

LESLIE BAPTIST CHURCH PROCEDURES

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1. INTRODUCTION

- a) These procedures work alongside the Constitution of Leslie Baptist Church SCIO (Registered Scottish Charity Number SC0[]) to outline how we intend to work with others as disciples of Christ. Our ultimate guide is the Bible interpreted communally under the direction of the Holy Spirit. However, it is useful for us to have a shared written understanding about various points of how we operate.
- b) Changes to these procedures can be made only at a validly constituted Church Meeting where notice of the proposed changes has been given in writing.
- c) All terms used in this document are as defined in the Constitution.
- d) In the event of a discrepancy between this document and the Constitution then the Constitution shall take precedence.

2. ELDERS

- a) The Elders are a sub-group of the Leadership Team with responsibility for the Spiritual and Pastoral oversight of the Church, and act as a Committee as per the Constitution.
- b) The Elders will have specific shared responsibility for - Vision and Strategy, Preaching Rota, Pastoral Support, Prayer and Governance.
- c) The Elders may meet as a separate group but will ensure the whole Leadership Team are kept abreast of any significant issues they are dealing with whilst recognising the need for confidentiality in sensitive matters.

3. DEACONS

- a) Deacons are a sub-group of the Leadership Team with responsibility for specified activities within the Church, and act as a Committee as per the Constitution.
- b) Deacons will be appointed to have specific responsibility for - Finance, Administration, House Groups, Welcome and Stewarding and any other activities the Leadership Team may identify.
- c) At their first meeting following any AGM the Leadership Team shall review all the required roles within the Church and appoint Deacons to oversee them.
- d) The Leadership Team may appoint church members to undertake specific roles within the Church but shall ensure a member of the Leadership Team has oversight of them.

4. ELECTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

- a) The Leadership Team shall review the number of vacancies on the Leadership Team and shall determine the number of Elders and the number of Deacons required prior to inviting nominations.
- b) The Leadership Team shall ensure that a suitable Nomination Form is prepared for Elections at least six weeks prior to the AGM. This Form shall outline the Biblical and legal criteria for appointment as an Elder or Deacon as well as the deadline for submissions.
- c) Any Nominee will normally have been a member of the Church for at least a year before being nominated but this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Leadership Team in exceptional circumstances.
- d) Nomination Forms shall be submitted to the Church Secretary signed by the nominee and three church members, no more than two of whom shall be from the same family.
- e) The Church Secretary shall inform the Eldership of any nominations received within 48 hours.
- f) The Eldership shall consider such Nominations and if they have any concerns will arrange to meet with the individual concerned to discuss the issue.
- g) Following such discussions, if the Eldership still have concerns, and the Nominee wishes to proceed, then the Eldership shall consider informing the Church of their concerns.
- h) Names of the Nominees shall be advised to Church Members at least three weeks before the AGM, together with any reservations as per Sections 4f and 4g.
- i) Nominations for Elders shall require a two-thirds majority of votes cast to be passed, abstentions shall be ignored in this calculation except as outlined in Section 4k.

- j) Nominations for Deacons shall require a two-thirds majority of votes cast to be passed, abstentions shall be ignored in this calculation except as outlined in Section 4k.
- k) If, in the opinion of the Chair, the number of abstentions is excessive, then they may rule that the vote shall be deferred until the next Church Meeting.
- l) In the event of there being more candidates than places available, candidates shall be appointed in the order of most votes received descending until all vacancies are filled.

5. BAPTISM

- a) As per Clause 11 of the Constitution Baptism is normally to be by immersion. Where a candidate has an objection to, or concern about, that the Elders shall arrange for them to be interviewed and if they are satisfied with the explanation they may bring a recommendation to the Church that the requirement be waived, replacing it with such other procedure as may be appropriate.
- b) Baptism is normally into Membership of the Church but where a candidate has an objection to, or concern about, that the Elders shall arrange for them to be interviewed and if they are satisfied with the explanation they may bring a recommendation to the Church that the requirement be waived, replacing it with such other procedure as may be appropriate.
- c) Where the candidate for Baptism is under the age of 16, the Leadership Team shall consult with the parent(s) or guardian before bringing a recommendation to the Church Meeting.

6. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- a) The Elders have the primary responsibility within the Leadership Team for Church discipline. Disciplinary proceedings will be carried out in accordance with Scripture, in particular, cases of personal offence should be dealt with in accordance with Matthew 18.
- b) Members have an obligation to report to the Elders any issue involving them which may impact on the Church's reputation e.g. police charges.
- c) Where matters cannot be resolved, or in more serious cases of sin or failure to fulfil the obligations of membership, the Eldership shall investigate. The member concerned shall have the opportunity to share their perspective before any decision is reached unless, in the sole discretion of the Elders, immediate action is necessary to avoid harm to an individual or to the Church's reputation.
- d) The Eldership may agree voluntary restrictions with the member concerned e.g. withdrawal from certain activities for a period of time and/or supervision to be applied.

- e) Where the Elders feel restrictions are required, but the Member does not consent then the Elders shall agree the way forward with the Leadership Team.
- f) The Leadership Team may consult with the Baptist Union of Scotland for advice and guidance on how to handle any disciplinary situation.
- g) Where more permanent or severe restrictions are contemplated, the Elders shall consult with the Leadership Team before coming to a conclusion.
- h) Any decision to remove a person from membership shall be undertaken in compliance with the appropriate provisions of the Constitution.
- i) Failure to co-operate with an investigation is itself a severe disciplinary offence. Consistent failure to engage with the process may lead to removal of Church Membership in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Constitution.

7. CHURCH MEETINGS

- a) The AGM shall be held within 3 months of the end of the financial year, normally in November.
- b) Other Church Meetings shall normally be held in February, June and September.
- c) Any Member desiring to raise an item at a Church Meeting that is not on the Agenda shall normally inform the Chair at least 48 hours before the Meeting.
- d) The Leadership Team will set the specific dates each year and may vary them as required provided sufficient notice is given to the Church.
- e) Church Members will be advised of the Agenda and Date of Church Meetings via announcements in Church, direct email (where an address has been provided), on the Website and/or Social Media. The Secretary shall maintain a list of Members without electronic access and will attempt to ensure they are advised of Church Meetings via post, telephone or word of mouth.
- f) Members have an obligation to keep the Secretary updated with their current contact details.
- g) Given the significance of the positions of Secretary and Treasurer, the AGM papers will make clear to the Membership who the Leadership Team envisages carrying out these roles.

8. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

- a) An applicant for Membership who has previously been a member of another Church(s) will supply these details to the Church Secretary when applying for Membership.
- b) The Leadership Team shall normally obtain references from previous Churches or other sources as they deem appropriate.

