

Local Church Governance

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Prior to achieving Charitable Company status in 2008 the UEC, through published guidance, encouraged member Churches to adopt formal rules for internal governance.
- 1.2. The November 2014 Board meeting acknowledged the need for each member Church to have formal internal governance protocols, both to promote good order and to meet the expectation of regulatory bodies.
- 1.3. The following addition to the ACP at Handbook page 9.26 was considered at that meeting, but adoption postponed pending sight of the detailed proposals for the Handbook entry.
- 1.4. *“Each Church is required to have a form of internal governance and record-keeping that follows the guidance published in the UEC Handbook, and does not conflict with the provisions of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the UEC, or this Agreement for Common Purposes.”*
- 1.5. In our situation as a charitable company with self-governing local Churches, uniformity or the lack of it is not an issue, providing the procedures are workable, sufficiently comprehensive, reflect democratic values and conform to scriptural principles.

2. Example

On page 5.9 the example of rules adopted by one member Church is a good model to follow. Your Church leadership is encouraged to adopt these and amend them in the light of your local circumstances.

3. Contents and Options

- 3.1. The table at Annex A (page 5.11) identifies the elements of the Local Church Governance instrument and where appropriate the flexibility open to individual fellowships.

Introduction

- 1.1 The Church is a member of Union of Evangelical Churches (UEC) which is governed in accordance with its Articles of Association.
- 1.2 These rules are not intended to be exhaustive but to provide a sufficient framework to promote the orderly conduct of the activities of the Church in accordance with the Agreement for Common Purposes made with UEC and principles contained within Scripture.
- 1.3 Nothing within these rules is to be interpreted in a way that contradicts the Articles of Association or the current Agreement for Common Purposes with the UEC.
- 1.4 They were adopted at a Church meeting convened for that purpose on 24th April 2007 to take immediate effect.
- 1.5 They may only be added to or amended at a Church Meeting convened for that purpose and on a majority vote of members present.

Church Membership

- 2.1 Applications for inclusion on the Membership Roll of _____ Evangelical Church will be accepted from those aged 18 years and over who acknowledge Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord of their lives.
- 2.2 Two existing members are to be appointed to meet informally with applicants and act as their sponsors.
- 2.3 The sponsors are to report to a subsequent Church Meeting where existing members will vote on the application. Those who receive at least half of the votes of those present and entitled to vote will be added to the Membership Roll.
- 2.4 Should a Church Meeting not be imminent, membership applications may be voted on at a Tuesday Bible Study and Prayer Meeting evening providing notice of membership matters has been given at the previous Sunday Services.

Church Meetings

- 3.1 Church Meetings are normally to be held once a quarter but may be held more frequently should the Ministry Team deem it to be necessary, or if eight enrolled members make a written request to the Secretary.
- 3.2 They are normally to be held on a Tuesday evening and notice is to be given at the Services on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.
- 3.3 Except in special circumstances the meetings are to be open to non-members who regularly attend Sunday Services and they may contribute but not vote on motions brought to the meeting.
- 3.4 The Leading Minister, or another member of the Ministry Team, is to chair the meeting.
- 3.5 To conduct business a quorum of 40% of the membership is required. Notes are to be kept of the business conducted at each meeting and approved at the subsequent meeting.
- 3.6 Consensus is to be the principle for making decisions but where it is necessary to take a vote on a motion it must be proposed and seconded and receive the votes of more than half those present and entitled to vote in order to be carried.
- 3.7 Where it is necessary to vote the Chairman is to have the discretion on whether to accept a show of hands or take a paper ballot. Where a ballot is used the meeting is to appoint two scrutineers to issue voting slips and count the votes cast.
- 3.8 After audit, the annual Church Accounts are to be submitted to a Church Meeting for approval.
- 3.9 The Church Meeting may appoint Sub-Committees to be responsible for specific matters. They are to be headed by a Church Member.

Ministry Team

- 4.1 The Ministry Team is to be made up of those in membership who have been approved by UEC as 'Leading Minister,' 'Minister,' or 'Local Preacher' with the appointment subsequently confirmed at a Church Meeting by a 75% majority of the votes cast by those present and entitled to vote. Voting will be by paper ballot at the meeting.
- 4.2 The team is to be responsible for ministry, teaching, spiritual and pastoral oversight within the fellowship and is normally to meet at least once a month to pray, reflect and plan.
- 4.3 They are to share with the Church Committee as need arises and report to the Church Meeting.
- 4.4 The members of the team will continue in post until they resign, or their UEC appointment ceases, or they are asked to stand down by a 75% majority vote at a Church Meeting called for that purpose.

Church Committee

- 5.1 The Church Committee is to be made up of a Secretary, a Treasurer and up to four other members.
- 5.2 Appointments are for a period of three years, and re-election is permitted at a Church meeting.
- 5.3 Candidates must have been in membership for at least six months at time of appointment. They are to be nominated and seconded in writing two Sundays before the Church Meeting. The list of candidates is to be announced at the Sunday services preceding the Church Meeting.
- 5.4 Election is to be at a Church Meeting and by a paper ballot of the membership. In order to be appointed, candidates must receive the support of at least half those present and entitled to vote. Where there are more candidates than vacancies the person(s) with the highest number of votes is (are) to be appointed subject to receiving the support of half those present.
- 5.5 The Committee is to normally meet once a quarter under the chairmanship of the Leading Minister or another member of the Ministry Team with a quorum of four. It is to be responsible for the day to day management of the Church Property and Finances and the co-ordination of the activities of the groups that meet on the church premises.
- 5.6 The Church Committee is to report to the Church Meeting.
- 5.7 Notes are to be kept of the business conducted at each meeting and approved at the subsequent meeting.

Child Protection

- 6.1 The Church Meeting is to review at least annually the Policy Statement on Children, Young People and the Church and its operation.
- 6.2 A Child Protection Advisor is to be appointed from among the membership to be responsible for co-ordinating Child Protection measures.
- 6.3 Those in church groups who have unsupervised access to children or young people are required to go through the Disclosure & Barring Service procedure as operated by the Church.

Church Groups and use of Premises

- 7.1 All activities on the church premises, or undertaken in the name of the Church, are to be under the leadership of a Church member appointed for the purposes who will be accountable to the Church Meeting through the Church Committee for the proper conduct of that activity.
- 7.2 Casual use of the church premises is to be approved by the Church Committee and be under the oversight of an appointed member.
- 7.3 Use of church premises by outside organisations is allowed, and must be monitored in accordance with the UEC Handbook procedure.

As adopted at a Church Business Meeting on _____ (date).

ANNEX A to Local Church Governance with the UEC

Ref	Heading and Description	Observations including any flexibility
1	<u>Introduction</u> - the Church identified by the title as used in the Agreement for Common Purposes (Handbook page 9.15), and a statement confirming the over-riding authority of the Articles of Association (Handbook page 9.8) and the Agreement for Common Purposes.	-
2	<u>Membership Roll</u> - and conditions for adding and Removing names.	Confirmation of the suitability of applicants and the endorsement of membership as a whole are “musts”, but the methods of testing are optional.
3	<u>Members’ privileges</u> – the right to be consulted.	Formal meetings – who usually calls meetings – members ‘right to call a meeting – quorum.
3.1	<u>Members’ meetings</u> – frequency – minimum bi-annually.	Frequency minimum every six months - whether meetings are closed or open to non-members, and under what circumstances.
4	<u>Conduct of meetings</u> Chairing - usually the Senior Minister. Record-keeping Decision-making	The rules should state that, in the absence of a chairman as specified in the rules, the meeting should elect a chairman. Minute-taking and approval. Accounts and approval. Consensus the norm. Motions, voting, ballots.
5	<u>Committee(s) and Office Holders</u> Business and Ministry – areas of responsibility Appointments – method – eligibility – term of office Statutory/UEC requirements need to be addressed e.g. Child Protection policy, Health & Safety policy.	All open to flexibility, but where Biblical terms are used, any conditions within scripture must be adhered to.