budgeted Expenditure

Church people involved in particular church activities are authorised to spend up to the budgeted amount for their activities on customary items by agreement following consultation together. Invoices for payment or itemised receipts for reimbursement should be provided to the Treasurer as soon as they are available.

Unusual items should be authorised in the same way as non-budgeted expenditure.

5.3.3 Non-Budgeted Expenditure

Normally, all non-budgeted expenditure or budgeted expenditure on unusual items must be agreed by a Church Meeting.

If the urgent need arises for expenditure on non-budgeted or unusual items, the Leadership Team is authorised to spend up to a specified limit with the agreement of the Treasurer on each occasion that this situation arises. All such expenditure must be reported to the next Church Members' Meeting for ratification.

The specified limit will be agreed by the Annual General Meeting as part of the setting of the annual budget. It should be an amount that is sufficient for likely purposes but small enough that it will not distort the budget.

5.3.4 Pastoral Support

It is the custom of the church to budget an amount for Pastoral Support, to be available to provide confidential support to persons involved with the church fellowship in exceptional need.

"Pastoral Support" means the "church family" stepping in as part of the ministry of the church to help one of the family in their exceptional need.

The Minister and the Leadership Team are separately authorised to spend or donate up to the amount of the unspent Pastoral Support budget confidentially and at their absolute discretion. This may be done by the Minister acting alone without reference to the Leadership Team, or by the Leadership Team.

When expenditure from the Pastoral Support budget has been made, the Treasurer will be given a signed statement of the amount of the expenditure so that the available budget can be reduced and the amount reimbursed. The Treasurer will inform the Minister of the amount of the unspent budget, or, during a vacancy, a designated member of the Leadership Team.

The Minister must keep a confidential record of the recipient and amount of each Pastoral Support payment for six years or as long as support seems likely to recur whichever is the longer, and pass them on to the designated member of the Leadership Team at the beginning of a vacancy.

Appendix A Becoming a Member of TCinBW

A.1 “Church Membership”

All Christians are **members of God’s Family**.

Anyone who is involved with TCinBW and is baptised and has made a Public Declaration of Faith can take the step of showing that they belong to this church by becoming a **member of TCinBW**.

A.2 Where do members come from?

Members may come from various backgrounds. For example, you may be a Christian of good standing from a church recognised by Churches Together in England and Wales. Or you may be a Christian who has not made a commitment of formal church membership before.

A.3 When can I become a Member?

We ask everyone to attend worship regularly for six months before they become a member. We invite you to get to know us during this period and get involved as much as you wish. We are committed to making you welcome.

A.4 What is the process for becoming a member?

A.4.1 *We will support you*

Anyone seeking membership is firstly assured of prayerful help and support in their spiritual journey.

We seek to help you understand both your commitment and how TCinBW is organised.

A.4.2 *Background Reading*

Along with your Membership Application form we will give you copies of the current leaflets and documents:

- Belonging to God’s Family
- Our History and Aims
- The Constitution and The Standing Orders

and documents relating to the church policies on Child Protection (“Safe from Harm – Safe to Grow”), Safeguarding Adults and Baptism will be available.

A.4.3 *The Application Form*

The Membership Application form is designed to show clearly how you may meet the church’s membership requirements.

In completing the form you are asked to indicate your denominational allegiance, if any.

You must also decide whether to register as a Voter or non-Voter, as described in 2.1 of the Standing Orders. As a Voting Member you will commit yourself to the additional responsibility of making the church’s business decisions, taking into account the views of all members and the wider church community. Members may change this decision at any time by writing to the Secretary.

You should give your completed application form directly to the Minister, Secretary or a member of the Leadership Team.

A.4.4 *Discussing your Membership*

The Minister will arrange with you an appointment for you to discuss your application with two designated church members. The point of the discussion is to give any explanation required concerning the church’s life, to explore and affirm your faith, and to agree whether or not your application should go forward at that time. The outcome of the discussion will be confirmed by the Leadership Team.

The two designated members will be drawn from a list agreed by the Church Meeting. No more than one of the two may be a member of the Leadership Team. The meeting can take place at your home, or it can be arranged at another suitable location.

A.4.5 Initiation into the Christian Church

For those who have been baptised and made a public declaration of their faith no further steps are required prior to acceptance into membership.

For others:

- We will prepare you for your baptism and public declaration of faith, and give you information about the wider Christian Church and your options for belonging to wider church denominations.
- Since our church is a Baptist-Anglican partnership, you will be able to choose a Baptist, Anglican, or approved ecumenical rite.

A.4.6 Formal Acceptance into Membership

New members are formally accepted into active membership during a Sunday morning service and also formally welcomed at the next Church Meeting.

New members usually want to re-affirm their Christian faith and share something of their testimony with the congregation as part of becoming a member.

Appendix B Guidelines on Confidentiality Adopted at AGM 25.3.07

This appendix offers some Guidelines on Confidentiality for all church members, and in particular, those in positions of Leadership (see 4.2.4 above)

B.1 Principles

The Bible encourages members of the church family to be open and honest with each other, to share their lives as well as their faith.

We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

In fact the Body of Christ cannot be built up and any hindrances to growth or fellowship dealt with unless people are willing to trust each other enough to share matters for advice, prayer ministry, counselling etc.

Sometimes this sharing will involve private and confidential information.

How should we view confidentiality? What are the boundaries and responsibilities involved?

B.1.1 We follow biblical principles

We must be honest

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices (Colossians 3:9)

However, not lying to each other does not mean that we 'tell everything' to all and sundry.

There is a proper time and place for sharing personal stories.

We need people to be reliable and trustworthy

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2)

People have a right to expect others to act with integrity and to keep any commitment to confidentiality they have made, not passing on another's story without their permission.

We are all called to be involved and be faithful

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Whilst some, like the Minister or those with a ministry of prayer for healing, will hear many 'confidences', every church member will at some time or other be trusted with another's story.

We need integrity

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure (1 Timothy 5:22)

Acceptance of another's story does not mean agreement with their behaviour.

Sometimes, for fear of breaking a trust, a 'listener' can be tempted to ignore a wrong.

Our attitude must follow Jesus' example – to show God's love to the sinner but hate the sin.

B.2 We also follow 'good practice'

Guidelines within TCinBW are:

- 1. Pastoral leadership** Church members agree to accept the pastoral leadership of the Minister and the Leadership Team. Many situations remain confidential to the Minister, who may be approached by anyone at any time. Advice may be sought from outside the church on behalf of an 'anonymous person'. Some situations will be prayerfully considered by the minister and Leadership team together in order that relevant support may be given.
- 2. Prayer ministry** in church or in a home should always be preceded by a commitment to confidentiality which would allow telling the Minister or a member of the Leadership Team where there was a need for prayer support or guidance.
- 3. In groups** there should be a group agreement to confidentiality which would allow telling the Minister or a member of the Leadership Team where there was a need for prayer support or guidance

- 4. In one to one conversation** the responsibility is with the 'listener' to ask if confidentiality is needed and whether the issue discussed can be shared with named people.

IMPORTANT: When a listener agrees to confidentiality, they MUST add this qualification, that what is said will be confidential ...

“unless you are going to harm yourself or others, or the abuse of a child is involved, bearing in mind that ‘harm’ may be physical, emotional or spiritual”.

Should such concern be raised, the 'listener' must seek advice from the Minister, or member of the Leadership Team, or in obvious emergencies, the police.

Listeners have a 'duty of care' and silence is not an option.

TCinBW has clear guidance on whom to approach regarding the abuse of a child or where a child reports an abuse (Safe from Harm-Safe to Grow pages 10 and 11).

- 5. In a church service** the responsibility is with the 'speaker' to request a matter be kept within the fellowship.
- 6. Information received** via prayer ministry, a group, one to one conversation, should never be '*passed on for prayer*' even between married couples, nor made a matter for church intercessions without explicit permission.

Prayer Chain information should remain confidential to the Chain contacts.

B.3 Data Protection

The Leadership team has accepted responsibility for compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Records held by the Church Members' Meeting are treated separately from those held by the Minister. In TCinBW case neither the CMM nor the Minister need to 'register'.

However people must be informed regarding personal information which is held about them.

The names and addresses of church members are listed on paper and/or on computer.

E-mail addresses and ex-directory telephone numbers are not listed unless permission is given.

These lists are used to inform people about church events and are never given to anyone else.

Lists are held by the Minister, and Secretary; members may have a copy on request.

Organisers of children's and youth groups, Open Door, Holiday Club hold a paper and/or computer list of contacts.

Prayer chain telephone numbers are circulated to those on the chain.

The Minister may have from time to time sensitive confidential pastoral paper records. No permanent material is kept that would identify individuals.

The Minister keeps confidential paper records of applications and references regarding everyone who regularly works with children within the church. They are seen at the time of application by those on the relevant interview panel.

The Treasurer holds a record of the financial giving of those in the Gift Aid scheme in order to reclaim tax from the Inland Revenue. These records are not available to others.