



Standing Orders of the Association of Interchurch Families¹

1. MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1.1 Types of membership

- (a) Apart from honorary life membership, which is dealt with in Standing Order 2.3 (Honorary Life Members), there shall be two categories of membership of the Association, namely individual and family membership.
- (b) Any individual adult wishing to join shall fill in and submit the appropriate form.
- (c) Similarly, any family which wishes to take out family membership shall fill in and submit the appropriate form. Each adult within a family which has taken out family membership shall be treated as a separate member of the Association for all purposes (and so, for example, will have a separate vote at any general meeting), subject to Standing Order 1.1(e).
- (d) A young person within a family which has taken out family membership will be treated as an adult in this context when he or she becomes a member of the Young Adults Group. He or she may then elect to become an individual member; but if he or she does not do so, then he or she will be treated as an adult within the family membership (unless he or she notifies the Association that he or she does not wish to continue to be treated as a member at all).
- (e) It will not be necessary to send a separate copy of each mailing to each adult within a family which has taken out family membership, unless one of the adults makes a specific request to that effect.
- (f) The Executive Committee may in its discretion refuse membership to any individual or family or terminate the membership of any member. Clearly this right should only ever be exercised in an extreme case and after the individual or family in question has been given the opportunity to address the Executive Committee.

1.2 Subscription rates

The minimum subscription rate as at the date of adoption of this Standing Order for each category of membership is £15 per annum; but for the avoidance of doubt, this does not apply to Honorary Life Members.

1.3 Hardship

Payment of subscriptions may in the case of hardship be waived by the honorary secretary (or appropriate paid employee) and the Chair acting together.

2. PRESIDENT, PATRONS AND HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

2.1 President

One or more Presidents of the Association may be appointed by the Executive Committee, but only with the approval of a general meeting.

2.2 Patrons

- (a) With the approval of the Advisory Council (as representing the membership of the Association) Patrons may be appointed by the Executive Committee, in each case because of an office held by the proposed Patron or because of his or her recognizable personal influence.
- (b) Any appointment as a Patron made because of the holding by the Patron of a particular office shall come to an end when he or she ceases to hold that office. Any appointment made as a result of the Patron's recognizable personal influence shall be for a fixed period, to be specified by the Executive Committee at the time of the appointment (currently 5 years)

¹ As most recently amended at the AGM of the Association on 29 August 2010

2.3 **Honorary Life Members**

With the approval of the Advisory Council, the Executive Committee may appoint one or more Honorary Life Members. It is intended that this status should be conferred upon friends of the Association as a mark of affection and respect.

3. **OFFICERS AND THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OR AUDITOR**

3.1 **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

- (a) The Executive Committee shall appoint one of the elected or co-opted members of the Executive Committee to be the chair of the Executive Committee for a term (which may not exceed the then current term of his or her membership of the Executive Committee) determined by the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall appoint one of the elected or co-opted members of the Executive Committee to be the vice-chair of the Executive Committee for a term (which may not exceed the then current term of his or her membership of the Executive Committee) determined by the Executive Committee.
- (c) The appointment of the Chair or Vice-Chair shall be by a majority vote of the members of the Executive Committee (excluding any candidate or candidates for the appointment, who shall if any member of the Executive Committee so requests withdraw from the meeting of the Executive Committee considering the appointment whilst that consideration and any vote takes place).
- (d) Each Chair and Vice-Chair shall be eligible for re-appointment to that office at the end of his or her term.
- (e) The Executive Committee shall appoint in accordance with paragraph 3.1(a) or, as the case may be, (b) a replacement Chair or, as the case may be, Vice-Chair if the Chair or the Vice-Chair resigns from that role or resigns from, or otherwise ceases to be a member of, the Executive Committee.

3.2 **Elections of honorary secretary and honorary treasurer**

- (a) The election of the honorary secretary and the honorary treasurer shall take place at the annual general meeting.
- (b) Each elected officer shall be appointed for a four year term expiring at the end of the appropriate annual general meeting, unless the annual general meeting at which he or she is elected resolves to appoint him or her for a shorter term.
- (c) An elected officer shall be eligible for re-election at the end of his or her term.
- (d) The Executive Committee may, but need not, fill a vacancy created by an elected officer resigning or otherwise ceasing to hold office. Any appointment by the Executive Committee to fill a vacancy shall take immediate effect but shall only be for the period up to the next annual general meeting. If the outgoing officer's term of office would not have expired at that annual general meeting, then a replacement (who may be the person appointed by the Executive Committee to fill the vacancy in the meantime) shall be elected in accordance with Standing Order 3.2(b).

3.3 **Powers and duties of the Chair and the Vice-Chair**

The Chair:

- (a) shall chair or host all general meetings, all meetings of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council and the other principal meetings and events organised by the Association;
- (b) shall manage the Association between meetings of the Executive Committee by exercising the powers and duties of the Executive Committee, except to the extent that those powers and duties have from time to time been delegated by the Executive Committee to one or more other individuals or working groups;

- (c) shall be the first point of reference when any employee of the Association needs guidance on the business of the Association;
- (d) shall exercise oversight of, and offer support to, employees of the Association, as appropriate;
- (e) may delegate particular powers and duties (but not all or a substantial part of his or her powers and duties) to one or more other persons; and
- (f) shall have such further powers and duties as the Executive Committee may decide from time to time.

The Vice-Chair shall chair or host all general meetings, all meetings of the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council and any other principal meetings and events organised by the Association at which he or she is present but the Chair is not present; and may with the approval of a majority of the Executive Committee exercise some or all of the powers and duties of the Chair during any period when, by reason of illness or otherwise, the Chair is unable to do so himself or herself.

The person chairing a general meeting or a meeting of the Executive Committee (which will generally be the Chair or, in his or her absence, the Vice-Chair) has a second, casting vote in the event of a tied vote. It is intended that this casting vote would generally be used to support the position as it was before the relevant vote is taken.

3.4 **Powers and duties of the honorary secretary**

The honorary secretary shall:

- (a) attend and take minutes at each general meeting of the Association, each meeting of the Executive Committee, (unless the Executive Committee appoints someone else to do so) the Advisory Council and (unless the relevant Working Group appoints someone else to do so) each Working Group of which he or she is a member;
- (b) subject to the direction of the Executive Committee and those appointed for this purpose by the Executive Committee, be responsible to the Chair for the day-to-day management of the Association; and
- (c) have such further powers and duties as the Executive Committee may decide from time to time.

The Executive Committee may determine from time to time that one or more of the duties of the honorary secretary may be fulfilled by a paid employee of the Association; and with the consent of the Executive Committee one or more of the duties of the honorary secretary may be delegated to a paid employee of the Association if the duty is within the employee's job description. As at the date of the most recent amendment of this Standing Order 3, the duties of the honorary secretary have been delegated to an executive officer (the "**Executive Officer**").

3.5 **Powers and duties of the honorary treasurer**

The honorary treasurer shall:

- (a) be responsible for the proper keeping of the Association's books of account and for the preparation of the Association's annual accounts;
- (b) administer the funds of the Association (including those in any bursary or similar fund) in accordance with the instructions of the Executive Committee and those appointed for this purpose by the Executive Committee;
- (c) have the power to give receipts for all moneys paid to the Association; and
- (d) have such further powers and duties as the Executive Committee may decide from time to time.

The Executive Committee may determine from time to time that one or more of the duties of the honorary treasurer may be fulfilled by a paid employee of the Association; and with the consent of the Executive Committee one or more of the duties of the honorary treasurer may be delegated to a paid employee of the Association if the duty is within the employee's job description.

3.6 **Appointment of the independent examiner or auditor**

- (a) The appointment of the independent examiner or, as appropriate, auditor shall take place at the annual general meeting.

- (b) The independent examiner or, as appropriate, auditor shall be appointed for a one-year term expiring at the end of the appropriate annual general meeting, unless the law requires the appointment to be for a different term or the annual general meeting at which he or she is elected resolves to appoint him or her for a shorter term.
- (c) An independent examiner or auditor shall be eligible for re-appointment at the end of his or her term.
- (d) The Executive Committee shall fill a vacancy created by the independent examiner or auditor resigning or otherwise ceasing to hold office (unless the vacancy arises only a short time before an annual general meeting). Any appointment by the Executive Committee to fill a vacancy shall take immediate effect but shall only be for the period up to the next annual general meeting. If the term of office of the outgoing independent examiner or, as appropriate, auditor would not have expired at that annual general meeting, then a replacement (who may be the person appointed by the Executive Committee to fill the vacancy in the meantime) shall be elected in accordance with Standing Order 3.6(b).

4 DELEGATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Delegation generally

- (a) The constitution permits the Executive Committee to delegate all or any of its powers and duties between meetings of the Executive Committee to any person or Working Group comprising two or more persons. Standing Order 3.3 (Powers and duties of the Chair and the Vice-Chair) is an example of delegation by the Executive Committee.
- (b) Normally, an individual to whom any of the powers and duties of the Executive Committee are delegated shall be either a member or a paid employee of the Association.
- (c) There is no requirement that members of a Working Group need be members of the Executive Committee. Indeed, a Working Group may have amongst its members one or more people who are not members of the Association. However, members of the Association shall always comprise a majority on any Working Group.
- (d) The nature and extent of any delegation by the Executive Committee should normally be recorded in writing. The Executive Committee shall determine the appropriate manner to record each delegation – for example, in a Standing Order; in terms of reference annexed to these Standing Orders; in a job description annexed to these Standing Orders; or in the minutes of the Executive Committee or by a memorandum from the Chair. The written record shall in the case of any delegation other than a minor or short-term delegation specify at least the following:
 - (i) the purpose of the delegation, the powers and duties delegated and the period of the delegation (which may be a specified period or until further notice);
 - (ii) the identity of the delegate and, if it is a Working Group, the initial membership of that Working Group; and
 - (iii) in the case of a Working Group, whether any paid employee of the Association is to be a member and if so on what basis (for example as to counting in a quorum, taking part in the deliberations and voting).
- (e) Any Working Group shall (unless the Executive Committee determines to the contrary) be entitled to:
 - (i) co-opt additional members (subject to Standing Order 4.1(c)); and
 - (ii) invite one or more other people (whether or not members or paid employees of the Association) to attend all or part of any of its meetings and to take part in its deliberations (but not to vote).
- (f) The Executive Committee remains ultimately responsible for the management of the Association, including the exercise of any powers and duties which have been delegated. Accordingly, while any person or Working Group to which any powers and duties are delegated by the Executive Committee (and the Chair, who pursuant to Standing Order 3.3(b) (Powers and duties of the Chair and the Vice-Chair) manages the Association between meetings of the Executive Committee) may take and act upon their decisions between meetings of the Executive Committee, they must report their decisions back to the Executive Committee at its next meeting for endorsement. This endorsement may take the form of the approval of reports or meeting minutes (and so need not generally involve the Executive Committee in re-considering in detail each decision).

4.2 **Annexures to these Standing Orders**

- (a) If the Executive Committee approves the terms of reference of any Working Group, then those terms of reference (as amended from time to time with the approval of the Executive Committee) shall be annexed to these Standing Orders.
- (b) The job description of any paid employee of the Association (as amended from time to time with the approval of the Executive Committee) shall be annexed to these Standing Orders.
- (c) The Executive Committee may from time to time specify additional annexures to these Standing Orders. These might for example include the terms of delegation to an individual or Working Group and the job description of any volunteer or group conducting one or more specific tasks for the Association.
- (d) Any annexures to these Standing Orders shall be treated for all purposes (including the making of amendments) as part of these Standing Orders.

5 **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

5.1 **Elections**

- (a) The election of the elected members of the Executive Committee shall take place at the annual general meeting.
- (b) Each elected member of the Executive Committee shall be appointed for a four year term, unless the annual general meeting at which he or she is elected resolves to appoint him or her for a shorter term.
- (c) Each elected member of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election at the end of his or her term.
- (d) This Standing Order 5.1 does not apply to the honorary secretary and the honorary treasurer, notwithstanding that they are elected and are members of the Executive Committee.

5.2 **Information for new Executive Committee members**

Each new member of the Executive Committee shall be given appropriate information and assistance to ensure that he or she can play a full part in the Executive Committee's deliberations. In particular, appropriate materials outlining the responsibilities of a trustee of a charity shall be made available to each new Executive Committee member.

5.3 **Meetings of the Executive Committee**

The constitution provides for no less than two meetings of the Executive Committee to be held every year. It is the intention in fact that there should be at least three meetings of the Executive Committee in every year.

5.4 **Co-option onto the Executive Committee**

- (a) Paragraph 6.3(a) (Co-option onto the Executive Committee) of the constitution gives the Executive Committee the power to co-opt onto the Executive Committee up to three members of the Association in total at any time. Any appointment of this sort shall be for a specified period of no more than four years and is to be confirmed at the AGM subsequent to the appointment being made. The person involved shall be eligible to be co-opted again onto the Executive Committee at the end of the specified period with the approval of a general meeting.
- (b) In addition, pursuant to paragraph 6.3(b) (Co-option onto the Executive Committee) of the constitution, 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. Any appointment by the Executive Committee to fill a vacancy shall take immediate effect but shall only be for the period up to the next annual general meeting. If the outgoing Executive Committee member's term of office would not have expired at that annual general meeting, then a replacement (who may be the person appointed by the Executive Committee to fill the vacancy in the meantime) shall be elected for a period of up to four years as determined by the Executive Committee.

5.5 Attendance at meetings of the Executive Committee

- (a) In addition to its power to co-opt people as members of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee may invite any person (whether or not a member of the Association) to attend at all or any part of one or more of its Executive Committee meetings and to take part in the Executive Committee's deliberations (but not vote).
- (b) It is intended that the Executive Committee shall use the power set out in Standing Order 5.5(a) to invite the Executive Officer to take minutes at each meeting of the Executive Committee (except for business to which the Executive Committee considers it would be inappropriate to admit him or her).

5.6 Insurance

The Executive Committee may (but is not required to) obtain and maintain insurance for members of the Executive Committee against any liabilities incurred as trustees of the Association; but this insurance may not cover a member of the Executive Committee in the case of his or her own wilful default or fraud.

6 THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

6.1 Elections

- (a) The election of the elected members of the Advisory Council shall take place at the annual general meeting.
- (b) Each elected member of the Advisory Council shall be appointed for a three year term, unless the annual general meeting at which he or she is elected resolves to appoint him or her for a shorter term.
- (c) Each elected member of the Advisory Council shall be eligible for re-election at the end of his or her term.

6.2 Information for new Advisory Council members

Each new member of the Advisory Council shall be given appropriate information and assistance to ensure that he or she can play a full part in the Advisory Council's deliberations.

6.3 Meetings of the Advisory Council

The constitution provides for the Advisory Council to meet as often as the Executive Committee may determine. It is the intention in fact that there should be at least two meetings of the Advisory Council in every year.

6.4 Co-option onto the Advisory Council

- (a) Paragraph 8.1(e) (Membership of the Advisory Council) of the constitution gives the Executive Committee the power to co-opt onto the Advisory Council other members or non-members of the Association. Any appointment of this sort shall be for a period determined by the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall use its powers to co-opt additional members onto the Advisory Council with the aim of ensuring, so far as it is practicable in the circumstances, that there is in the membership of the Advisory Council an appropriate level of representation of the Free Churches, the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church and a wide geographical spread. In particular, it is considered desirable that there should always be two Free Church members of the Advisory Council, in addition to any Free Church member of the Executive Committee.

6.5 Attendance at meetings of the Advisory Council

- (a) In addition to its power to co-opt people on to the Advisory Council, the Executive Committee may invite any person (whether or not a member of the Association) to attend all or any part of one or more Advisory Council meetings and to take part in the Advisory Council's deliberations.
- (b) It is intended that the Executive Committee shall use the power set out in Standing Order 6.5(a) to invite:
 - (i) an appropriate person to take minutes at each meeting of the Advisory Council;
 - (ii) any paid employee of the Association to each part of any Advisory Council meeting which is relevant to the work undertaken by that employee.

7 BURSARY FUND

7.1 Establishment and intention

The Association shall maintain a bursary fund to enable members of the Association to attend conferences and other occasions when the interests of interchurch families or "mixed marriages" are involved. Priority is to be given to assisting members of the Association to attend the annual conference of the Association.

7.2 Management of the bursary fund

- (a) The Executive Committee shall from time to time appoint two administrators for the bursary fund.
- (b) The Executive Committee may at any time:
 - (i) remove (and replace pursuant to Standing Order 7.2(a)) one or both of the administrators; or
 - (ii) replace pursuant to Standing Order 7.2(a) an administrator who resigns.
- (c) Neither administrator shall be eligible to apply for a grant from the bursary fund.
- (d) The administrators shall consider any application or suggestion for a bursary award to be made to a member of the Association.
- (e) The administrators may consult the Chair if they wish to do so in relation to any particular bursary decision.

7.3 Information and accounting

- (a) The administrators may notify the honorary treasurer and the independent examiner or, as the case may be, auditor of any bursary awards made. Apart from that, they should not generally reveal the fact of any bursary award being made or details of it to any other person (apart from the Chair where he or she has been consulted pursuant to Standing Order 7.2(d) (Management of the bursary fund)). No information about any bursary awards shall be made public.
- (b) A financial report on the bursary fund shall be produced as soon as possible after the end of each of the Association's financial years. That report shall be audited if that is required by law or if the Executive Committee so decides. Otherwise, it shall be examined by an independent examiner. A suitably qualified auditor or, as the case may be, independent examiner shall be appointed by the annual general meeting. The report shall be appended to the annual accounts of the Association.

7.4 Closing or winding-up the bursary fund

The bursary fund may be closed to new moneys or wound up only if a general meeting of the Association so decides. Any moneys in the bursary fund at the time it is wound up shall, subject to any requirements imposed by law, be applied as determined by a general meeting of the Association.

8 HONORARIA

8.1 Constitutional requirements

The requirements of the constitution must be satisfied in relation to any proposal to pay an honorarium to any member of the Executive Committee or any other member of the Association in relation to work he or she has agreed to carry out for the Association. These include a requirement to obtain the consent of the Charity Commission before any payment is made to a member of the Executive Committee.

8.2 Appraisal process for recipient of an honorarium

- (a) No honorarium shall be paid to any member of the Association unless a detailed written statement of the responsibilities and priorities in respect of which the honorarium is to be paid has been approved by the Executive Committee.
- (b) Any member of the Association receiving an honorarium shall:
 - (i) regularly supply to the Chair a timesheet showing the work in the relevant areas which he or she has carried out; and

- (ii) at least once a year report in writing to the Executive Committee on that work,
to allow the Chair and the Executive Committee to consider whether the honorarium should be continued.

8.3 **Payment of expenses to the recipient of an honorarium**

A member of the Executive Committee or other member of the Association in receipt of an honorarium shall be entitled to the reimbursement of expenses pursuant to Standing Order 9.2 (Expenses) in addition to the honorarium.

9 **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**

9.1 **Bank signatories**

- (a) Cheques and other instructions for payment from any account of the Association shall be signed by at least two persons authorised by the Executive Committee from time to time. For any cheque or other payment instruction of £1,000 or more, one of the signatories must be a member of the Executive Committee.
- (b) A list of the persons authorised by the Executive Committee for this purpose from time to time shall be maintained by the honorary treasurer. This list shall always include the Chair.

9.2 **Expenses**

Expenses incurred by a member of the Association in carrying out the business of the Association shall be reimbursed by the Association, provided that:

- (a) if the expenses are incurred in relation to a Working Group, the incurring of the expenses must be approved by the person appointed by the Executive Committee to chair that Working Group, the Executive Officer, the honorary treasurer or the Chair. This does not apply to travel expenses relating to a meeting of that Working Group called by or with the agreement of the person who chairs that Working Group, which will require no separate approval;
- (b) for expenses not falling within (a), the incurring of the expenses must be approved by the Executive Officer, the honorary treasurer or the Chair. This does not apply to travel expenses relating to a meeting of the Executive Committee, which will require no separate approval;
- (c) any expenses which are outside the then current budget for a Working Group to which they relate, or which might reasonably be expected to result in that Working Group exceeding its then current budget, must in any event be approved by the Executive Officer, the honorary treasurer or the Chair;
- (d) members will be expected to travel for meetings as economically as possible, taking advantage of any reduced fares which may be available. If a member is unable to use public transport for a journey, travel expenses by car may be claimed at the rate determined by the Executive Committee;
- (e) no expenses may be reimbursed without the Association's expenses claim form being completed appropriately and submitted by the member claiming them. The current form requires separate claims to be submitted for expenses falling within different appropriate headings; and
- (f) no person may approve his or her own expenses claim.

9.3 **Financial years**

The financial year of the Association shall end on 31 December in each year.

9.4 **Contact with the press and other media**

Any member of the Association who speaks or writes to or on any publication or broadcast to further the cause of interchurch families should take care not to attribute his or her personal opinions to the Association (unless he or she has been specifically mandated to put forward that opinion on behalf of the Association).

End