

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **1. NAME OF THE CHURCH**

Langley Free Church

### **2. AFFILIATION**

The Church shall be affiliated to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Southern Counties Baptist Association .

### **3. STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

- a) We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
- b) We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is both true God and true man. We believe in his all-sufficient sacrifice for sin by his death on the cross, his bodily resurrection, his ascension into heaven and his coming again in glory.
- c) We believe in the Holy Spirit who is one with the Father and the Son in the Godhead. We believe that he dwells within every Christian believer and is the source of our spiritual life, obedience to God, and Christ-like behaviour.
- d) We believe that through sin man is under God's judgement and is unable to redeem himself. We believe that a sinner is put right with God through faith in Christ alone; expressed in repentance from sin and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.
- e) We believe that Christ is the supreme head of his body, the Church, in which every believer is equipped by God for a specific function. We believe the Church is called to glorify God in worship, to preach the gospel throughout the world and grow together in love.
- f) We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that it is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and Christian living.

### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- a) Membership is open to those:-
  - who assent to the Statement of Belief,
  - who profess repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and whose lives bear evidence of their Christian commitment.
- b) Requests for membership should be made to the Minister or Church Secretary.
- c) Applicants will be made conversant with this constitution, and Ethos Statement in Appendix 1 and Safeguarding Statement in Appendix 2
- d) Any applicant who has not been baptised as a believer will be asked to consider earnestly the New Testament teaching on baptism.
- e) A report on an applicant's suitability for membership will be made to the Church Meeting by two visitors appointed by the Minister and Deacons.
- f) At the discretion of the Minister and Deacons, letters of commendation may be sought for applicants who have been in membership elsewhere.
- g) Membership will be decided by the Church Meeting and will be effective from that date for those accepted.
- h) Applications for holding dual membership with another church will be considered in specific situations, e.g. where the applicant is working for a recognised missionary organisation
- i) Members are expected to:
  - give glory to God in their worship.
  - endeavour to share Christ in today's world.
  - be faithful in praying for the Church, its leaders and activities.
  - bear good witness to the Lord by their lifestyle.
  - Adhere to the published Safeguarding policy.

- regularly support the Church services.
  - contribute financially to the work of the Church, as the Lord prospers them.
  - take part in Church activities, including attendance at Church Meetings, as they are able.
  - be willing to use their gifts for the benefit of the Church whenever appropriate.
  - recognise the privileges and responsibilities of membership and be open to the pastoral care and discipline of the Church.
- j) A Membership List will be maintained and reviewed annually prior to the AGM by the Minister and Elders. Members who are not able to fulfil their expectations in 4(i) above for 3 months, will be moved to the LFC friends list but will be contacted appropriately by a designated member of the leadership or pastoral team, as agreed by the Minister, before this action is taken. As with Membership applications the recommended removal of a member will be proposed by the Minister and Elders and brought before the Church Meeting for approval.

## **5. ORDINANCES**

- a) The ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Communion) shall be observed regularly (at least once a month and at such other times as may be desired). Members are encouraged to make every effort to attend.
- b) The ordinance of Believer's Baptism shall be administered as required. All believers shall be admitted to this ordinance, whether or not such candidates desire church membership.
- c) In view of b) above a service of dedication will be offered to parents of children brought to the fellowship in place of infant baptism.

## **6. CHURCH OFFICERS**

- a) **THE MINISTER** – The Minister shall be an accredited Baptist Minister, Probationer, Student at a recognised Baptist Theological College or training towards a recognised model of Baptist leadership and must be elected at a specially called Church Meeting by at least three quarters of the membership eligible to vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot and notice given on two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.
- b) **ELDERSHIP** – The Church may appoint Elder(s) to assist the Minister in spiritual leadership, oversight and pastoral care and support the Minister personally. Elder(s) will be elected for a period determined by the Church Meeting but not exceeding 3 years, unless agreed at a Special Church Meeting, or ordinary Church Meeting previously designated for this purpose. They will then be eligible for re-election. During periods of pastoral vacancy, the Elders will assume the roles of the Minister

The name(s) of proposed Elder(s) will be recommended to the Church by the Minister and Diaconate for election individually at a subsequent Church Meeting by secret ballot and require approval of three quarters of the membership eligible to vote.

- c) **THE DIACONATE** – The Deacons shall assist the Minister in the oversight and administration of the Church. An agreed number of brothers or sisters, above the age of 18, shall be elected individually from amongst members of not less than six months standing, for a period determined by the Church Meeting but not exceeding 2 years. They shall then be eligible for re-election.
- d) **EXECUTIVE OFFICERS** – A Secretary and a Treasurer shall be elected from the members of the Diaconate and/or Eldership, for a period of one year. They shall then be eligible for re-election.
- e) **ELECTIONS** - The election of Elders and Deacons shall take place at a Church Meeting by secret ballot. Members who are unable to vote at the Church meeting will be permitted to vote by secret ballot on the previous Sunday using authorised numbered ballot papers which must be signed for. Election shall be by majority of not less than three quarters of members eligible to vote- If there are more nominations than vacancies those receiving the most votes above the required number of votes to fill the vacancies at the first

ballot shall be deemed to be elected. Those not receiving the required number of votes shall be eligible to be nominated for election at a future ballot. In the case of a tie for a vacancy or vacancies those candidates shall submit themselves to one further ballot for that vacancy or vacancies. The election of Deacons shall normally take place at the Annual General Meeting to be held in November and the election of Executive Officers at the following Church Meeting, or at such other Church Meeting as the Church shall decide.

Elections may be held at other times to replace Deacons or Executive Officers when vacancies arise mid-term. Those elected, as above, shall take office with immediate effect.

## **7. CHURCH MEETINGS**

a) The Church shall meet for the transaction of business at least once a quarter and shall hold an Annual General Meeting normally held in November each year. Details of receipts and payments of all Church financial transactions must be properly set out in statements of account. These accounts are subject to annual inspection by an independent examiner selected by the Diaconate.

b) Members over the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote at Church Meetings.

c) No new business, except notice of motion, shall be introduced at a Church Meeting by anyone other than the Minister or Presiding Deacon, unless notice of the same has been given to the Secretary in writing before the previous Deacons' Meeting.

d) Members who have been absent from Church services at L.F.C. for three months without good reason, as notified to the Minister, shall not be eligible to vote.

e) Voting, except as outlined above, shall be by simple majority of those present.

## **8 GENERAL**

The Minister shall be ex-officio President of all societies and organisations connected with the Church, and shall be entitled to preside at all meetings, both of the Church and its constituent societies.

## **9. ALTERATION OF RULES**

Alteration of these rules may be made at a Special Church Meeting, or ordinary Church Meeting previously designated for that purpose, provided that proposed amendments are notified to the members in writing at least three weeks before the meeting.

END.

Revised May 2024

Approved 15.7.24