



## Constitution for CT Shire & Soke – Adopted AGM held 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### Shire & Soke

#### Churches Together in Northamptonshire, Peterborough & Rutland

##### Name

The Council (formerly the Northamptonshire Ecumenical Council, later Churches Together in All Northamptonshire, merged with Greater Peterborough Ecumenical Council) and latterly added the Churches Together in Rutland, shall be known as "Shire & Soke - Churches Together in Northamptonshire, Peterborough & Rutland".

##### Basis

Shire & Soke unites in pilgrimage those churches in the county of Northamptonshire, county of Rutland and the Peterborough area, which acknowledge God's revelation in Christ, confess the name of 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 one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

##### Purpose

- a) To promote and seek by prayer and other appropriate ways the fullness of unity in the church founded by Jesus Christ;
- b) To promote and encourage all appropriate forms of local ecumenism formal or informal, including CT groups and Ecumenical Groups outside of this.
- c) To support, encourage and assist all present and future Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs); Appointed Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEO's) and County Ecumenical Development Officers (CEDO's)
- d) To act as the sponsoring body of LEPs where appropriate;
- e) To act in a consultative and pastoral relationship with those working in LEPs; (Denominational Ecumenical Officers)
- f) To offer advice to the appointing authority on all appointments in such LEPs; (Denominational Leadership & Denominational Ecumenical Officers)
- g) To negotiate the financial arrangements of LEPs with participating denominations; (Denominational Leadership & Denominational Ecumenical Officers)
- h) To ensure provision for the evaluation of each designated LEP; (Denominational Ecumenical Officers) Note: If LEP's require additional mediation this can be supported by the County Ecumenical Development Officer and nominated persons given authority by Denominational Leadership

i) To ensure that there is adequate negotiation with secular and ecclesiastical authorities over matters of planning and provision of sites and buildings; (Denominational Ecumenical Officer and Denominational Leaders)

j) To facilitate and promote area-wide ecumenical involvement in such matters as local radio, chaplaincies also organising, or inviting Churches to participate in Ecumenical events eg. Church Leaders Breakfasts, Prayer Meetings, Retreats, Services (including week of prayer for Christian Unity) Civic Breakfasts, promoting Ecumenical social action projects, providing links to Ecumenical Resources and Training etc. work encouraged mainly by County Ecumenical Development Officers and support from Denominational Ecumenical Officers.

k) To connect both at local and national level with existing and future ecumenical agencies, eg. Churches Together groups, Churches Together in England, Churches Together in Britain & Ireland

l) Fostering good relations with other faith groups.

m) To encourage regional Leaders and Denominational Ecumenical Officers to come together for at least once a year or more.

## **Membership**

### **Area Church Leaders (or their nominees):**

- The Anglican Bishop of Peterborough and the Bishop of Brixworth;
- The Anglican Bishop of Ely and the Bishop of Huntingdon
- The Regional Ministers of the Central Baptist Association
- The Chair of the Northampton Methodist District
- The Roman Catholic Bishop of Northampton
- The Roman Catholic Bishop of East Anglia
- The Moderator of the East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church
- The East Midlands Divisional Commanders of the Salvation Army.

### **Denominational Ecumenical Officers (Minister or one lay person from):**

- the Church of England;
- the Baptist Association
- the Methodist church
- the Roman Catholic church
- the Church of Scotland
- the United Reformed Church
- the Salvation Army

### **Associate Members:**

- Representation from properly constituted Churches Together groups and LEPs within the county of Northamptonshire, Rutland and the Peterborough area.
- Those churches which are in full membership with Churches Together in England under article 3 of the Constitution of Churches Together in England, shall be entitled to be members of the Council of Shire & Soke. (eg. Orthodox Churches, RCCG, Vineyard, Elim etc)
- An invitation to membership or observer status may be offered to other Christian bodies as Churches Together Shire & Soke shall determine.

### **Area Church Leaders Meetings**

Area Church Leaders are encouraged to gather together at least three times a year (with one meeting being face to face).

County Ecumenical Development Officers will coordinate these meetings.

If a Church Leader is unable to attend they are able to nominate a representative (normally their Denominational Ecumenical Officer) to attend.

### **Trustees of CT Shire & Soke**

Up to five Trustees shall be drawn from the Denominational Ecumenical Officers of CT Shire & Soke.

Trustees will meet at least three times a year (which can be allocated time after the Executive Denominational Officers Meetings) and ensure that CT Shire & Soke is upholding responsibilities in line with the Charity Commission.

Secretary - County Ecumenical Development Officer who has administrator rights to the Charity Commission website

### **Role of Trustees**

To protect and advance the purpose of the organisation.

Responsibility to ensure CT Shire and Soke monies are used to carry out the charity's purposes (Constitution) on behalf of all the denominations who contribute.

Good Stewardship by connecting with treasurer to ensure the charity is not overcommitting or taking any financial risk.

Ensure the charity maintains a good reputation and integrity as it carries out its purpose.

To comply with current Employment Law and review salaries of paid employees (County Ecumenical Development Officers)

**The Executive consists of the Denominational Ecumenical Officers & invited Associate Members representing the broad Denominations from around the CT Shire & Soke area**

- a) Chair - elected by the Executive for two years;
- b) Secretary - County Ecumenical Development Officer (who is appointed by the Executive) to take minutes
- d) Treasurer - elected by the Executive for two years.
- e) Invitation to attend from other Christian Church Leaders in the area who represent their Denomination (Those churches which are in full membership with Churches Together in England under article 3 of the Constitution of Churches Together in England (eg Orthodox Churches, RCCG, Vineyard, Elim etc)

**Executive DEO & Invited Associate Members Meetings:**

The Executive Committee (Denominational Ecumenical Officers) shall normally meet every two months (six time a year – on Zoom and face to face), of which the May meeting shall be the Annual General Meeting.

The Executive shall be made up of the Chair, CEO, Treasurer, Denominational Officers and such other persons as may be required to attend and provide updates of Ecumenical and ongoing Denominational work across the CT Shire & Soke

**Finance**

The financing of Churches Together Northamptonshire, Peterborough & Rutland (Shire & Soke) operation shall be by annual contributions from the member churches (Methodist Northampton District, East Midlands Synod of URC, East Midlands Division Salvation Army , Northampton Roman Catholic Diocese, Central Baptist Association, Peterborough Anglican Diocese and from subscriptions from Churches Together groups as requested by the Council which shall appoint someone to audit or examine over the accounts on an annual basis.

**Constitution**

Amendments to this constitution must be approved by a simple majority of the Executive and will only take effect from the next Annual General Meeting following.