

## **Model Constitution**

### **1 Practicalities**

The Local Ecumenical Partnership shall be known as Churches Together in Pawlett. The partner churches are:-

Pawlett Methodist Church

St John the Baptist Church, Pawlett (Church of England)

The Partnership looks for support, encouragement, advice and overview to Somerset Churches Together.

### **2 Christian Initiation**

The partner churches shall continue to follow their own practice with regard to baptism, confirmation and church membership. There shall be joint preparation for Christian initiation. There shall be a joint service at which Confirmation and Reception into Church Membership takes place, using a rite authorised by the partner denominations through Churches Together in Somerset.

### **3 Ministry**

Pastoral responsibility for the churches and the communities which they serve shall be exercised by the partner churches collectively. The ordained ministers shall exercise within this collective ministry the specific roles to which they have been appointed.

All those appointed by the partner denominations to minister in the partner churches shall meet together regularly for prayer, fellowship and discussion of matters related to the exercise of their ministry.

Denominational procedures shall be followed in the appointment of ministers. Those responsible for the appointment of ministers shall seek to select persons who will respect, support and develop the Partnership and the ecumenical nature of the appointment shall be clearly indicated in any 'job description'.

When a ministerial vacancy occurs, or a new ministerial appointment is in view, there shall be ecumenical consultation. It shall be the aim of those responsible for the appointment of ministers that the ecumenical consultation shall include

- the involvement of representatives of other partner churches in the procedures of the appointing denomination as far as is possible and permitted;
- the opportunity for existing ministers to meet with prospective candidates and to pass on their opinions to those responsible for making the appointment;
- if appropriate a representative from Somerset Churches Together will be available for advice.

Ministers shall be subject to the normal discipline of the denomination to which each belongs.

Children's work, young people's work, training, education and formation, involvement with schools, marriage preparation, hospital visiting, pastoral care for homes for the elderly and other institutions within the communities, community outreach and bereavement counselling shall all be planned and undertaken jointly. A partner church shall not act individually in any of the areas of ministry listed above unless there are compelling reasons to do so and that church has, in advance, explained those reasons to appropriate representatives of the other partner churches.

#### **4 Worship**

The partner churches shall continue to follow their own practice with regard to worship. The members and ministers of all of the partner churches shall be welcome to attend worship in all of the partner churches and shall be encouraged to take part in worship in all of the ways permitted by the parent denominations. There shall be opportunities for joint worship and prayer for each other.

#### **5 Decision-Making**

The partner churches shall continue to follow their own practice with regard to decision-making processes.

Each partner church shall invite representatives of the other partner churches to attend meetings of its decision-making body as observers.

To facilitate joint decision-making and the sharing of information between the partner churches there shall be a Partnership Enabling Group. The membership of the Partnership Enabling Group shall be:

- All those appointed by the parent denominations to minister in the partner churches.
- Two other representatives of each of the partner churches. These people shall be elected or appointed by the partner churches in whatever way those churches choose and, if not already members of the decision-making bodies of their respective churches, shall be enabled to become members of those bodies at the earliest opportunity.

The Partnership Enabling Group shall meet at least three times a year, one of these meetings being an Annual General Meeting.

- Members of all of the partner churches may attend the Annual General Meeting,
- Reports on the life and progress of the Partnership shall be given at the Annual General Meeting and financial accounts shall be presented when appropriate.
- The Annual General Meeting shall elect the Chairperson of the Partnership Enabling Group, who shall serve for two years, a Secretary, Treasurer and other officers, as appropriate.

The Partnership Enabling Group shall agree a budget each year for meeting the administrative costs of the Partnership and for other purposes which have been agreed by the Partnership Enabling Group. The money shall be raised by the partner churches.

The Partnership Enabling Group may set up sub-committees, working parties or other groups to carry out specific tasks.

## **6 Buildings**

The partner churches shall continue to use, maintain and develop the buildings for which they already have responsibility.

Any partner church considering a change of use of its buildings, items of maintenance involving expense in excess of £5000, or the construction of new buildings, shall, before putting the work in hand, share its proposals with the other partner churches.

Every effort shall be made to share the use of buildings and to enter into agreements, formal or informal, to do so.

## **7 Ongoing Development**

Other churches within the area may negotiate for participation in the Partnership at any time. Churches seeking to enter into the Partnership must have the approval of the Partnership Enabling Group, Somerset Churches Together and their own denominational authorities.

The Denominational authorities shall ensure that every seven years the Partnership shall be reviewed with reference to its Covenant and this constitution.

The Partnership may only be terminated with the approval of Somerset Churches Together and the denominational authorities. A partner church may only withdraw from the Partnership with the approval of its own denominational authorities and Somerset Churches Together.

This constitution, and the Covenant, may only be amended by the Partnership Enabling Group. No amendment shall take effect until it has been approved by all of the partner churches and Somerset Churches Together.