

Tavistock United Reformed Church - Constitution



Tavistock United Reformed Church shall order its life in accordance with the United Reformed Church's Manual (Section B) and The Basis of Union as agreed and amended by the United Reformed Church General Assembly. The following Rules are additional, for the purpose of aiding the smooth running of the local Church.

Membership

All persons who are in sympathy with the Constitution and mission statement of the Church and are seeking to live their lives in accordance with the teachings of Jesus are eligible for Membership. The Minister, Elders and Members should ensure new and regular attenders who are not Members are made welcome in the Church. The Minister shall invite regular attenders into Membership. Thereafter when they feel ready to be received into Membership they should ask the Minister or Church Secretary to be admitted and will be welcomed within the context of Sunday worship as soon as possible. The Membership Roll shall be updated annually by the Minister and Elders.

Holy Communion

Holy Communion is normally celebrated once a month. All are welcome to partake.

Church Meeting

The functions of the Church Meeting are set out in the URC Manual (Section B 2(1)). A Church Meeting is required at least every quarter. The Church Meeting normally meets bi-monthly except during August and December. The Minister chairs this meeting but in his/her absence the Secretary or an Elder shall take the chair. All Church Meetings are open meetings but only Church Members may vote. Voting is by show of hands except when Elders are elected or a Minister is called when voting shall be by secret ballot. A secret ballot may be held at other times at the request of a Member and with the agreement of the Church Meeting. A 'Quorum' at any meeting shall be 25% of the registered Membership or 5 whichever is the higher. Should there be an equality of votes the 'Chairperson' will have a second or casting vote, especially in relation to any Landfill Communities Fund matters. The Elders shall propose and the Church Meeting shall appoint such committees, temporary or permanent, as is deemed necessary by the Church Meeting for the proper running of the Church's affairs. Such committees shall be chaired by the Minister, the Church Secretary or an Elder. These committee meetings should prepare minutes and report back to the Minister, Elders' Meeting and Church Meeting.

Elders' Meeting

The functions of the Elders' Meeting are set out in the URC Manual (Section B 2(2)). The Elders' Meeting normally meets bi-monthly except during August.

Election of Elders

Elders are ordained for life. The term of service is 3 years. After 2 consecutive terms of service Elders shall stand down for one year after which they may stand for re-election. Elders are elected at the Annual General Meeting which shall be held within 4 months of the end of the financial year. All members of the local church who are over 18 years of age and have been in Membership of the United Reformed Church for at least 12 months are eligible to serve as Elders. At the Church Meeting prior to the AGM Members will be informed of Elders who are standing down and those who do not wish to seek re-election. Members will be invited to nominate new Elders subject to their willingness to stand for election. All nominations must have a proposer and seconder and be submitted to the Church Secretary two Sundays in advance of the AGM. Voting shall be by secret ballot at the AGM. A two thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote is required to be elected. 2 scrutinisers shall be appointed by the Church Secretary to count the voting slips. The results will be handed to the Minister to declare the results.

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Church Secretary

The Elders shall nominate from among themselves a Church Secretary. The Secretary shall be approved by the Church Meeting to serve for a term of 3 years. An Assistant Secretary may be appointed in the same manner.

Church Treasurer

A Treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and elected at the Church Meeting to serve for 3 years and may then stand for re-election. The Treasurer should be a Member of the church. If no suitable nominee is available among the Members, a non-member may be proposed and elected, PROVIDED THAT he/she has the required expertise and is in sympathy with the Constitution and Mission Statement of the Church. The Treasurer shall present the Accounts (reviewed by a suitably qualified person) at the AGM. In addition financial reports shall be presented at each Elders' Meeting and Church Meeting.

The Treasurer and Members will ensure that monies are only spent in fulfilling the life of the Church, its service to others and that designated monies received are only used for the purpose for which they were intended. The Church is precluded from using funds received under the Landfill Communities Fund to benefit the contributors. Although the Tavistock United Reformed Church is not a registered charity it is recognised by the HMRC for their purposes as a charity.

Service

The Membership of this not for profit making body are mindful of being of value to others by way of charity, personal and collective service, as well as making available the facilities of our church building to others. We accept that one aspect of our stewardship of this religious building of historic interest, in the vicinity, presently, of a landfill site, is the maintenance and repair of our church building in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Closure and Dissolution

Any resolution to close the Church must be passed by the Church Meeting and approved by the South Western Synod of the URC. When approved the resolution will have the effect of dissolving the Church as an association, at the date agreed between the Local Church and the Synod. A direction may be given by the Church Meeting for unrestricted monies held as part of the general funds of the Church to be applied after the settlement of debts and liabilities, in a specific manner determined by the Church. If no such direction is given by the Church Meeting it shall be deemed to have directed the Trustees to apply the unrestricted monies to be held as part of the general funds of the Church, after the settlement of debts and liabilities, as determined by the Synod. Restricted assets, such as any interest of third parties such as the Landfill Communities Fund, must not be distributed amongst the Members, and remain accountable to such third parties.

Amendment of the Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by the Church Meeting. Members may bring proposals to the Church Meeting for discussion. If the Church Meeting agrees by a two thirds majority the amendment may be brought to the next Church Meeting for acceptance. A two thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote is required.

Adopted & Approved at the Church Meeting held on Sunday 19th January 2020.