

# CITY EVANGELICAL CHURCH RULES

## Part 1- Principles for Trust Purposes

### 1.1 *The Church Constitution*

The Church is established under a Constitution dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009, which contains the main legal provisions governing the Church, its purpose and Basis of Faith, its powers and the use of any property owned by the Church. For ease of reference the Basis of Faith is set out in Appendix 1. The Constitution appoints The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Limited as Holding Trustee and the Pastor(s) and Elders as the Managing Trustees.

### 1.2 *Provisions of the Church Constitution*

The Constitution contains provision for the meetings of the Managing Trustees. These provisions are the minimum requirements for their meetings. They stipulate the following:

1.2.1 There shall be not less than 3.

1.2.2 The Chairman of their meetings shall be appointed by them and shall have lasting vote.

1.2.3 They shall meet not less than 4 times a year.

1.2.4 A quorum shall consist of at least one half of the Managing Trustees.

1.2.5 Written minutes of their meetings shall be maintained.

1.2.6 The Pastor(s) and Assistant Pastor(s) may be remunerated from church funds provided those paid are not more than one half of the number of Managing Trustees, but they must not be present during such part of the meeting in which their salary or financial benefits are discussed or voted upon.

1.2.7 Subject to 1.2.6 above no Managing Trustee shall receive any financial benefit from the church funds in connection with his service as an Officer, other than the reimbursement of expenses incurred in carrying out his duties as an Officer or reimbursement of costs of the purchase of goods or services supplied to or for the Church.

1.2.8 Legal rules calling for the disqualification of trustees.

1.2.9 The Constitution also contains provisions for its amendment.

### 1.3 *Church Rules*

These Rules set out the practices of the Church and its method of internal governance, none of which are contrary to any of the provisions of the Constitution referred to in 1.1 above.

## **Part 2 – Doctrinal Distinctives**

### *2.1 The Nature of the Doctrinal Distinctive of the Church*

These Doctrinal Distinctives state the doctrinal position, and thereby determine the practice, of City Evangelical Church in respect of certain issues. It is recognised that true evangelical Christian believers may, in conscience, take a different personal view in respect of these matters. Persons may be welcomed into membership of City Evangelical Church who hold a different view on these matters, provided that they are prepared to respect the beliefs and practices of the church and that they will not seek to undermine them. A person may only become an Elder of City Evangelical Church if he wholeheartedly subscribes to these beliefs and is willing to uphold them.

### *2.2 The Sufficiency of the Scriptures*

City Evangelical Church believes that God speaks to men and women today through the Scriptures. When the Scriptures are read or explained, whether publicly or privately, God speaks by his Spirit. The Scriptures contain everything which it is necessary for God to say, whether explicitly or through deduction by good and necessary consequence, to enable men and women to come to salvation through Christ, and to grow to maturity in Christ such that they might know how to live to please him. Since the Scriptures are entirely sufficient in this regard, no additional word or revelation from God is required to enable a person to know God, or to know his will. Where anyone claims that God is speaking a word by any means other than through the Scriptures, such word shall not be accepted unless it is first rigorously tested to determine whether it is consistent with the Scriptures. In accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, the Elders of the church are the persons within the congregation who bear the responsibility for assessing whether any such word is genuinely from God.

### *2.3 Baptism*

City Evangelical Church believes that Baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is an outward sign which marks a person's regeneration and baptism by the Holy Spirit into membership of the Church of Jesus Christ. As such it should only properly be administered to a person who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism should, wherever possible and practicable, be administered by immersion in water, symbolising that the person baptised has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and is the possessor of the benefits thereof.

### *2.4 The Lord's Supper*

City Evangelical Church believes that the Lord's Supper is a remembrance meal at which Christian believers share bread and wine together to remind themselves of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of the new covenant of salvation which he inaugurated, and to proclaim that he will return. Jesus Christ is no more present at a celebration of the Lord's Supper than at any other gathering of the members of a local

church. The Lord's Supper should be celebrated on a regular basis by the members of the church, ideally in the context of a fellowship meal demonstrating their unity in the body of Christ.

### *2.5 Election and Evangelism*

City Evangelical Church believes that God is sovereign in the salvation of men and women. Those persons who exercise genuine repentance and true faith in Jesus Christ do so because they have been chosen by God. Knowledge of this truth promotes amongst believers absolute humility and assurance of salvation. However it does not follow from the truth of election that believers need not participate in mission and evangelism. The Church is commanded by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all men everywhere, and the proclamation of the gospel is the means by which the elect are brought to salvation.

### *2.6 Baptism in the Holy Spirit*

City Evangelical Church believes that every genuine believer was baptised by the Holy Spirit at the moment at which they were regenerated and brought to true faith in Jesus Christ. The experiences of the disciples at Pentecost and of the Samaritan believers in Acts Chapter 8 were unique and unrepeatable moments of salvation history, and they do not provide a pattern for present day spiritual experience. Whilst every genuine believer is therefore always indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it does not follow that every believer is necessarily filled with the Spirit at all times. All believers are urged by Scripture to ensure that they are increasingly yielded to the power, influence and control of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them.

### *2.7 The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

City Evangelical Church believes that all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament may be bestowed upon believers today as God himself directs in his sovereignty. The gifts of the Spirit did not cease to be available to the church with the passing of the apostolic age, and they will only pass away when Jesus Christ returns to establish his kingdom.

### *2.8 The Gift of Tongues*

City Evangelical Church believes that although the gift of tongues may be given to believers today, it is not a gift which is given to every believer, nor is it a sign of receipt of the Holy Spirit. Tongues are given not as a means by which God may speak to his church, but are a gift whereby members of the church are enabled to praise God in languages other than their own. The gift of tongues should be used publicly to offer praise to God at a meeting of a local church only where an interpreter is present who will be able to translate the praise offered so that it can be understood and affirmed by all members of the congregation.

### *2.9 Salvation By Christ Alone*

City Evangelical Church believes that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and that he provides the sole means by which men and women may come to salvation. The Christian faith is the only true religion, and adherence to any other belief cannot lead to salvation. Believers in Jesus Christ are required to display tolerance in their attitude towards those of other faiths, but also to seek to bring them to a true saving knowledge of Him by prayer and evangelism.

### *2.10 Leadership of the Local Church*

City Evangelical Church believes that, in accordance with the pattern established in Scripture, a local church congregation should be led by a plurality of suitably gifted Elders. Whilst God created men and women in absolute equality, he also ordained that leadership in the family, within the context of marriage, and in the church, should be the functional responsibility of men. For this reason, in obedience to the Word of God, the Elders of City Evangelical Church are required to be male. The duly appointed Elders of the church are the under-shepherds of Christ, and they must exercise their leadership of the local church in accordance with the character of Christ's own leadership of the Universal Church. They are to love the members of the church and to give themselves in their service, working to present them to Christ as holy and blameless. In turn the members of the church are required to submit themselves to the leadership of the Elders, in so far as such leadership is exercised in accordance with the Scriptures. Also in accordance with the pattern of Scriptures, male and female members of the church with appropriate gifts may be set apart as Deacons to serve particular needs arising in the life of the church.

### *2.11 Every Member Ministry*

City Evangelical Church believes that each and every member of the church is called by God to utilise his or her gifts, whatever they may be, by ministering to other members of the church. The provision of teaching and pastoral care within the life of the church is not the sole responsibility of the Elders and Deacons. The church does not believe that there is any scriptural justification for a distinction amongst believers between clergy and laity, but affirms that every believer is a priest who enjoys direct access to God and is able to minister to others. The Elders and Deacons of the church are not qualitatively distinguishable from other members of the church, but are believers who have been appointed by the members of the church to provide pastoral leadership of the congregation, in recognition that they are suitable in character and gifts to undertake such responsibilities.

### *2.12 Sex and Sexuality*

City Evangelical Church believes that God created men and women as sexual creatures. As such it is entirely right and pleasing to God that they should enjoy the pleasure of sexual intimacy. However, God has ordained that the only proper

relationship within which such sexual intimacy may be enjoyed is marriage. Sexual intimacy between a man and a woman who are unmarried, or between persons of the same gender, is sinful and displeasing to God. Those who engage in sexual intimacy outside of the context of a marriage relationship, and who do not repent of their sin, face the certain prospect of judgement. However, God longs that all persons who have fallen short of his standards of sexual behaviour should come to repentance and faith so that they might receive complete forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and that they might resist temptation and live in a manner which is pleasing to him.

## **Part 3 – Membership**

### **3.1 The Role of Members**

The members of the church are those individuals who are in full agreement with the Statement of Faith and have committed themselves to serve Christ in united corporate fellowship and solidarity with the other members of the church, and who have agreed to submit themselves to the constitutional authority and leadership of the Elders of the church.

### **3.2 Categories of Membership**

#### *3.2.1 Full Adult Members*

3.2.1.1. Persons aged over eighteen years may become full adult members of the church.

3.2.1.2. Full adult members are entitled to vote on all matters regarding the conduct of the business of the church.

3.2.1.3. Full adult members of the church are not entitled to hold a concurrent equivalent permanent membership of any other church.

#### *3.2.2. Junior Members*

3.2.2.1. Persons aged between fourteen and eighteen years may become junior members of the church.

3.2.2.2. Junior members of the church are entitled to attend and participate in discussions at church business meetings, but are not entitled to vote on matters regarding the conduct of the business of the church.

#### *3.2.3 Associate Members*

3.2.3.1. Persons aged over eighteen years are eligible to become associate members of the church if they are members of another church and they are:

(a) students undertaking a course of study in Birmingham, or

(b) they will be temporarily resident in Birmingham for a period of less than three years

3.2.3.2. A person may become an associate member of the church notwithstanding that he or she retains permanent membership of another church.

3.2.3.3. Unless otherwise specified by this constitution, associate members of the church are entitled to vote on all matters regarding the conduct of the business of the church.

#### 3.2.4. *Missionary Members*

##### 3.2.4.1 *Missionary Members*

Persons aged over eighteen years are eligible to become Missionary Members of the church if they:

- (a) are members or former members of the church
- (b) are no longer permanently resident within a distance of 25 miles from the church
- (c) are actively involved in Christian ministry where they are now living
- (d) wish to enjoy the support of City Evangelical Church for their ministry, whether as a Mission Partner or not
- (e) wish to continue to be subject to the pastoral oversight of the Elders of the church

##### 3.2.4.2. *The Obligations of Missionary Members*

Missionary Members are expected to demonstrate their continuing commitment to City Church in the following ways:

1. by regular private prayer for the work and ministry of the church
2. by providing regular information to the Elders and the church regarding their ministry
3. by providing such information to the Elders as they may require so as to enable them to exercise effective pastoral oversight

##### 3.2.4.3. *Support for Missionary Members*

Missionary Members will be entitled to receive the following support from the church:

1. the church will pray regularly for Missionary Members and their ministries
2. the members of the church will be kept informed about the ministry of Missionary Members
3. the Elders will provide pastoral oversight for Missionary Members

##### 3.2.4.4. *Voting Rights of Missionary Members*

Missionary Members will be entitled to attend business meetings of the church but will not be entitled to vote.

#### *3.2.4.5 Admission as a Missionary Member*

Any current member of the church who fulfils the requirement for admission as a Missionary Member will automatically become a Missionary Member of the church. Any former member of the church may apply to become a Missionary Member, and will be accepted as a Missionary Member if their application is supported by 65% of the adult members of the church attending a church business meeting.

#### *3.2.4.6 Automatic Termination of Missionary Membership*

A Missionary Member who returns to take up permanent residence within a distance of 25 miles of the church will immediately cease to be a Missionary Member and will automatically become a member of the church with the membership status that he or she enjoyed immediately before becoming a Missionary Member

#### *3.2.4.6 Resignation of a Missionary Member*

A Missionary Member of the church may resign his or her membership at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Elders.

#### *3.2.4.7 Discipline of Missionary Members*

A Missionary Member may be subject to the discipline of the church in exactly the same way as any other member of the church, as specified in §8, with the exception that a Missionary Member is only required to fulfil the obligations of a Missionary Member of the church.

### **3.3 The Obligations of Members**

Members of the church are expected to demonstrate their commitment to the church in the following ways:

- (a) by regular attendance at the services organised by the church
- (b) by ministering to one another in accordance with their gifting
- (c) by regular attendance at such mid-week bible-study and prayer meetings as may be organised by the church
- (d) by regular private prayer for the work and ministry of the church
- (e) by regular financial contribution to the work of the church in accordance with their means
- (f) by active participation in the outreach of the church
- (g) by attendance of church business meetings
- (h) by submission to the authority and leadership of the Elders in accordance with the provisions of this constitution

### **3.4. Eligibility for Membership of the Church**

#### *3.4.1 Eligibility for Membership*

A person cannot be admitted to membership of the church unless he or she meets the following criteria:

- (a) He or she is a publicly professing Christian believer
- (b) He or she has regularly attended the church for six months, or is transferring from membership of another church where he or she has been a member for more than six months, or is applying for associate membership and is a member of another church and has been so for more than six months
- (c) He or she is in full agreement with the Statement of Faith of the church
- (d) He or she is prepared to respect the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (e) He or she is prepared to undertake the obligations of membership
- (f) He or she is prepared to submit to the authority and leadership of the Elders of the church within the provisions of this constitution
- (g) He or she accepts the right of the church to exercise discipline if necessary in accordance with the provisions of this constitution

#### *3.4.2 Disputes Concerning the Eligibility of Applicants for Membership*

3.4.2.1 Where there is any doubt whether an applicant is eligible for membership of the church, the Elders of the church may appoint one or more suitably qualified leader from a like-minded Christian church to interview and assess the applicant's eligibility for membership.

3.4.2.2. Where such an assessment is sought the advice given must be given due weight by the Elders and members of the church as they determine the candidate's eligibility for membership.

### **3.5 Admission to Membership of the Church**

3.5.1 A person wishing to apply for membership of the church should inform the Elders that he or she wishes to apply for membership.

3.5.2 Where a person has applied to the Elders for membership of the church, the Elders must consider whether the applicant is eligible for membership.

3.5.3 Where a person applying for membership was previously a member of another church, the Elders shall be entitled to request a reference from the leaders of that church regarding the applicant's suitability for membership.

3.5.4 Where the Elders believe that an applicant meets the qualifications for membership, they shall inform the members of the church, in writing, that they intend to recommend the applicant for admittance to membership of the church a month before the calling of a church business meeting.

3.5.5 Prior to the holding of the church business meeting, any member of the church may bring to the attention of the Elders any matters which they feel would render the applicant unsuitable for admission as a member of the church.

3.5.6 If any member of the church raises such a matter of concern the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the applicant would be suitable for admission as a member of the church.

3.5.7 If the Elders intend to proceed to recommend the admission to membership of an applicant in respect of whom a member of the church has raised a matter of concern which has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

3.5.8 An applicant shall be admitted to membership of the church if the recommendation of the Elders is supported by 65% of the adult members of the church attending the church business meeting.

3.5.9 Applicants for membership of the church will be invited to attend the Business Meeting at which it is proposed that they be admitted to membership. They will be only permitted to join the meeting after the resolution for their admission as members has been passed. They shall not, however, be entitled to vote on any matter at the business meeting at which they were admitted to membership.

### **3.6 Resignation of Members**

A member of the church may resign his or her membership at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Elders.

### **3.7 Transfer of Membership**

A member of the church will be treated as having resigned from membership of the church if he or she becomes a member of another church, unless he or she does so only under a scheme equivalent to associate membership as understood by this constitution.

### **3.8 Discipline of Members**

#### *3.8.1 Grounds for the Exercise of Church Discipline*

A member of the church may be subject to the discipline of the church for any of the following reasons:

- (a) He or she errs in doctrine so that he or she no longer affirms the Statement of Faith of the church
- (b) He or she is no longer willing to respect the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (c) He or she errs in conduct by committing open sin which brings the church into disrepute
- (d) He or she has consistently failed to fulfil the obligations of a member of the church
- (e) He or she has made false and malicious allegations against an Elder, Deacon or other member of the church

(f) He or she is no longer living in submission to the leadership and authority of the Elders of the church

### *3.8.2 Forms of Discipline*

A member of the church may be disciplined by the church in any of the following ways:

- (a) A member of the church may be excluded from participation in the Lord's Supper
- (b) A member of the church may be suspended from membership of the church
- (c) A member of the church may be dismissed from membership of the church
- (d) A member of the church may be dismissed from membership of the church and the remaining members of the church instructed not to have any association with them.

### *3.8.3 Procedure for the Exercise of Church Discipline*

3.8.3.1 Where a member of the church alleges that another member has acted in such a manner as to require the exercise of church discipline the Elders of the church shall thoroughly investigate that allegation.

3.8.3.2 A member against whom such an allegation has been made shall be given every opportunity to answer the allegation before the Elders of the church.

3.8.3.3 If the Elders conclude that the member in question has acted in a manner warranting the exercise of church discipline, they shall give the member concerned opportunity to repent and seek forgiveness, whether of the church in general, or of such individuals as have been affected by his or her conduct.

3.8.3.4 Where the member in question repents and seeks such forgiveness, the Elders shall take no further action.

3.8.3.5 If the member in question fails to take the opportunity to repent and seek forgiveness, the Elders shall submit a written report to the members of the church stating the allegation raised against the member concerned, why they believe there are sufficient grounds for the exercise of church discipline, and what disciplinary action they consider would be appropriate in the circumstances.

3.8.3.6 Following the submission of such a report, the Elders shall call a church business meeting to discuss the allegations made against the member concerned, and to determine whether any disciplinary action should be taken.

3.8.3.7 At such a church business meeting the member in question must be given the opportunity to answer the allegations brought against him or her.

3.8.3.8. A member against who an allegation has been made will be subjected to a disciplinary proposal put to a public ballot of the members of the church at a duly called business meeting which receives the support of either 65% of the full adult

membership of the church, or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting, provided that in this latter case a majority of the full members of the church have voted in favour of the proposal. [amended 11/12/05]

#### *3.8.4 Procedure for the Removal of Disciplinary Measures*

3.8.4.1 Where a member of the church has been subjected to church disciplinary measures in accordance with the terms of this constitution, but remains a member of the church, the disciplinary measures shall be removed if he or she demonstrates repentance and seeks forgiveness, whether of the church in general, or of such individuals as have been affected by his or her conduct.

3.8.4.2 The removal of disciplinary measures from a member who remains in membership of the church must be supported by a vote of 65% of the full adult membership of the church at a church business meeting.

3.8.4.3 Where a member of the church has been dismissed from membership of the church and subsequently demonstrates repentance and seeks forgiveness, whether of the church in general, or of such individuals as have been affected by his or her conduct, he or she may apply for readmission to membership.

### **Part 4 – Elders**

#### **4.1 The Role of Elders**

4.1.1 The duly appointed Elders of City Evangelical Church are the leaders, under Christ, of the local congregation. They serve as the “pastor-teachers” of the members of the church. The members of the church are required to submit to their leadership, provided that such leadership is exercised in accordance with the provisions of Scripture and of this constitution.

4.1.2 The Church shall be led at all times by three or more Elders.

#### **4.2. Functions performed by Elders**

The Elders shall collectively perform the following functions to maintain the ministry of the church:

- (a) ensure that true doctrine is maintained by the members of the church
- (b) organise the regular preaching and teaching of the Bible at public services of the church
- (c) preach regularly within the church
- (d) ensure the orderly administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s supper within the church
- (e) exercise pastoral oversight of other ministry activities conducted by the church
- (f) provide pastoral care for the members of the church
- (g) exercise correction and discipline of the members of the church where necessary
- (h) call and co-ordinate church business meetings as required by this constitution
- (i) govern the church according to the terms of this constitution

### **4.3 Elders designated as Pastor, Associate Pastor or Assistant Pastor.**

4.3.1 Any Elder or Elders, whether full or part time, employed or not employed by the church, may be identified by reason of their gifting and availability to bear a primary responsibility for the preaching and teaching of God's word in the church, the pastoral care of the members of the church and the day to day management of the affairs of the church.

4.3.2 Any Elder identified to bear such primary responsibility shall be designated with the title of "Pastor," "Associate Pastor" or "Assistant Pastor" depending upon their seniority and experience.

4.3.3 A person may only be identified and designated as a "Pastor", "Associate Pastor" or "Assistant Pastors" by the decision of the Managing Trustees of the church at a meeting conducted in accordance with the Constitution of the Church which is approved by a majority of the members of the church at a duly called Business Meeting of the church.

4.3.4 There shall continue to be equality of position and authority between Elders who are designated as "Pastor," "Associate Pastor" or "Assistant Pastor" and those who are not so designated.

4.3.5 An elder designated as "Pastor", "Associate Pastor" or "Assistant Pastor" shall be entitled, if he wishes, to use the title "Reverend".

### **4.4. Specific Offices of Elders**

4.4.1. One Elder of the church shall serve as the Chairman of the Managing Trustees/Elders as provided in the terms of the Church Constitution.

4.4.2. One Elder of the church shall serve as the Church Secretary.

4.4.3 One Elder of the church shall serve as Church Treasurer.

4.3.3 The Church Sectary and Church Treasurer shall be elected by means of an annual vote of the Managing Trustees at a Trustees meeting in accordance with the Church Constitution.

### **4.5. Duties of the Church Secretary and Church Treasurer**

4.5.1 Duties of the Church Secretary

The Church Secretary shall ensure that:

- (a) an accurate record of the membership of the church is maintained
- (c) members of the church receive such notice as is required by the terms of this constitution for the holding of business meetings and the discussion of specific items arising for discussion at such meetings
- (d) accurate minutes of each business meeting of the church are kept

(e) engage in correspondence with third parties on behalf of the Elders and the church

#### 4.5.2 Duties of the Church Treasurer

4.5.2.1 The Church Treasurer shall ensure that:

- (a) full and accurate records of church finances are maintained in a manner consistent with current accounting practice
- (b) disbursements of church money are made only in accordance with the direction of the Managing Trustees
- (c) interim accounts, detailing any receipts and disbursements, are presented to the church at each quarterly business meeting
- (d) audited accounts of the church finances are presented at the annual general meeting
- (e) that the Church possesses public liability insurance for all church activities and church equipment.

4.5.2.2 The Elders may appoint any additional individual as an “Assistant Treasurer” to assist the Church Treasurer in the performance of his duties.

### **4.6 The Qualifications of Elders**

#### 4.6.1 *Gender of Elders*

In accordance with the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church, the Elders charged with the leadership of the church are required to be male.

#### 4.6.2 *Qualifications for Eldership*

A man cannot be considered for appointment as an Elder unless he meets the following criteria:

- (a) He is over the age of 25 years
- (b) He is a full adult member of the church
- (c) He has been a professing believer for upwards of three years
- (d) He is of recognised Christian character
- (e) He has a recognised gift of preaching which he has exercised regularly in the church or elsewhere
- (f) He has a recognised pastoral love for the people of God which he has demonstrated regularly in the church or elsewhere
- (g) He has a recognised heart to serve the people of God which he has demonstrated regularly in the church or elsewhere
- (h) He is in full agreement with the Statement of Faith and the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (i) He has a mature knowledge of the Bible and a solid grasp of evangelical theology
- (j) If he is married, that his wife is a professing believer of recognised Christian character, who is member of the church and is also in full agreement with the Statement of Faith

(k) If he has children, that he leads his family in a manner which demonstrates that he is competent to lead the family of God in the local congregation of the church

#### *4.6.3 Disputes Concerning the Eligibility of Candidates for Eldership*

4.6.3.1 Where there is any doubt whether a potential candidate for Eldership meets the qualifications, the Elders of the church may appoint one or more suitably qualified leader from a like-minded Christian church to interview and assess his suitability for Eldership.

4.6.3.2 Where such an assessment is sought the advice must be given due weight by the Elders and members of the church as they determine the candidate's suitability for Eldership.

### **4.7 The Appointment of Elders**

#### *4.7.1 Appointment of Elders*

4.7.2.1 Where the Elders intend to propose the appointment of an Elder, they must inform the members of the church to this effect, in writing, at least one month prior to the calling of a church business meeting.

4.7.2.2 Prior to the holding of the church business meeting, any member of the church should bring to the attention of the Elders any matters which they feel would render the proposed Elder unsuitable for office.

4.7.2.3 If any member of the church raises such a matter of concern the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the proposed Elder would be suitable for office.

4.7.2.4 If the Elders intend to proceed to propose the appointment of an Elder in respect of whom a member of the church has raised a matter of concern which has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

4.7.2.5 A member of the church shall be appointed an Elder if his appointment is supported by the Elders and by a vote in favour of his appointment in a secret ballot at a duly called church business meeting which gains the support of either 65% of the full adult membership of the church, or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting.

4.7.2.6 A newly appointed Elder will usually be commissioned into office at a subsequent morning service of the church. He shall be required to declare publicly his full agreement with the Statement of Faith and the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church and that he will faithfully discharge the duties of his office in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.

### **4.8. Term of Appointment of Elders**

#### *4.8.1 Term of Office on First Appointment*

With the exception of the Founding Elders, a person appointed an Elder of the church shall serve an initial term of office of twelve months.

#### *4.8.2 Term of Office on Subsequent Appointment*

Where an Elder is reappointed, he shall be appointed to serve a term of office of three years.

### **4.9 Reappointment of Elders**

#### *4.9.1 Date of Reappointment*

An Elder must be considered for reappointment at the church quarterly business meeting preceding the expiry of his current term of office.

#### *4.9.2 Procedure for Reappointment*

4.9.2.1. Where an Elder wishes to be considered for reappointment he should make this known to his fellow Elders. They shall then decide whether they wish to propose that he be reappointed.

4.9.2.2 Where the continuing Elders intend to propose the reappointment of an Elder they must inform the members, in writing, one month prior to the holding of a church business meeting

4.9.2.3 Prior to the holding of the church business meeting, any member of the church may bring to the attention of the Elders any matters which they feel would render the proposed Elder unsuitable for reappointment.

4.9.2.4 If any member of the church raises such a matter of concern the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the proposed Elder would be suitable for reappointment.

4.9.2.5 If the Elders intend to proceed to propose the reappointment of an Elder in respect of whom a member of the church has raised a matter of concern which has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

4.9.2.6 An Elder shall be reappointed if this is supported by the Elders and by a majority of the full adult membership of the church in a secret ballot at the church business meeting or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting.

### **4.10 Joint Meetings of the Elders and Deacons**

At least once every six months the Elders of the church must arrange a meeting with the Deacons of the church to discuss and review the work of the church.

#### **4.11. Attendance of Elders Meetings by Other Church Members**

4.11.1 The Elders may invite any Deacon of the church, or any individual member of the church, to attend either a single Elders meeting, or a series of such meetings, if they consider that such attendance would be beneficial for the conduct of the business of the church.

4.11.2 Individuals invited to attend Elders meetings are not entitled to vote at such meetings, nor are they entitled to require the Elders to take a vote.

4.11.3 Where the Elders wish to invite an individual to attend more than three Elders meetings, they must first seek ratification of such an invitation at a church business meeting.

#### **4.12 Employment of Elders**

##### *4.12.1 The Right to Employ an Elder*

4.12.1.1 The church may employ an Elder to serve in a full-time capacity if the church has twenty or more members in full-time paid employment.

4.12.1.2 The church may employ more than one full-time Elder provided that the ratio of full-time Elders to members of the church in full-time paid employment does not exceed 1:20 and that the majority of Elders are not employed by the church.

4.12.1.3 The church may employ one or more Elders in a part-time capacity, provided that the total salary incurred thereby does not exceed the salary which would have been payable if the maximum permitted number of full-time Elders were to be employed by the church.

##### *4.12.2 Procedure for the Employment of an Elder*

4.12.2.1 Where the Elders wish to recommend the employment of one of their number by the church, they must inform the members of the church to this effect in writing, a month prior to the holding of a church business meeting.

4.12.2.2 The church may employ the Elder concerned if the recommendation of the Elders is supported by 65% of the adult members of the church.

##### *4.12.3 Salary of an Employed Elder*

4.12.3.1 An Elder employed by the church shall be entitled to receive a total remuneration package commensurate with his value and status as a teacher and manager of the church.

4.12.3.2. An Elder employed full-time by the church shall be entitled to receive a minimum salary equivalent to that payable to a secondary school teacher of similar experience working in the state sector.

4.12.3.3 Where an Elder is employed by the church on a part-time basis, he will be entitled to receive a minimum salary calculated on a pro-rata basis as if he were an Elder employed by the church full-time, provided that his overall income does not in total exceed the maximum to which he would have been entitled if he had been employed as an Elder on a full-time basis.

4.12.3.4 Where an Elder is employed by the church and is provided with rent-free housing by the church, his salary shall normally be reduced by an amount equivalent to the monthly mortgage payments of an average local family home. He shall be entitled to have an equivalent amount paid into an agreed savings plan established on his behalf so as to enable him and his family to purchase accommodation on the termination of his employment by the church.

4.12.3.5 An Elder employed by the church will be entitled to receive contributions paid to an agreed pension scheme calculated on the same basis as his salary.

4.12.3.6 An Elder employed by the church will be entitled to receive a minimum annual pay rise equivalent to the national pay award granted to those employed in the comparator profession.

4.12.3.7 Where an Elder enjoys other sources of income which ensure that his family receives an overall income not below that to which he would be entitled from the church, he may agree to take up an offer of employment by the church at a salary lower than that to which he would otherwise be entitled under the terms of this constitution.

#### **4.13 Retirement of Elders**

##### *4.13.1 Retirement of an Elder who is not Employed by the Church*

An Elder who is not employed by the church, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, may retire from the Eldership at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Elders of his intention to retire.

##### *4.13.2 Retirement of an Elder who is Employed by the Church*

An Elder who is employed by the church, whether on a full-time or a part-time basis, may retire from the Eldership by giving the Chairman of the Elders three months written notice of his intention to retire.

#### **4.14 Removal of Elders from Office**

##### *4.14.1 Removal of an Elder by vote of the church*

An Elder may be removed from office at any time if 75% of the full adult membership of the church vote in favour of a proposal for his removal in a public ballot conducted at a church business meeting.

#### *4.14.2 Removal of an Elder by Exercise of Church Discipline*

4.14.2.1 An Elder may be removed from office in the church on any of the following grounds:

- (a) He errs in doctrine so that he no longer affirms the Statement of Faith and Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (b) He errs in conduct by the commission of open sin which brings the church into disrepute
- (c) He has failed to fulfil his responsibilities as an Elder
- (d) He is no longer able to fulfil his responsibilities as an Elder due to illness or incapacity but is unwilling to resign

4.14.2.2 Where any such allegation is made against an Elder it shall be thoroughly investigated by the Elders and Deacons of the church, who will submit a report to the members of the church assessing the weight of the allegations raised and stating whether they believe there are sufficient grounds for the Elder to be removed from office.

4.14.2.3 An Elder against whom such an allegation has been made shall be given every opportunity to answer the allegation at a church business meeting.

4.14.2.4 An Elder against whom an allegation has been made will be removed from office if at a duly called business meeting a proposal for his removal receives the support in a public ballot of either 65% of the full adult membership of the church, or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting, provided that in this latter case a majority of the full members of the church have voted in favour of the proposal.

#### *4.14.3 Removal of an Elder Employed by the Church*

4.14.3.1 Where an Elder removed from office in accordance with these procedures is employed by the church, his removal from office shall automatically terminate his employment.

4.14.3.2 In such an event, the Elder removed shall be entitled to receive whatever compensation for his dismissal as is required by current employment legislation, or such greater sum as the members of the church determine to give him.

## **Part 5 - Deacons**

### **5.1 The Role of Deacons**

#### *5.1.1 Serving the Body of the Church*

Deacons are individuals, recognised as having appropriate gifts, who are appointed to serve specific needs of the church, whether such needs be material or spiritual in character.

### *5.1.2 Responsibilities which must be undertaken by Deacons*

5.1.2.1 Unless undertaken by an Elder, the following responsibilities within the life of the church must be undertaken by duly appointed Deacons of the church:

- (a) supervision of the care and maintenance of properties owned or leased by the church
- (b) overall leadership of any Sunday School provided by the church
- (c) overall leadership of any regular youth or student ministries organised by the church
- (d) overall leadership of any music group playing at the services of the church
- (e) overall leadership of any house-groups or similar mid-week activities organised by the church
- (e) co-ordination of the distribution of money and help to church members who are in need
- (f) the position of Church Treasurer

5.1.2.2 From time to time the Elders of the church may determine other areas of service within the church which should be undertaken by a Deacon.

5.1.2.3 A Deacon of the church may be appointed to perform more than one such responsibility within the church.

## **5.2 The Qualifications of Deacons**

### *5.2.1 Gender of Deacons*

In accordance with the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church, the Deacons of the church may be male or female.

### *5.2.2 Qualifications for Service as a Deacon*

A person cannot be considered for appointment as a Deacon unless he or she meets the following criteria:

- (a) He or she is over the age of 21 years
- (b) He or she is a full adult member of the church
- (c) He or she has been a professing believer for upwards of two years
- (d) He or she is of recognised Christian character
- (e) He or she has a recognised heart to serve the people of God which he or she has regularly demonstrated in the church or elsewhere

- (f) He or she is in full agreement with the Statement of Faith of the church and agrees to abide by the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (g) He or she has a mature knowledge of the Bible
- (h) If married, his or her spouse is also a professing believer of recognised Christian character, who is in full agreement with the Statement of Faith of the church and agrees to abide by the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (k) If he or she has children, that he or she exercises responsibility for them in a manner which demonstrates that he or she is competent to exercise responsibility in serving the family of God in the local congregation of the church

### *5.2.3 Disputes Concerning the Eligibility of Candidates for Appointment as a Deacon*

5.2.3.1 Where there is any doubt whether a candidate for appointment as a Deacon meets the qualifications specified above, the Elders of the church may appoint one or more suitably qualified church leaders from a like-minded Christian church to interview and assess the candidate's suitability for appointment as a Deacon.

5.2.3.2 Where such an assessment is sought the advice given must be given due weight by the Elders and members of the church as they determine the candidate's suitability for appointment as a Deacon.

## **5.3 The Appointment of Deacons**

5.3.1 The Elders of the church may at any time propose that a member of the church be appointed a Deacon of the church if he or she satisfies the qualifications of a Deacon.

5.3.2 Where the Elders intend to nominate a candidate for appointment as a Deacon they must inform the members of the church to this effect, in writing, a month prior to the calling of a church business meeting.

5.3.3 Such written notice should specify the nature of the service that the candidate for appointment as a Deacon will be asked to perform in the church.

5.3.4. Prior to the holding of the church business meeting, any member of the church may bring to the attention of the Elders any matters which they feel would render the proposed Deacon unsuitable for office.

5.3.5 If any member of the church raises such a matter of concern the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the proposed Elder would be suitable for office.

5.3.6 If the Elders intend to proceed to propose the appointment of a Deacon in respect of whom a member of the church has raised a matter of concern which has not been withdrawn, the Elders must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

5.3.7 A member of the church shall be appointed a Deacon if his appointment is supported by the Elders and by a vote in favour of his appointment in a secret ballot at

a duly called church business meeting which gains the support of either 65% of the full adult membership of the church, or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting.

5.3.8 A newly appointed Deacon shall be commissioned into office at a subsequent morning service of the church. He or she shall be required to declare publicly his or her full agreement with the Statement of Faith of the church, and his or her willingness to abide by the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church, and that he or she will seek to faithfully serve the church in the specific area for which he or she has been appointed a Deacon.

#### **5.4. Term of Appointment of Deacons**

##### *5.4.1 Term of Office on First Appointment*

A person appointed a Deacon of the church will be appointed for an initial term of service of twelve months.

##### *5.4.2 Term of Office on Subsequent Appointment*

Where a Deacon of the church is reappointed, he or she will be appointed for a term of service of two years.

#### **5.5 Reappointment of Deacons**

##### *5.5.1 Date of Reappointment*

A Deacon must be considered for reappointment at the church business meeting preceding the expiry of his current term of office.

##### *5.5.2 Procedure for Reappointment*

5.5.2.1 Where a Deacon wishes to be considered for reappointment he or she should make this known to the Elders. The Elders shall then decide whether they wish to propose that the Deacon be reappointed.

5.5.2.2 Where the Elders intend to propose the reappointment of a Deacon they must inform the members, in writing, one month prior to the holding of a church business meeting.

5.5.2.3 Prior to the holding of the church business meeting, any member of the church may bring to the attention of the Elders any matters which they feel would render the Deacon concerned unsuitable for reappointment.

5.5.2.4 If any member of the church raises such a matter of concern the Elders must make such investigations as they think necessary to determine whether the Deacon concerned would be suitable for reappointment.

5.5.2.5 If the Elders intend to proceed to propose the reappointment of a Deacon in respect of whom a member of the church has raised a matter of concern which has not been withdrawn, they must bring that matter of concern to the attention of the members of the church.

5.5.2.6 A Deacon shall be reappointed if the Elders propose his or her reappointment and this is supported by a majority of the full adult membership of the church in a secret ballot at the church business meeting, or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting.

## **5.6. Responsibilities of Deacons**

### *5.6.1 Responsibilities of Deacons*

The Deacons are under a duty to serve the church by carrying out the specific functions for which they have been appointed by the Elders and the church.

### *5.6.2 Meetings of the Deacons and Elders*

5.6.2.1 The Deacons will meet with the Elders of the church to discuss and review the work of the church at least once every six months.

5.6.2.2 Joint meetings of the Deacons and Elders may be requested by the Elders, or by the Deacons of the church, at any time.

## **5.7. Retirement of Deacons**

### *5.7.1 Retirement of Deacons*

5.7.1.1 A Deacon may retire from office at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Elders.

5.7.1.2 A Deacon must retire from office when he or she no longer wishes to undertake the responsibility within the church for he or she was appointed a Deacon.

## **5.8. Removal of Deacons**

### *5.8.1 Removal of a Deacon by Vote of the Church*

A Deacon may be removed from office at any time if 75% of the full adult members of the church vote in favour of a proposal for his or her removal in a public ballot conducted at a church business meeting.

### *5.8.2 Removal of a Deacon by Exercise of Church Discipline*

5.8.2.1 A Deacon may be removed from office in the church on any of the following grounds:

- (a) He or she errs in doctrine so that he or she no longer affirms the Statement of Faith of the church
- (b) He or she is no longer willing to abide by the Doctrinal Distinctives of the church
- (c) He or she errs in conduct by the commission of open sin which brings the church into disrepute
- (d) He or she has failed to fulfil the responsibilities of his or her appointment as a Deacon
- (e) He or she is no longer able to fulfil his or her responsibilities as a Deacon due to illness or incapacity but is unwilling to resign

5.8.2.2 Where any such allegation is made against a Deacon it shall be thoroughly investigated by the Elders of the church, who will submit a report to the members of the church assessing the weight of the allegations raised and stating whether they believe there are sufficient grounds for the Deacon to be removed from office.

5.8.2.3 A Deacon against whom such an allegation has been made shall be given every opportunity to answer the allegation at a church business meeting.

5.8.2.4 A Deacon against whom an allegation has been made will be removed from office if at a duly called business meeting a proposal for his removal receives the support in a public ballot of either 65% of the full adult membership of the church, or of 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting, provided that in this latter case a majority of the full members of the church have voted in favour of the proposal.

## **Part 6 – Conduct of Church Business**

### **6.1 Church Business Meetings**

#### *6.1.1 Frequency of Church Business Meetings*

6.1.1.1 A church business meeting shall be held in each quarter of the calendar year.

6.1.1.2. The quarterly business meeting held during the second quarter of the year shall take the form of an annual general meeting of the church.

6.1.1.3. An extraordinary church business meeting may be called by the Elders of the church at any time.

6.1.1.4 An extraordinary church business meeting must be called by the Elders if a written request for such a meeting is received from more than 25% of the members of the church.

#### *6.1.2. Notice of Church Business Meetings*

6.1.2.1 The Elders shall provide members of the church with a month's written notice of the proposed date of a church business meeting.

6.1.2.2 Such written notice shall invite the members of the church to put forward to the Elders items to be included for discussion on the agenda of the business meeting.

6.1.2.3 The Elders shall provide members of the church with a written agenda of items for discussion two weeks in advance of the holding of a business meeting.

6.1.2.4. Where an extraordinary business meeting is called the Elders shall provide the members of the church with seven days notice of the proposed date of the extraordinary business meeting and of the nature of the business to be discussed. Such notice may be given by means of an oral announcement at the Sunday services of the church.

### 6.1.3 *Items to be Included on the Agenda of Church Business Meetings*

6.1.3.1 The following items must be included on the agenda for a church quarterly business meeting:

- (a) a report by the Chairman of the Elders on the state of the church
- (b) a report by the Church Secretary on any changes in membership since the last quarterly business meeting
- (c) a report by the Church Treasurer on the financial state of the church
- (d) a report by each Deacon of the church on the area of responsibility for which he or she is responsible

6.1.3.2 The following items must be included on the agenda for the church annual general meeting:

- (a) a written report from the Elders reviewing the state of the church and outlining plans for the coming year
- (b) a written report by the Church Secretary on any changes in membership during the last year
- (c) presentation by the Church Treasurer of audited accounts of church finances for the last year
- (d) a written report by each Deacon of the church reviewing the area of responsibility for which he or she is responsible and outlining plans for the coming year

6.1.3.3 Wherever possible written reports which are to be discussed at a church business meeting should be distributed to the members of the church at the same time as they are provided with an agenda for the meeting in question.

### 6.1.4 *Conduct of Church Business Meetings*

6.1.4 Church business meetings shall be chaired by an Elder appointed for this purpose by the Elders. .

6.1.4.2. Only such items as appear on the agenda issued to members of the church prior to a business meeting are required to be discussed at the meeting

6.1.4.3. An issue which does not appear on the agenda of a business meeting may be discussed at a church business meeting if the Elders are willing to allow it to be discussed, or if 65% of the members of the church present at the meeting vote to allow it to be discussed.

### *6.1.5 Resolutions Passed by the Church Business Meeting*

6.1.5.1 Unless other voting requirements are specified in this constitution, a resolution of the church will be passed at a business meeting if it is proposed by the Elders and is supported by a vote of the majority of those attending the business meeting, or it is proposed by a member of the church and is supported by more than 65% of the membership of the church.

6.1.5.2 Where an extraordinary business meeting is held, a resolution of the church will only be passed at the meeting if it is proposed by the Elders and is supported by more than 65% of the membership of the church.

6.1.5.3 Where this Constitution specifies that an appointment or decision requires the support of a specific percentage of the members of the church, the requisite majority shall be calculated as a percentage of the total number of members who are entitled to vote on the matter concerned, excluding those who are not permanently resident within a 25 mile radius of the meeting place of the church, unless they attend the Business Meeting.

## **6.2 Church Finances**

### *6.2.1 Disbursement of Church Funds*

6.3.3.1 The Managing Trustees of the church may authorise the Treasurer to make disbursements of church funds, whether in respect of the purchase of goods or services, or by way of a donation to a third party, not exceeding £1000 per single item of expenditure without seeking the advice of the members of the church at a church business meeting.

6.2.2 Where the Managing Trustees of the church propose an individual disbursements of church funds exceeding £1000, they must first consult and seek the advice of the members of the church by way of a vote at a church business meeting.

6.2.3 The advice of the members of church obtained in this manner by the Managing Trustees in regard to an individual disbursement of church funds exceeding £1000 shall not be binding upon the Managing Trustees, who retain the unfettered discretion to dispose of church funds in accordance with the provisions of the church constitution.

### *6.2.4 Appointment of Auditors*

The Elders shall appoint a suitably qualified independent person or organisation to audit the church accounts, such appointment to be ratified by the members of the church at a church business meeting.

### **6.3 Church Equipment**

#### *6.3.1 Purchase of Church Equipment*

The church may purchase such equipment as is necessary for the carrying out of church activities.

#### *6.3.2 The Use of Church Equipment*

6.3.2.1 The Elders may authorise any members of the church to use church equipment, provided that they are sufficiently mature to do so, and on condition that they are provided with adequate instruction, or where necessary, adequate supervision.

6.3.2.2 The Elders may similarly permit the use of church equipment by third parties or other organisations provided that such equipment shall only be used in furtherance of an activity consistent with the Statement of Faith.

### **6.4. Authorised Church Activities**

An activity will only be an activity of the church if it is held with the prior authorisation of the Elders of the church.

### **6.5 Alteration of the Doctrinal Distinctives of the Church**

The Doctrinal Distinctives of the Church shall only be altered if a proposed alteration is supported by 75% of the full adult membership of the church at a church business meeting.

### **6.6 Alteration of the Rules of the Church**

#### *6.6.1 Amendment of Rules of the Church other than Sections 6.5, 6.6.1 and 6.6.2*

With the exception of sections 6.5, 6.6.1 and 6.6.2, the Rules of the Church shall only be altered if a proposed alteration is supported at a church business meeting by either 65% of the full adult membership of the church, or by 80% of the full adult members of the church in attendance at the meeting.

#### *6.6.2 Amendment of Sections 6.5, 6.6.1 and 6.6.2*

Sections 6.5, 6.6.1 and 6.6.2, the Rules of the Church shall only be altered if a proposed alteration is supported at a church business meeting by 90% of the full adult membership of the church.

## **6.7 Affiliation to Organisations**

### *6.7.1 Preservation of Independence*

The Church shall not affiliate to any organisation where such affiliation would mean that it is no longer able to operate as an autonomous self-governing body.

### *6.7.2 Affiliation to Like-Minded Organisations*

6.7.2.1 The Elders may propose that the Church affiliates to any organisation holding to the doctrinal standards espoused in the Statement of Faith of the Church, and which organisation does not admit into affiliation such bodies as would not share the doctrinal standards espoused in the Statement of Faith of the Church.

6.7.2.2 A proposal of the Elders to affiliate to such an organisation must be ratified by a vote of 65% of the full adult membership of the church at a church business meeting.

## **Part 7 – Non-Members**

### **7.1 The Participation of Non-Members in the Life of the Church**

7.1.1 Professing Christians who regularly attend the public meetings of the Church will be regarded as being in fellowship with the Church, and are consequently expected to respect the Statement of Faith, Doctrinal Distinctives, Church Constitution and Leadership of the Church.

7.1.2 Professing Christians who are attending the church will ordinarily be invited to join with the members of the church in celebrating the Lord's Supper.

7.1.3 The Elders shall be entitled to exclude from celebration of the Lord's Supper non-members attending the church who are not known to be professing Christians, or who are subject to the discipline of another church, or who are known to have committed open and notorious sin of which they have not repented.

### **7.2 The Participation of Non-Members in the Ministry of the Church**

Non-members shall not be entitled to hold any official ministry responsibility within the church.

### **7.3 Exclusion of Non-Members From Public Meetings of the Church**

7.3.1 The Elders of the church may propose that the open invitation to attend public meetings of the church customarily extended to non-members may be withdrawn from any individual who seeks to obstruct the carrying out of the work and ministry of the church, or to undermine the leadership of the church.

7.3.2 The Elders may only withdraw such open invitation to an individual if this is supported by a vote of 65% of the adult members of the church attending a church business meeting.

## **Part 8 – Church Planting**

### **8.1 The commitment of City Evangelical Church to Church Planting**

8.1.1 City Evangelical Church is committed to plant new churches as a means of gospel growth

8.1.2 City Evangelical Church will seek to plant autonomous independent evangelical churches which adopt the Statement of Faith and Doctrinal Distinctives of the church.

8.1.3 Whilst the goal of City Evangelical Church will always be to plant autonomous independent churches, the church may pursue this goal through intermediate steps such as the establishment of new congregations of City Evangelical Church, which remain under the pastoral oversight and leadership of the Elders of City Evangelical Church.

8.1.4 A proposal to plant a new church or congregation must be proposed by the Elders and approved by vote at a duly called Business Meeting of the church.

8.1.5 If City Evangelical Church votes to plant a new congregation, then the new Planted Congregation will be taken to have started meeting from the date on which it holds its first regular service.

8.1.6 The provisions of this Constitution regarding Church Planting are of necessity provisional, and will need to be amended and developed in the light of our experience of church planting.

### **8.2 Plant Members**

#### *8.2.1 Definition of Plant Members*

Plant Members are members of City Evangelical Church who have chosen to commit themselves to a Planted Congregation of the church.

#### *8.2.2 Eligibility for Plant Membership*

The requirement for eligibility for Plant Membership are identical to those for Full Membership of City Evangelical Church, as specified in the Church Rules, with the exception that Plant Members must be prepared to submit to the authority of the Plant Elders as well as to the Elders of City Evangelical Church.

### *8.3.3 Obligations of Plant Members*

The obligations of Plant Members are identical to those of Full Members of City Evangelical Church, with the exception that Plant Members are expected to demonstrate their commitment by attendance at the services and meetings of the Planted Congregation.

### *8.3.4 Rights of Plant Members*

Plant Members have the same rights as Full Members of City Evangelical Church, with the exception that they are not permitted to vote on matters other than those directly concerning the affairs of the Planted Congregation at Business Meetings of the Church.

### *8.3.5 Associate Plant Membership*

There is no category of Associate Plant Membership, and Associate Members cannot become Plant Members. City Associate Members must become full Plant Members.

## **8.4 Becoming a Plant Member**

### *8.4.1 Founding Plant Members*

8.4.1.1 Six months from the date on which the Planted Congregation starts meeting, or on such other date as is agreed by the City Elders and Plant Elders, all members of City Evangelical Church who are habitually attending the Planted Congregation will automatically become Plant Members of City Church.

8.4.1.2 Two weeks prior to that date all such members of City Evangelical Church who have been habitually attending the new congregation for four months or more must be informed in writing that their membership status will be changed.

8.4.1.3 Those members who do not wish to become Plant Members on that date should inform the Elders of the Church in writing either that they have not decided to join the Planted Congregation, in which case their membership status will not be affected and they will be expected to attend the services and meeting of the Church and not the Planted Congregation, or that they are still considering whether to join the Planted Congregation or not.

### *8.4.2 Existing Members of City Church Becoming Plant Members*

8.4.2.1 Once the planted congregation has been meeting for more than six months, a City Member who wishes to join the Planted Congregation as a Plant Member may change his membership status to that of Plant Member by giving written notice to this effect to the Elders and the Plant Elders. A City Member who changes his membership status in this way will henceforth be expected to attend the service and meetings of the Planted Congregation and not the Church.

8.4.2.2 Once the planted congregation has been meeting for more than six months, any City Members who have been habitually attending the Planted Congregation for a period of six months or more will automatically become Plant Members.

8.4.2.3 Two weeks prior to such a change in membership status any member of City Evangelical Church must be informed in writing that his or her membership status is about to be automatically changed.

8.4.2.4 If such a member does not wish to become a Plant Member, he should inform the Elders of the Church in writing prior to the date on which his membership status will change that he has decided not to join the Planted Congregation, in which case his membership status will not be affected and he will be expected to attend the services and meetings of the Church and not the Planted Congregation.

#### *8.4.3 Admission of New Plant Members who were not Previously Members of City Evangelical Church*

8.4.3.1 No persons shall be admitted into Plant Membership until the Planted Congregation has been meeting publicly for a period of six months.

8.4.3.2 The procedure for the admission of Plant Members who were not previously Full Members of City Evangelical Church is identical to that for the admission of new members as specified in the Church Rules,, with the exception that the applicants must also have been recommended for admission as Plant Members by the Plant Elders, which recommendation was approved by 65% of the Plant Members at a duly called Plant Members Meeting.

8.4.3.3 If a Plant Member who was not formerly a Full Member of City Evangelical Church wishes to leave the Plant Congregation and to join the main church they must apply for admission as a Full Member of the church, but will be treated as if they were transferring their membership from another church.

#### *8.4.4 Discipline of Plant Members*

The grounds and procedure for the discipline of Plant Members shall be identical to that for the discipline of church members as specified in the Church Rules,, with the exception that any proposal for church discipline must also have been proposed by the Plant Elders and approved by a vote of the Plant Members at a duly called Plant Meeting held prior to the Church Business Meeting.

#### *8.4.5 Reversion to Membership of City Evangelical Church*

If a Plant Member who was formerly a Full Member of City Evangelical Church decides to leave the Planted Congregation and return to the main church, they should inform the Elders and the Plant Elders of their decision to this effect, and on giving written notice of their decision they will automatically revert to their former status as Full Members of City Evangelical Church.

### **8.5. Plant Elders**

### *8.5.1 Role of Plant Elders*

8.5.1.1 Plant Elders are not Elders of City Evangelical Church as understood in Section II of this Constitution.

8.5.1.2 Plant Elders will be appointed to exercise a delegated pastoral oversight of those attending the Planted Congregation.

8.5.1.2 Plant Elders exercise their authority under the oversight of the Elders of City Evangelical Church and shall be required to submit to the authority of the Elders of City Evangelical Church in all matters.

8.5.1.3 Plant Elders will be expected to perform all the functions of Elders as set out in §9.2 of this Constitution in respect of the Planted Congregation.

8.5.1.4 Plant Elders will have no authority over the congregation or members of City Evangelical Church, and their rights will be identical to those of Plant Members.

8.5.1.5 In particular the Elders of City Evangelical Church will have the right to approve or veto all proposals for preaching and teaching, meetings and speakers, made by the Plant Elders for the Planted Congregation.

8.5.1.6 The Elders of City Evangelical Church will be expected to be preach at the Planted Congregation on a regular basis.

### *8.5.2 The Qualifications of Plant Elders*

A man cannot be considered for appointment as a Plant Elder unless he meets the criteria for Eldership as specified in the Church Rules,.

### *8.5.3 Terms of Appointment of Plant Elders*

The terms of appointment of Plant Elders will be identical to those for Elders of City Evangelical Church.

### *8.5.4 Appointment of Initial Plant Elders*

When a planted congregation is being established, the procedure for the appointment of the initial Plant Elders will be identical to that for the appointment of an Elder of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,.

### *8.5.5 Appointment of Subsequent Plant Elders*

8.5.5.1 The procedure for the appointment of any subsequent Plant Elders during a six month period after the Planted Congregation has started meeting will be identical to that for the appointment of an Initial Plant Elder

8.5.5.2 The procedure for the appointment of a Plant Elder after the Planted Congregation has been meeting for six months will be identical to that for the appointment of an Elder of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,.

with the exception that the proposed Elder must also have been recommended for appointment by the Plant Elders, which recommendation was approved by 65% of the Plant Members in secret ballot at a duly called Plant Meeting held prior to the Church Business Meeting at which the appointment is proposed.

#### *8.5.6 Employment of Plant Elders*

*8.5.6.1* City Evangelical Church may choose to employ or support Plant Elders to work full or part time for the church.

*8.5.6.1* Where Plant Elders are employed by the church they will be employed on the same basis as Elders as set out in §15 of this Constitution.

### **8.6. Retirement and Removal of Plant Elders**

The procedures for the retirement and removal of Plant Elders from office will be identical to those for the retirement and removal of Elders of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,.

### **8.7. Elders Meetings**

#### *8.7.1 Conduct of Plant Elder's Meetings*

The provisions of this constitution regarding the conduct of Elders' meeting shall apply identically to meetings of the Plant Elders.

#### *8.7.2 Attendance of Elders at Meetings of Plant Elders*

The Elders of City Evangelical Church shall be entitled to attend all meetings of Plant Elders.

#### *8.7.3 Provision of Minutes of Meetings of Plant Elders*

The Plant Elders shall keep full and accurate minutes of all their meetings, which minutes will be copied to the Elders of City Evangelical Church within seven days of each such meeting.

#### *8.7.4 Plant Elders Attending Elders Meetings*

The Elders of City Evangelical Church may permit or require any or all of the Plant Elders to attend their Elders meetings as observers, either on a regular, periodic or one-off basis.

### **8.8 Plant Deacons**

#### *8.8.1 Role of Plant Deacons*

*8.8.1.1* Plant Deacons are not Deacons of City Evangelical Church as understood in Section III of this Constitution.

8.8.1.2 The role of Plant Deacons is identical to that of Deacons of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,, with the exception that Plant Deacons are recognised to serve within the life of the Planted Congregation only.

8.8.1.3 Plant Deacons will have no responsibilities within the congregation of City Evangelical Church, and their rights will be identical to those of Plant Members.

#### *8.8.2 The Qualifications of Plant Deacons*

8.8.2.1 A person cannot be considered for appointment as a Plant Deacon unless he meets the qualifications for a Deacon as specified in the Church Rules,.

8.8.2.2 A person cannot be considered for appointment as a Plant Deacon unless he is willing to submit to the authority of the Plant Elders and recognise that the Elders of City Evangelical Church have ultimate pastoral oversight over the Planted Congregation.

#### *8.8.3 Terms of Appointment of Plant Deacons*

The terms of appointment of Plant Deacons will be identical to those for Deacons of City Evangelical Church.

#### *8.8.4 Appointment of Initial Plant Deacons*

When a planted congregation is being established, the procedure for the appointment of the initial Plant Deacons will be identical to that for the appointment of a Deacon of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,.

#### *8.8.5 Appointment of Subsequent Plant Deacons*

8.8.5.1 The procedure for the appointment of any subsequent Plant Deacons during a six month period after the Planted Congregation has started meeting will be identical to that for the appointment of the initial Plant Deacons.

8.8.5.2 The procedure for the appointment of a Plant Deacon after the Planted Congregation has been meeting for six months will be identical to that for the appointment of a Deacon of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,, with the exception that the proposed Deacon must have been recommended for appointment by 65% of the Plant Members in a secret ballot at a duly called Plant Meeting held prior to the Church Business Meeting at which the appointment is proposed.

### **8.9 Retirement and Removal of Plant Deacons**

The procedures for the retirement and removal of Plant Deacons from office will be identical to those for the retirement and removal of Deacons of City Evangelical Church as specified in the Church Rules,, with the exception that a proposal to remove a Plant Deacon from office must have been supported by a vote of 65% of the Plant Members in a secret ballot at a duly called Plant Meeting held prior to the Church Business Meeting at which the appointment is proposed.

## **8.10 Meetings of Plant Members**

### *8.10.1 Plant Members Meetings Prior to Church Business Meetings*

The Plant Elders shall hold a meeting of Plant Members at least two weeks before the holding of a Quarterly Church Business Meeting to discuss matters of relevance to the plant and to make recommendations to the Church Business Meeting on matters relevant to the plant.

### *8.10.2 Conduct of Plant Members Meetings*

Plant Members Meetings will be conducted in an identical manner to the Business Meetings of City Evangelical church, as specified in the Church Rules,.

### *8.10.3 Attendance at Plant Members Meetings*

8.10.3.1 Only Plant Members shall be entitled to attend Plant Members Meetings.

8.10.3.2. The Elders of City Evangelical Church shall be entitled to attend all Plant Members Meetings.

## **8.11 Plant Finances**

### *8.11.1 Financial Arrangements for the Planted Congregation*

Until such time as it becomes independent, the finances of the planted congregation will not be administered separately from those of City Evangelical Church, but will continue to be administered by the Church Treasurer under the leadership of the Elders of the church.

### *8.11.2 Agreement of a Budget for the Planted Congregation*

The Plant Elders shall be responsible for drawing up an annual budget for the Planted Congregation, which must be approved by the Elders of City Church.

### *8.11.3 Disbursement of Church Funds by Plant Elders*

8.11.3.1 Provided that they are acting within the limits of the agreed annual budget of the Planted Congregation, the Plant Elders may request the Managing Trustees to make disbursements of church funds, whether in respect of the purchase of goods or services, or by way of a donation to a third party.

8.11.3.2. Where the Managing Trustees of the church propose to make an individual disbursements of church funds exceeding £1000 initiated by the request of the Plant Elders, they must first consult and seek the advice of the plant members and the members of City Evangelical Church members by way of a vote at a church business meeting.

8.11.3.3 The advice of the members and plant members of the of church obtained in this manner by the Managing Trustees in regard to an individual disbursement of church funds exceeding £1000 shall not be binding upon the Managing Trustees, who retain the unfettered discretion to dispose of church funds in accordance with the provisions of the church constitution.

## **8.12 Participation of Non-members in the Planted Congregation**

The provisions of Section V of this constitution regarding the participation of non-members in the life of the church shall apply identically to the Planted Congregation, with the exception that the right to exclude non-members shall be exercisable by the Plant Elders, after consultation with the Elders of City Evangelical Church.

## **8.13 Independence of the Planted Congregation**

### *8.13.1 The goal of Independence*

It is the aim of City Evangelical Church than any planted congregation should become an independent autonomous church as soon as is reasonably practicable. However a planted congregation will only be able to attain independence as an autonomous church when it is clear that the grant of independence would not have the consequence of preventing the continuation of the ministry of City Evangelical Church.

### *8.13.2 The grant of independence*

8.13.2.1 A Planted Congregation will only be permitted to become an independent church if this is proposed by the Elders of City Evangelical Church, supported by the Plant Elders and a majority of the Plant Members of the Planted Congregation, and is approved by a vote of a majority of the members of City Evangelical Church at duly called Church Business Meeting.

8.13.2.2 A Planted Congregation shall only be permitted to become independent if:

- (a) The Plant Members vote to adopt a Statement of Faith and Doctrinal Distinctive identical to that of City Evangelical Church
- (b) The Plant Members vote to adopt a Constitution which is approved by the Elders of City Evangelical Church for the proposed Independent Church
- (c) The Plant Members have adopted a name for the independent church which is approved by the Elders of City Evangelical Church
- (d) The Plant Members have approved and adopted a budget for the two years which demonstrates how the proposed independent church will be able to be financially secure
- (e) The Plant Elders and Members have agreed to accept any conditions regarding the ministry and work of the proposed independent church which the Elders of City Evangelical Church consider to be necessary as a condition of independence or for the protection of the ministry of City Evangelical Church

### *8.13.3 Effect of Independence*

From the date that independence takes effect, all Plant Members shall immediately cease to be members of City Evangelical Church.

## **8.14 Dissolution of the Planted Congregation**

### *8.14.1 When the Church Plant May be Dissolved*

The planted congregation may be dissolved if either the City Elders and Plant Elders agree that the planted congregation should be dissolved, or if 75% of the plant members of the church vote in favour of dissolution at a church business meeting.

### *8.14.2 Application of the Assets of the Planted Congregation on Dissolution*

Where the planted congregation is dissolved any assets and equipment of the planted congregation will immediately become the property of City Evangelical Church.

### *8.14.3 Consequences of Dissolution for Plant Members*

Where the planted congregation is dissolved all plant members will automatically become full adult members of City Evangelical Church.