

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ST. ALBANS

CONSTITUTION

Preamble:

The Swanwick Declaration (1987), in which representatives of the Churches nationally committed themselves to each other, included the following:

“We now declare together our readiness to commit ourselves to each other under God. Our earnest desire is to become more fully, in his own time, the one Church of Christ, united in faith, communion, pastoral care and mission. Such unity is the gift of God.... We affirm our openness to this growing unity in obedience to the Word of God, so that we may fully share, hold in common and offer to the world those gifts which we have received and still hold in separation. In the unity we seek we recognise that there will not be uniformity but legitimate diversity.

It is our conviction that, as a matter of policy at all levels and in all places, our churches must now move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service of the world.”

In the light of this declaration, we, as churches in St. Albans, resolved to form “Churches Together in St. Albans” as our local response to that declaration.

1. NAME

The organisation shall be known as “CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ST. ALBANS” (CTSA)

2. BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP and COMMITMENT

The BASIS of membership of Churches Together in St. Albans is as follows:

“Churches Together in St. Albans” unites in pilgrimage those churches in St. Albans which, acknowledging God’s revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures; and in obedience to God’s will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves:

- to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body
- to fulfill their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(abstracted from the CTIE Constitution)

3. RELATIONSHIPS

Churches Together In St. Albans is associated with Churches Together in Hertfordshire, which is an Intermediate Body of Churches Together in England (CTIE).

4. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The objective of Churches Together in St. Albans is:

- ❖ To be a visible sign of the churches' commitment to one another in obedience to prayer of Our Lord 'that all may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you; May they also be in us that the world may believe that you have sent me' (John 17:21)

To be achieved by:

- ❖ Encouraging shared worship, learning, dialogue, service and evangelism with each church sharing the treasures of its tradition.
- ❖ Encouraging the churches to take steps to fuller unity in the living and sharing of the gospel through the sharing of resources and presenting a united witness to the people of the city
- ❖ Providing a channel for the exchange of information between Member Churches
- ❖ Assisting the churches as they grow together in unity to seek a common mind and share in decision making in common through city wide and local initiatives
- ❖ Enabling the churches to respond to the needs of society at all levels through cooperation with each other and other agencies.
- ❖ The fostering of growing understanding between the churches and other faith groups in the city.
- ❖ Providing facilities for the collection and distribution of funds on behalf of other charitable organisations (e.g. Christian Aid).

5. ORGANISATION

The business of CTSA is conducted at an Annual Business Meeting and any Extraordinary Business Meetings as may be called during the year.

Any SIX Member Churches or the Enabling Group may at any time call an Extraordinary Business Meeting to discuss matters of urgent importance having given 14 days notice to Member Churches via their representatives.

The main work of CTSA is conducted through:

- Open Public meetings which will explore matters of interest and promote discussion and (where appropriate) co-operation, as determined by the Enabling Group with advice from the Annual Business Meeting (ABM). Approximately 6 such meetings may take place each year.
- Specific City-wide ecumenical events.
- Ad Hoc Task groups established to be responsible for specific areas of work, events or initiatives.
- The support of smaller neighbourhood / District groups of churches working together.

Each Member Church is entitled to and shall appoint two voting representatives who may vote on behalf of their Member Church at Business Meetings.

The ABM will elect an Enabling Group consisting of:

- Convenor
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- SIX elected members

To serve for a term of three years, with a third of their number being re-elected for further terms annually.

The Enabling Group exists to facilitate the activities of Churches Together in St. Albans and has the responsibility for the day to day management of CTSA including forward planning, organising and publicising events, public meetings and Business Meetings on behalf of CTSA and shall report annually to the ABM

Prospective members of the Enabling Group may be nominated (with the consent of the nominee) by the church representatives, who will be encouraged to bear in mind the need for a balance of representation (e.g. denomination, lay/clergy, gender etc.).

The Enabling Group shall have the power to co opt a further three ex officio members for any given year, and will have the power to fill casual vacancies until the next ABM.

6. MEMBERSHIP

There are three categories of membership of Churches Together in St. Albans:

- Full Membership
- Observer Status
- Bodies in Association

Those Churches in Full Membership or with Observer Status and Bodies in Association at the date of adoption of this Constitution are listed in Schedule A. Other categories of membership may also be established from time to time as agreed by the Annual Business Meeting .

6.1. Full Membership

A local church or congregation may apply for full membership provided that it accepts the Basis.

Churches or congregations in full membership are hereinafter referred to as “Member Churches”.

Note: where a local church has more than one congregation then that church may elect to have each congregation separately represented as a Member. A congregation is defined as a group of people worshipping God in a specific place, on a regular basis and with a recognised leadership.

6.2. Observer Status

A church that does not wish to seek Full Membership may apply for Observer status. A church with Observer status may send observers to attend Business Meetings at which they may speak but not vote.

6.3. Bodies in Association

Bodies in Association include organisations and companies which bring together Christians of different denominations for purposes congruent with the Basis and Aims of Churches Together in St. Albans and has a member group in the local area. A Body in Association may send representatives to attend Business Meetings at which they may speak but not vote.

6.4. Applications for Membership

An application for membership from a church, congregation or other body (as defined above) shall be received by the Enabling Group. The Enabling Group will consider such an application and decide whether to recommend the applicant for membership.

The Enabling Group will give notice in writing to the Member Churches via their representatives that an application for membership will be put to the vote at either the next ABM or an EBM called specifically for this purpose and that the Enabling Group is either recommending acceptance or not.

If any written objections to the application are received by the Secretary before the date of the meeting, then these will be taken into account at the vote. Absence of any such communication or vote from a Member Church will be assumed to be a vote in accordance with the Enabling Group's recommendation.

Acceptance into membership requires the support of at least 75% of the Member Churches. In all votes on membership applications, each Member Church has ONE vote.

7. FINANCE

The Enabling Group is responsible for funds on behalf of the Member Churches.

Each Member Church shall pay an annual subscription to Churches Together in St. Albans. The minimum level of subscription is set each year at the Annual Business Meeting. The Treasurer shall have the responsibility for recommending an appropriate minimum subscription level at the ABM.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving subscriptions and other monies for the work of CTSA and paying such receipted bills as may be received for goods and services purchased on behalf of CTSA.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the presentation of accounts to the ABM.

The ABM shall be responsible for the appointment of an independent examiner on the recommendation of the Treasurer.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Any amendments to this Constitution must be approved by at least 75% of the Member Churches of Churches Together in St. Albans.

9. DISSOLUTION

Churches Together in St. Albans may be dissolved by a Resolution passed by not less than 75% in number of the full Member Churches by their representatives present and voting at a EBM convened for the purpose of which at least six months notice shall have been given to the Member Churches. Such resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by or in the name of Churches Together in St. Albans provided that if any property remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities such property shall not be paid to or

distributed among the Member Churches of Churches Together in St. Albans but shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institutions or institutions having objects similar to some or all of the objects of Churches Together in St. Albans as Churches Together in St. Albans may determine and if and in so far as effect cannot be given to this provision then to some other charitable purpose.

This version of the Constitution was adopted on (date)

Approval

The Member Church known as

.....

having considered the above Constitution in its appropriate Governing Body, hereby indicates its acceptance of the Constitution.

Signed:

Position held:

SCHEDULE A

Full Members

Ss Alban & Stephen	RC
Ashley Church	Independent
St. Bartholomew's	RC
Bricket Wood	URC
Cathedral & Abbey Church of St. Alban	CofE
Chiswell Green	URC
Christ Church	CofE
City Church	Elim
Dagnall Street	Baptist
German Lutheran Congregation	
Hatfield Road	Methodist
Homewood Road	URC
St. Julian's	CofE
The King's Community Church	
St. Leonard's, Sandridge	CofE
Living Waters International Fellowship	COGIC (?)
St. Luke's, Cell Barnes Lane	CofE
Marlborough Road	Methodist
Marshalswick Baptist Free	
St. Mary's, Marshalswick	CofE
St. Michael's w/ St. Mary's, Childwick Green	CofE
New Testament Church of God	
St. Paul's	CofE
St. Albans Pentecostal	Assemblies of God
St. Peter's	CofE
Salvation Army	
St. Saviour's	CofE
St. Stephen's	CofE
Trinity	URC

Observer Status

The Network Church
London Colney Baptist
Park Street Baptist
Seventh Day Adventist
Society of Friends (Quakers)
Thirlmere Christian Fellowship
Vineyard Christian Fellowship

Bodies in Association

St. Andrew's Bookshop
Herts & Beds Churches Media Trust