

2012 CONSTITUTION

(Adopted by the GMCT Assembly 30th October 2012, amended 15 Jan 2013)

1. **NAME**

The Charity shall be known as Greater Manchester Churches Together (hereafter referred to as GMCT). Its area of operation shall be the geographical region of Greater Manchester and the communities surrounding which relate to it.

2. **BASIS**

GMCT unites in pilgrimage those Churches in Greater Manchester which, acknowledging God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves:

- to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body and
- to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world,

to the glory of the one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. **RELATIONSHIPS**

GMCT shall within its area of operation:

- a. sponsor Local Ecumenical Partnerships;
- b. accept the affiliation of local Churches Together or similar such groups.

4. **ASSOCIATION**

GMCT shall be associated with Churches Together in England and shall relate to other ecumenical bodies in the North-West of England

5. **OBJECTS**

The objects of GMCT shall be:

- a. the advancement of the Christian religion
- b. any other purposes which are charitable according to the law of England and Wales which are agreed by the Trustees.

6. **AIMS**

The primary vision of GMCT is the enabling of the flourishing of local ecumenism for mission in its many forms.

GMCT shall seek to advance this vision by:

- a. facilitating common witness to the Christian religion by the Member Churches;
- b. providing means of consultation between the Member Churches;
- c. working and praying for Christian unity;

- d. facilitating the sharing of our ecumenical treasures and resources; and in particular shall seek
- e. to be a sign of the Churches' commitment to one another and to assist the Churches in the visible expression of Christian unity;
- f. to affirm, support and service local ecumenism, whether it be formal or informal, structured or unstructured and to encourage the work and witness of local Churches Together or similar such groups;
- g. to act as Sponsoring Body for present and future Local Ecumenical Partnerships, ensuring for them the provision of appropriate ongoing advice and support, equitable financial assessment and proper periodic review;
- h. to encourage shared worship and prayer, learning, service and evangelism, with each Church sharing with others the treasures of its tradition;
- i. to encourage full and early ecumenical consultation so that the Churches may use resources (including buildings and the deployment of personnel) with sensitivity and in the interests of good stewardship;
- j. to provide a meeting point for Church Leaders and/or their representatives within the Greater Manchester area;
- k. to keep the Churches informed about ecumenical initiatives within Greater Manchester and beyond, in particular those promoted by Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland;
- l. to encourage the Churches to respond to the needs and opportunities of society, in their relations with local government, and other statutory, voluntary and private bodies, and, when appropriate, to make representations on behalf of the Churches, either independently or with others;
- m. to encourage the fostering of good relations with other faith communities

and shall have

- n. power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Trustees shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
- o. power to buy, take on lease or in exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain and equip it for use;
- p. power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Charity;
- q. power subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Charity with repayment of the money so borrowed;
- r. power to employ such staff (who shall not be eligible to be Trustees of the Charity) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the objects and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants;
- s. power to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;
- t. power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;
- u. power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Trustees may think fit;
- v. power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

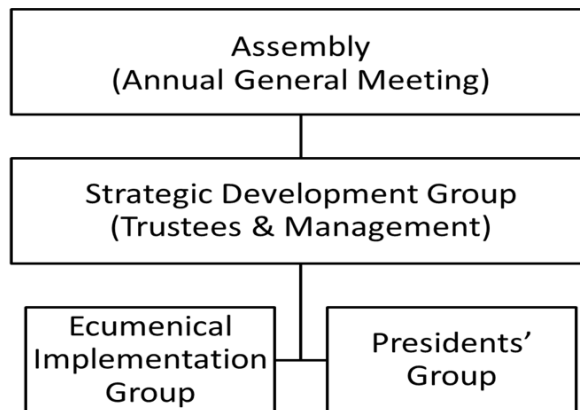
7. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Members of GMCT will assent to the Basis of GMCT (cf. 2 above).
- b. Also eligible is any Church or association of churches which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition and therefore cannot formally subscribe to the statement of faith

- in the Basis, provided it satisfies 67% in number of those Full Members which subscribe to the Basis that it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and it is committed to the aims and purposes of GMCT and that it will work in the spirit of the Basis.
- c. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which has no credal statements in its tradition and satisfies the conditions in 7.b above, shall be eligible for membership of GMCT.
 - d. **Full Membership is open to:**
 - i. A Church that is a larger body than a single local congregation (for example, a Roman Catholic or Church of England Diocese or a Methodist District, etc.).
 - ii. An association of churches bringing together into one body a number of local congregations who belong to a common Christian tradition (for example, a Baptist Association).
 - e. **Associate Membership (Churches) is open to:**
 - i. Single local congregations not represented in 7.d. above.
 - ii. Churches or associations of churches in the GMCT area who do not wish to apply for full membership, or if membership under 7.d would for some reason be inappropriate.
 - f. **Associate Membership (Other) is open to:**

Bodies (e.g. associations, networks, movements) which bring together Christians of different traditions for purposes congruent with the Basis and Objects of GMCT.
 - g. New applications for full membership require the written nomination of two existing full members of GMCT. Applications for all categories of membership are also subject to procedures outlined in the Standing Orders.

8. ORGANISATION



9. THE ASSEMBLY

- a. The Assembly meets to allow people representing the Churches at local level to consult together. Its purposes shall be:
 - i. to engage in worship and discussion with the Presidents' Group, the Strategic Development Group and the Ecumenical Implementation Group;
 - ii. to reflect on the activities and strategic direction of GMCT;
 - iii. to recommend to the Member Churches such matters as it believes should be addressed jointly;
 - iv. to appoint two representatives from local Churches Together or similar groups or from Local Ecumenical Partnerships to serve on the Strategic Development Group;

- v. to appoint an Honorary Treasurer, who shall during the period of such appointment continue as a full member of the Strategic Development Group
- b. The Assembly shall be an open meeting. Its Membership for voting purposes shall be:
 - i. The representatives of the Full Member Churches serving on the Presidents Group and the Ecumenical Implementation Group;
 - ii. One representatives of each local Churches Together group affiliated to GMCT;
 - iii. One representative of each Local Ecumenical Partnership sponsored by GMCT;
 - iv. One representative of each Associate Member
 - v. or as determined from time to time by the Trustees
- c. Twenty Members shall constitute a quorum.
- d. One meeting of the assembly shall be the Annual General Meeting of the Charity.

10. **THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP (SDG)**

- a. The Strategic Development Group is the management committee of GMCT. The members of the Strategic Development Group are the Trustees of the Charity, defined in Section 97(1) of the Charities Act 1993 as *'the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a Charity.'*
- b. The Strategic Development Group shall normally meet at least four times a year. Its functions shall be:
 - i. to facilitate, encourage and oversee the strategic direction of GMCT
 - ii. to respond to initiatives from the Member Churches and the Assembly;
 - iii. to decide upon applications for and invitations to membership of GMCT
 - iv. to co-ordinate the work of the Ecumenical Implementation Group and/or any other groups which may be established by the Strategic Development Group for the furtherance of the work of the Charity.
 - v. to liaise with the Presidents' Group on common matters of strategic interest
 - vi. to set up any other permanent or temporary task groups which may be needed and to keep them under review;
 - vii. to appoint and (if required) to dismiss members of staff and to deal with all matters regarding the terms and conditions of their employment including the appointment of management support groups (Chair of GMCT to be designated line-manager for staff);
 - viii. to agree a budget and receive accounts;
 - ix. to appoint independent examiners/auditors.
- c. The Membership of the Strategic Development Group (SDG) shall be as follows:
 - i. Four Presidents of GMCT, nominated by the Presidents' Group
 - ii. Four Members of the Ecumenical Implementation Group nominated by the Ecumenical Implementation Group
 - iii. Two representatives from local Churches Together or similar groups or from Local Ecumenical Partnerships, appointed by the Assembly (cf. 9.a.iv)
 - iv. The Honorary Treasurer, appointed by the Assembly (cf. 9.a.v)
 - v. The Strategic Development Group shall have powers to co-opt up to two Members
 - vi. The staff of GMCT may be invited to attend in a non-voting capacity.

- d. The SDG shall appoint a Chair and Secretary from among its members. They shall also normally serve as Chair and Secretary of the Assembly.
- e. There shall be a quorum when at least one third of the number of members of the SDG are present at a meeting.
- f. All members of the SDG must belong to bodies in membership of GMCT.

11. THE ECUMENICAL IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (EIG)

- a. The Ecumenical Implementation Group (EIG) shall
 - i. be a forum for Denominational Ecumenical Officers;
 - ii. act as Sponsoring Body on behalf of GMCT, in particular ensuring that all Local Ecumenical Partnerships receive appropriate ongoing advice and support, and proper periodic review;
 - iii. support and encourage local Churches Together or similar groups.
- b. Membership of the EIG shall consist of:
 - i. the person(s) charged with oversight of ecumenical relationships from each Church in Full Membership of GMCT;
 - ii. the EIG may co-opt up to two members and may invite observers;
 - iii. the staff of GMCT may be invited to attend in a non-voting capacity.
- c. The EIG shall appoint its own convener.
- d. Five members of the EIG shall constitute a quorum.
- e. All acts and proceedings of the EIG shall be fully and promptly reported to the SDG.

12. THE PRESIDENTS' GROUP

- a. The Presidents are the appropriate leaders of the Churches in Full Membership of GMCT.
- b. They are committed to meeting at least twice a year for prayer, reflection and consultation about matters of common concern.
- c. By agreement of the Presidents, alternates may be sent.
- d. They shall bring such matters as they deem appropriate to the attention of the SDG.

13. FINANCE

- a. The work of GMCT shall be maintained by contributions from the Member Churches as agreed among themselves, and from local Churches Together groups as determined by the SDG. The SDG shall also have the right to seek donations from trusts and private individuals towards the furtherance of its work.
- b. The SDG shall prepare a budget for each calendar year and shall submit the proposed budget for each year to the appropriate financial authorities of the Member Churches.
- c. Accounting records shall be maintained in accordance with the Charities Act 1993 and any subsequent legislation in relation to charities as may be enacted by Parliament
- d. The accounts shall be presented to the SDG, be made available to the AGM and be communicated to the appropriate financial authorities of the Member Churches
- e. GMCT shall operate a bank account/bank accounts in the name of the Charity into which all monies shall be paid. Cheques drawn on this account shall require the signatures of any two from among the treasurer and the signatories appointed by the SDG

- f. The title and any property which may be acquired by or for the purposes of GMCT shall be vested in Trustees who shall enter into a Deed of Trust setting forth the purposes and conditions under which they hold the said property for GMCT. The acquisition of a title or any property requires the support of the annual meeting or special meeting of members.

14. STANDING ORDERS

The SDG may make and amend all Standing Orders necessary for the conduct and operation of GMCT. At least three months' notice of change should be provided to the Members. Such Standing Orders shall be consistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

15. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

Amendments to this Constitution may be approved at a meeting of the Assembly with the consent of not less than 67% of the Full Members of GMCT provided six months' notice is given to enable their decision-making bodies to form a view on the matter. For this purpose each Full Member shall have a single vote to be exercised by its representatives. No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which shall cause GMCT to cease to be a Charity in law.

16. DISSOLUTION

- a. A motion to dissolve GMCT must be circulated to Full Members at least six months before it can be considered by a special meeting of Full Members when the support of at least 75% of Full Members is required for the motion to be successful. It will be the responsibility of Full Members to discuss the proposal for dissolution with their nominating bodies.
- b. Any residual funds should be allocated to Christian charitable organisations designated by the Trustees.