



Constitution of the Association of Interchurch Families

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Name

This is the constitution of the association known as “The Association of Interchurch Families” (the “**Association**”).

1.2 Objects

The objects of the Association are:

- (a) to advance the Christian religion; and
- (b) to educate the public concerning the institution of marriage, with particular reference to inter-denominational marriages.

1.3 Powers

The Association shall have the following powers, which may only be exercised to further the objects set out in paragraph 1.2 (Objects):

- (a) to provide information, advice, help and pastoral support for those in inter-denominational marriages and those connected with them, including without limitation by providing a confidential counselling service;
- (b) to publicise by any means (including without limitation by writing or having written, publishing and/or circulating any leaflets, periodicals, books or other documents and in each case either for payment or not) the issues raised by inter-denominational marriages and the experiences of those within them;
- (c) to establish centres for one or more aspects of the Association’s work;
- (d) to hold, arrange, assist and/or attend conferences, lectures, meetings, discussions and other events;
- (e) to encourage the development of the faith and ecumenical commitment of the children and young people of inter-denominational marriages;
- (f) to raise funds by any lawful means, including without limitation by inviting and receiving subscriptions from members and contributions from any person or entity;
- (g) to open and maintain bank accounts and to invest any moneys held by the Association in any account, security or investment of any kind;
- (h) to establish and maintain insurance policies of any kind;
- (i) to hold property and other assets of any kind and to sell, let, grant security over or otherwise dispose of any assets of the Association; and
- (j) to do any other things which may further the objects set out in paragraph 1.2 (Objects).



1.4 **Standing Orders**

This constitution needs to be read in conjunction with the standing orders of the Association from time to time (the “**Standing Orders**”). The Standing Orders deal with various matters relating to the running of the Association. Some, but not all, of those matters are referred to in this constitution.

2. **MEMBERSHIP**

2.1 **Membership**

Membership of the Association shall be open to all those interested in furthering the objects of the Association. The regulations governing categories of membership and related matters shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

2.2 **Subscriptions**

Members shall be required to pay in advance each year an annual subscription at the appropriate rate or rates (as determined from time to time by the annual general meeting and recorded in the Standing Orders).

3. **GENERAL MEETINGS**

3.1 **Annual and extraordinary general meetings**

An annual general meeting shall be held once a year, at a date to be determined by the Executive Committee. An extraordinary general meeting may be called by the Executive Committee at any time and shall be called promptly by the Executive Committee if 25 or more members of the Association (or if membership of the Association is below 50, one third of the members) so request in writing, stating the object of the meeting.

3.2 **Notice of general meetings**

Not less than 14 days’ notice of any general meeting shall be sent to all members of the Association. However, the proceedings of a general meeting shall not be invalidated by the failure to give notice to a person entitled to receive notice of that meeting or by any person so entitled not receiving the notice.

3.3 **Conduct of general meetings**

- (a) The quorum for a general meeting shall be 25 members (or if membership of the Association is below 50, one third of the members) present in person.
- (b) Each general meeting shall be chaired by the Chair or, if he or she is not present, the Vice-Chair; except that if neither of them is present, then the meeting shall elect another member of the Executive Committee to chair the meeting.
- (c) Votes at a general meeting shall be taken on a show of hands, unless the person chairing the meeting orders a poll (which he or she must do if six or more members of the Association so request). Each member of the Association present shall have a single vote. The person chairing the meeting shall have a second, casting vote in the event of a tied vote, including on a poll.



4. PRESIDENT, PATRONS AND HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

4.1 President

It is intended that the Association may, but need not, from time to time have one or more Presidents. The regulations governing the appointment of a President shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

4.2 Patrons

It is intended that the Association may, but need not, from time to time appoint one or more Patrons. The regulations governing the appointment of Patrons shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

4.3 Honorary Life Members

It is intended that the Association may, but need not, from time to time appoint one or more Honorary Life Members. The regulations governing the appointment of Honorary Life Members shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

5. OFFICERS AND PAID EMPLOYEES

5.1 Officers

The Association shall have the following officers:

- (a) a chair of the Executive Committee (the “**Chair**”);
- (b) a vice-chair of the Executive Committee (the “**Vice-Chair**”);
- (c) an honorary treasurer; and
- (d) an honorary secretary,

except that there need not be an honorary treasurer or, as the case may be, an honorary secretary at any time when the Association has employed someone to fulfil all of the relevant duties. The regulations governing the appointment or election of officers, their powers and duties and related matters shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

5.2 Paid employees

- (a) The Association may from time to time have one or more paid employees. A member of the Association may be appointed as a paid employee; but this is subject to paragraph 9.2 (Remuneration of members of the Association).
- (b) No paid employee of the Association may be an officer of the Association or a member of the Executive Committee or the Advisory Council. However, any paid employee may be invited to attend (and take part in the discussions, but not in the case of the Executive Committee vote, at) meetings of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council.

6. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

6.1 Membership of the Executive Committee

The Association shall have a committee (the “**Executive Committee**”) made up of the following members:



- (a) the honorary treasurer and the honorary secretary, in each case from time to time;
- (b) four other members of the Association elected by the annual general meeting; and
- (c) any members of the Association from time to time co-opted onto the Executive Committee pursuant to paragraph 6.3 (Co-option onto the Executive Committee).

The members of the Executive Committee shall be the trustees of the Association. The regulations governing the election of members of the Executive Committee and related matters shall be set out in the Standing Orders. It is intended to have at all times on the Executive Committee at least one Roman Catholic, at least one Anglican and at least one member of another Christian Church.

6.2 Meetings of the Executive Committee

- (a) The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice during each financial year of the Association. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be called by the Executive Committee itself; but any two members of the Executive Committee may call one if more than eight months have elapsed since the previous meeting. A member of the Executive Committee may attend a meeting in person, by telephone or by any other real-time communication method approved by the person chairing the meeting.
- (b) The quorum for a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be three members of the Executive Committee (of whom one must be an elected member) who shall be present in person, by telephone or by any other real-time communication method approved by the person chairing the meeting.
- (c) Each meeting of the Executive Committee shall be chaired by the Chair or, if he or she is not present, the Vice-Chair; except that if neither of them is present, then the meeting shall elect another member of the Executive Committee to chair the meeting.
- (d) Votes at a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be taken in the manner determined by the person chairing the meeting. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have one vote. The person chairing the meeting shall have a second, casting vote in the event that a vote is tied.

6.3 Co-option onto the Executive Committee

- (a) The Executive Committee may co-opt up to three members of the Association in total at any time as members of the Executive Committee.
- (b) In addition, if an elected member of the Executive Committee leaves the Executive Committee for any reason before the expiry of the term for which he or she was elected, then the Executive Committee may co-opt a member of the Association to fill the vacancy.
- (c) The regulations governing the co-option of members of the Association onto the Executive Committee shall be set out in the Standing Orders

6.4 Executive Committee members not to be interested in the Association's assets or contracts

- (a) No member of the Executive Committee may have any interest (except as a trustee) in any assets belonging to the Association.
- (b) No member of the Executive Committee may have any interest (except as a trustee) in any contract entered into by the Association, other than a contract for services approved in accordance with paragraph 9.2 (Remuneration of members of the Association). This paragraph 6.4(b) shall not prevent the Association from establishing and maintaining any



policy of insurance from time to time for the benefit of all members of the Executive Committee.

7. MANAGEMENT

7.1 Management of the Association by the Executive Committee

The management of the Association shall be vested in the Executive Committee. It may exercise all of the powers of the Association, except for any matters expressly reserved (in this constitution or the Standing Orders) to a general meeting.

7.2 Management of the Association between Executive Committee meetings

The Executive Committee may delegate all or any of its powers and duties in between meetings of the Executive Committee to any person or group of two or more people (a “**Working Group**”). The regulations governing delegation by the Executive Committee and related matters shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

8. THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

8.1 Membership of the Advisory Council

The Association shall have an advisory council (an “**Advisory Council**”) made up of the following people:

- (a) each of the members of the Executive Committee from time to time;
- (b) any President, Patron or Honorary Life Member who may from time to time be invited by the Executive Committee to sit on the Advisory Council;
- (c) a representative of the Young Adults Group;
- (d) up to six other members of the Association elected as set out in the Standing Orders; and
- (e) any other member of the Association or other person from time to time co-opted onto the Advisory Council by the Executive Committee.

The regulations governing the appointment or election of members of the Advisory Council and related matters shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

8.2 Function of the Advisory Council

- (a) The function of the Advisory Council shall be to advise the Executive Committee on the general direction and policy of the Association and on any other matters determined by the Executive Committee.
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, the Advisory Council shall have no executive or managerial powers or duties.

8.3 Meetings of the Advisory Council

- (a) The Advisory Council shall meet as often as the Executive Committee may determine.



- (b) Each meeting of the Advisory Council shall be chaired by the Chair or, if he or she is not present, the Vice-Chair; except that if neither of them is present, then the meeting shall elect another member of the Advisory Council to chair the meeting.
- (c) No formal vote shall be taken at any meeting of the Advisory Council and there shall be no quorum requirement.

9. EXPENSES AND OTHER PAYMENTS TO MEMBERS

9.1 Expenses

The Association may pay any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by members on behalf of the Association or in attending conferences or events relevant to the objects and powers of the Association. Regulations regarding the payment of expenses shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

9.2 Remuneration of members of the Association

A member of the Association may become a paid employee of the Association or otherwise be remunerated for services provided to the Association. However:

- (a) the Executive Committee (or a Working Group specifically appointed for the purpose by the Executive Committee) must approve the employment or other remuneration by a resolution supported by three quarters of those present and entitled to vote at the relevant meeting;
- (b) the member concerned must not be present when the Executive Committee (or Working Group) debates and decides on the proposal;
- (c) if the member concerned is a member of the Executive Committee, then the employment or other remuneration must be approved by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee must take into account all relevant circumstances, including without limitation the ability and experience of the member concerned and the proposed level of remuneration. The Executive Committee may only approve the employment or other remuneration if it considers that it is necessary and the proposed terms reasonable in the interests of the Association and that prior written consent of the Charity Commission has been obtained. In the case of paid employment, the member must upon becoming a paid employee resign from the Executive Committee;
- (d) the number of members of the Executive Committee in receipt of remuneration from the Association may not at any time comprise more than a minority of the members of the Executive Committee at that time; and
- (e) a member who is remunerated for services provided to the Association on anything other than an exceptional, one-off basis shall be treated for the purposes of this constitution as a paid employee of the Association even if he or she is not an employee of the Association as a matter of law.

9.3 Bursary and similar funds

The Association may establish and maintain one or more bursary or similar funds, with the intention of assisting members of the Association to attend conferences, lectures, meetings and other events related to the purposes of the Association. The regulations regarding any such funds shall be set out in the Standing Orders.



9.4 No other payments or transfers of property to members

Payments may be made to members of the Association pursuant to paragraph 9.1 (Expenses) or 9.2 (Remuneration of members of the Association) or out of any fund set up pursuant to paragraph 9.3 (Bursary and similar funds). Apart from that, no part of the income and assets of the Association may be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly, to any member of the Association.

10. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Annual accounts shall be produced for the Association as soon as possible after the end of each of the Association's financial years. They shall be audited if that is required by law or if the Executive Committee so decides. Otherwise, they shall be examined by an independent examiner. A suitably qualified auditor or, as the case may be, examiner shall be appointed by the annual general meeting.

11. DISSOLUTION

The Association shall be wound up and then dissolved if so determined by a general meeting. If the Association is wound up or dissolved, then any remaining assets after the liabilities have been discharged shall be transferred to one or more charities having objects similar to those of the Association.

12. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION AND THE STANDING ORDERS

12.1 Amendments to the Standing Orders made by the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee may at any time with immediate effect adopt one or more new Standing Orders or otherwise amend the Standing Orders. However, any amendment made by the Executive Committee to the Standing Orders shall be notified to the members of the Association as soon as possible after the amendment is made and shall be subject to approval by an affirmative resolution of the next annual general meeting.

12.2 Amendments to this constitution and the Standing Orders made by a general meeting

- (a) Subject to paragraph 12.1 (Amendments to the Standing Orders made by the Executive Committee), an amendment may only be made to this constitution or the Standing Orders by a resolution passed at a general meeting by at least two thirds of those members of the Association present and voting.
- (b) A proposal to amend this constitution or the Standing Orders shall be considered by a general meeting if the Executive Committee so determines.
- (c) In addition, if 25 or more members of the Association (or if membership of the Association is below 50, one third of the members) submit a proposal to amend this constitution or the Standing Orders to the honorary secretary (or if there is no honorary secretary, to the relevant paid employee) no less than two months before the annual general meeting, then the proposal shall be considered at the annual general meeting. Alternatively, a proposal to amend this constitution or the Standing Orders may be the subject of an extraordinary general meeting called at the instance of 25 members (or if membership of the Association is below 50, one third of the members) pursuant to paragraph 3.1 (Annual and extraordinary general meetings).



12.3 Restrictions on amendments to this constitution and the Standing Orders

- (a) No amendment may be made to paragraphs 1.2 (Objects), 9.2(c) or (d) (Remuneration of members of the Association) or 11 (Dissolution) or this paragraph 12.3(a) without the consent of the Charity Commission.
- (b) No amendment may be made to this constitution or the Standing Orders which would cause the Association to cease to be a charity under English law.
- (c) No proposal for an amendment to this constitution or the Standing Orders which relates to elections shall be considered at a general meeting until after any elections being held at that general meeting have been completed.

End.