

Hereford Baptist Church Church Handbook

May 2025



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WELCOME TO HEREFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

Welcome to Hereford Baptist Church!

This handbook, which is available to all members and applicants for membership, serves as a general information booklet about HBC and what it means to be a member of our church.

Hereford Baptist Church, established in 1828, is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) and the Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA). Links to the Union and Association websites can be found below.

BUGB Website: <https://www.baptist.org.uk/>

HEBA Website: <https://www.baptist-heartofengland.org/>

We are committed to sharing God's love and the Gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ. We believe this will happen by teaching and explaining the Christian faith as well as through social action.

If there is anything in this handbook that is unclear, or you would like more details on, please feel free to contact one of the leadership team.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Note: The statement of faith below is a draft of an amplified version of the statement of faith found on the church's website, further detailing each point and citing the relevant Biblical passages. This draft was by and large present in the last draft of the handbook that you, the church, received.

God the Father

We believe that there is one living and true God¹, an infinite, all-knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes², one in substance, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit³.

We believe that God the Father is the Creator of all things⁴. He orders all things according to His own purpose and grace⁵. He cares for and directs all things in the universe with wisdom and love⁶. He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass⁷, and He continually upholds and sustains all that He has created⁸.

God in eternity past, without reference to anything outside of Himself, ordained everything that has happened or will happen. Yet God did this in such a way that in no sense is He the author of sin and human responsibility for sin is not removed⁹.

¹(Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4); ²(Psalm 18:30, 90:2, 139:1-4; Matthew 5:48; John 4:24); ³(Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14); ⁴(Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9); ⁵(Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6); ⁶(1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 103:19, 147:5; Romans 8:28, 11:33-36; Galatians 1:15); ⁷(Isaiah 43:6-7; Ephesians 1:11); ⁸(1 Chronicles 29:11; Job 38:1-41, Matthew 10:29-30); ⁹(Genesis 50:20; Luke 22:22)

Jesus, the Son of God

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father¹ and possesses all the attributes of the Father².

In the incarnation He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary³. While remaining fully God, He took on a full human nature, yet without sin⁴.

Our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His sacrificial death on the cross, dying in our place as our substitution. His death was effective to free believing sinners from the punishment, penalty, and power of sin, reconciling us to God⁵.

Three days after His crucifixion, by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that He accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross making our justification and future resurrection sure⁶.

He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, where He mediates and intercedes for us as our Advocate and High Priest⁷.

¹(John 10:30, 14:9); ²(Colossians 2:9); ³(Luke 1:35); ⁴(Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5); ⁵(John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25, 5:8-9; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18); ⁶(Matthew 28:6-15; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-32; Romans 1:4, 4:25, 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:17-23); ⁷(Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24; 1 John 2:1)

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He is eternal, possessing all the attributes of God¹ and He dwells within every believer at the moment of salvation².

His divine activity includes leading believers to repentance as He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement³; uniting believers in Christ and to one another⁴; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ⁵; transforming believers into the image of Christ⁶ and administering spiritual gifts to the church as He wills⁷; empowering believers to acts of service⁸; enabling our witness⁹; and giving us the wisdom needed¹⁰ to carry out the work God has prepared in advance for us to do¹¹.

¹(Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6, 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-14; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Hebrews 9:14); ²(John 3:5-16; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Ephesians 2:21-22); ³(John 16:7-11); ⁴(Romans 12:5-8; Ephesians 2:22, 4:1-6); ⁵(John 16:14-15); ⁶(Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18); ⁷(1 Corinthians 12:4-31); ⁸(1 Peter 4:10-11); ⁹(Acts 1:8); ¹⁰(1 Corinthians 2:10-13); ¹¹(Ephesians 2:10)

Scripture

We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the 66 books that make up the Old and New Testament Scriptures. They are the written Word of God's revelation to man through the Holy Spirit, inerrant in the original documents and constituting the church's only infallible rule of faith and conduct¹.

¹(Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-15; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

The church

We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church¹ of which Christ is the Head and supreme authority².

We believe in the priesthood of all believers³ who are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies⁴.

The purpose of the church is to glorify God⁵ by building itself up in the faith and in love⁶ through the instruction of the Word⁷; by fellowship⁸; by keeping the ordinances of baptism and communion⁹; by works of service¹⁰ and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world¹¹.

¹(1 Corinthians 12:12-13); ²(1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15 5:23; Colossians 1:18); ³(1 Peter 2:5-9); ⁴(1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25); ⁵(Ephesians 3:21); ⁶(Ephesians 4:13-16); ⁷(2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17); ⁸(Acts 2:46-47; 1 John 1:3); ⁹(Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42); ¹⁰(1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12); ¹¹(Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42)

Man

We believe that God created all people, male and female¹, in His image and likeness, to glorify Him², to enjoy His fellowship³, to be holy⁴ and to love and care for others⁵ and for creation⁶.

We believe that through Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will of God⁷, human beings lost their innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God⁸.

With no power to restore themselves, humankind is hopelessly lost and our only hope for salvation is by God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ⁹.

¹(Genesis 1:27); ²(Isaiah 43:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Revelation 4:11); ³(Psalm 73:25-26); ⁴(1 Peter 1:15-16); ⁵(Proverbs 21:13; John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:4; James 1:27); ⁶(Genesis 1:28); ⁷(Genesis. 2:16-17); ⁸(Genesis 3:1-19; John 3:36; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 1:18; Romans 5:10); ⁹(Romans 3:1-31, 6:23; Ephesians 2:4-10; 1 John 1:5-10)

Christ's return

We believe in the personal, visible, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ¹ to fulfil the purposes of God.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people, both the saved and the lost. The saved will be resurrected to eternal life², and the lost to judgement and everlasting punishment³.

God will establish a new heaven and new earth, and the saved will enter an eternal state of glory⁴ where they will enjoy fellowship with God and one another forever⁵.

¹(1 Thessalonians. 4:16; Titus 2:13); ²(John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11; 2 Corinthians. 4:14); ³(Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15); ⁴(Revelation; 21:1-27; 2 Peter 3:10-13; John 17:3); ⁵(Revelation 21-22)

OUR CONSTITUTION

Hereford Baptist Church (HBC) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by three key pieces of legislation: -

- The Charities Act 2011;
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General Regulations 2012) Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 3012; and
- The Charitable Incorporated Organisations (Insolvency and Dissolution Regulations 2012) Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 3013.

Our constitution is based on the approved constitution of the Baptist Union (BU), and is limited in its structure by the options provided by the BU.

This handbook does not replace HBC's constitution, but rather serves as a supportive document, providing an abbreviated summary of some of the key sections of our constitution.

Copies of HBC's constitution are available from the church office, and all current and prospective members are encouraged to read this important document and make themselves familiar with its contents.

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

As a Baptist church, HBC subscribes to a congregationalist understanding of church governance. Rather than believing that ecclesiastical authority resides with diocesan bishops, or with a central council, we as Baptists believe that each congregation has the authority to choose and ordain its own ministers, to decide the basis for its membership, to organise its worship, and to discipline its members, in the manner that the congregation sees best fits with the Biblical witness.

Practically speaking, this means that the recognised members of HBC gather every other month for "Church Members' Meetings", during which they consider, among other things:

- the reception and welcome of new members;
- the financial matters of the church;
- any matters of church discipline;
- the calling of ministers;
- the appointment of other kinds of leaders/workers;
- the Church's overall life and mission;
- and other important practical issues that have arisen since the last meeting.

THE CHURCH OFFICERS

HBC's appointed trustees, together with the minister, serve as the officers of the church. Having been appointed by the church meeting to serve/manage and to teach/guide/oversee respectively, these are the people primarily responsible for the day-to-day running and leading of the church, regularly referring back to the church members to ensure that they are aware of all matters that may impact the entire congregation and/or are of constitutional importance.

Looking at these two roles through the lens of the New Testament, the role of HBC's appointed trustees fits within the description of a "deacon", whilst the role of HBC's minister fits within the description of an "elder". As such, in our day-to-day functioning as a church we tend to refer to our officers using these Biblical categories, rather than using the legalese of the CIO. The rest of this document then will use "officer/minister/deacon" language.

If you have any questions or should you wish to meet with one of the officers, please contact the church office on 01432 352209 or by e-mailing office@herefordbaptist.org.uk.

Alternatively, the names and pictures for the church's officers can be found in the church foyer, if you'd prefer to arrange a meeting in-person.

ACTIVITIES

At Hereford Baptist Church we engage in a number of activities for different age groups and interests.

These activities broadly cover the following core areas:

- Regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching;
- Baptism, as defined in the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle;
- Communion, otherwise referred to as the Lord's Supper, which we currently celebrate together once a month;
- Evangelism and mission, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- Teaching, encouraging, welcoming and inclusion of young people;
- Nurturing and growth of Christian disciples;
- Education and training for Christian and community service;
- Giving and encouraging pastoral care;
- Supporting and encouraging charitable social action in the United Kingdom and abroad;
- Encouraging relationships with and supporting Baptists and other Christians.

A typical week at Hereford Baptist Church includes:

- A morning Worship Service at 10:30am on Sundays, which includes activities for young people. Once a month the morning service has an all-age focus and features a breakfast, for which most young people remain in church.
- We have a regular bring-and-share lunch after church.
- During the week there are numerous worship and social gatherings. These include:

- Monday evening prayer meetings twice a month;
- Sunday evening Bible studies twice a month;
- A Kid's Club running on the first Friday of the month;
- Youth on a Wednesday evening for all children from Year 7;
- Various men's, women's, seniors and other groups serving a multitude of needs and ministry opportunities throughout each month;
- and small groups that meet regularly in homes across Hereford and the surrounding area to study the Bible and to deepen and develop Christian community and fellowship.

If you would like more information regarding any of these groups/opportunities, please contact the church office on 01432 352209 or by e-mailing office@herefordbaptist.org.uk.

VOLUNTEERING AND JOINING IN

Our prayer is that you will enjoy attending Hereford Baptist Church, finding new friends and becoming a part of the family of brothers and sisters in Christ. We would love you to join in with our activities and any help you can offer in terms of time and talents would be most welcome.

The church cannot function without the efforts of its members, and everyone has God-given gifts to offer. Whether it be teaching, music, administration, maintenance, hospitality, technology or any number of other areas that make up the day-to-day running of the church, we are confident there is a place for you to serve at Hereford Baptist Church. Please speak to our minister or any one of the deacons if you are looking for guidance on how to become involved.

There are some parts of church life where we need to take special care. As in all organisations where activities involve children or vulnerable adults, we are legally required to ensure that the appropriate checks are undertaken so please do not be offended if we ask you to complete documentation or undergo training where appropriate.

We welcome your ideas and suggestions on how we can improve anything. Please speak to our minister or a deacon by contacting the church office on 01432 352209 or by e-mailing office@herefordbaptist.org.uk.

SAFETY

Safety is always important and we do our best to make sure the church premises are safe. However, we realise that accidents can happen. Please let one of the deacons know if there is a problem. All incidents are documented and relayed to the church office.

If you need the First Aid kit, there is one in the kitchen and another in the drinks preparation area at the front of the church. We also have a portable one for events outside of the church. These are checked every month or after an incident form is submitted stating that it has been used.

Kept with each box is an accident reporting book. The reports are filed in the church office.

Attached to each box is a list of first aiders.

The use of the church kitchen must be under the supervision of someone holding a valid Food Hygiene Safety certificate. A list of those HBC members who have this qualification is held in the church office. One of the deacons is appointed to oversee this list.

It is the responsibility of all users of the kitchen to leave it in a clean and “ready to use” condition. Details of these responsibilities are posted in the kitchen.

Fire extinguishers are located around the building and are checked annually by a professional organisation as well as monthly by the Health and Safety Deacon.

We also have numerous fire alarms which are linked to a call centre. These are checked monthly by 2 designated HBC persons and every 6 months by a professional organisation.

The church’s emergency lighting is checked monthly and tested every 3 months.

The dates of all these inspections are kept in the fire safety book which is administered by the Health and Safety Deacon and the church office.

Fire evacuation routes and instructions are posted in every room.

Nobody should use step ladders or undertake any kind of maintenance or building work whilst they are on their own in the building.

The church has the following health and safety policies in place.

- Safeguarding
- Health and safety (including fire)
- Lone worker
- GDPR

Anyone wishing to see a copy of a policy or discuss any health and safety concerns should contact the church office.

Other than Sunday mornings, access to the church is usually via the parking area at the back of the building. The gates are shared with the magistrate’s court and are locked during court hours. Access should only be for those with prior permission, on church business, coming for a meeting with the minister, or those who have been given an access card. These cards and users are reviewed regularly by both the court and church secretary. The side gate has a magnetic lock. Under normal circumstances this is on a timer and when the lock is engaged access is gained by means of a FOB provided to those who require it. Those requiring a FOB should submit their request to the church office.

JOINING HEREFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

As a member of the Baptist Union the church subscribes to the Baptist Union’s Declaration of Principle:

“That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His laws.

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who ‘died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again on the third day’.

That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world.”

Whilst membership of the church is open to all who profess repentance toward God and faith in the Lordship and Deity of Jesus Christ, it is our belief that such repentance and faith shall be witnessed to in Believer’s Baptism. In our pastoral care, discipleship support and interview for church membership we will seek to explain the importance of Believer’s Baptism and encourage people to consider responding.

Those who desire to become members of the church should apply to the minister, or the Church Secretary, or to the Membership Deacon where the process of membership will be explained to them.

Having received an application, the officers of the church will interview the person interested, and then bring their name, along with the highlights of the interview, to the church meeting to be considered and subsequently voted upon by the membership. If the vote is affirmative, then the applicant will be welcomed as a member of the church at the next convenient service.

All applicants shall be asked earnestly to consider the New Testament teaching on baptism, but the church may, at the discretion of the Church Members’ Meeting, welcome to full membership anyone based on their own public profession of faith and who conscientiously follows our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those accepted for membership shall be received into the fellowship of the church at a church service when they shall sign the membership roll. They will also be added to the membership list which is available to all members.

Belonging to Hereford Baptist Church involves some responsibilities. It is expected that all members strive to live a life consistent with the gospel and worthy of our high calling in Christ. Beside regular attendance in corporate worship and observance of the Lord’s Supper, we encourage all members to actively seek to grow in their knowledge and faith through spending some time every day in prayer and reading the Scriptures.

All members are also encouraged to take part in the work of the church, in accordance with their calling, gifts and opportunities. Furthermore, members are expected to accept personal responsibility for the government of the church, by being present, whenever possible, at the Church Members’ Meeting.

CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

There are three types of formal Church Members' Meetings:

- Ordinary Church Members' Meetings;
- Annual General Meeting; and
- Special Church Members' Meetings.

Ordinary Church Members' Meeting

There will be at least four Ordinary Church Members' Meetings in any calendar year. This is an opportunity for the Members to consider and review routine matters associated with the life of the church. The dates for the Ordinary Church Members' Meetings should be published at the start of each year. Notice of Church Members' Meetings will also be included in the Sunday news sheet on the two Sundays preceding the meeting.

Annual General Meeting

One Ordinary Church Members' Meeting each year shall include the Annual General Meeting for the Church members to receive annual accounts and reports and to consider proposals for the strategy and vision of the Church in the coming year.

Special Church Members' Meeting

A Special Church Members' Meeting will be convened when the officers believe a matter of sufficient importance requires it. Examples for a Special Church Members' meeting to be convened include:

- to consider the appointment or dismissal of a minister,
- the dismissal of a deacon,
- matters relating to the purchase, sale, lease, mortgage or redevelopment of church property,
- the closure of the church.

Notice of a Special Church meeting should be included in the Sunday news sheet on the three Sundays preceding the meeting.

General

Worship including prayer and the reading of Scripture shall be a key feature of Church Members' Meetings. The discussion of any matters affecting the life and activities of the church shall be set in this context with the intention that, so far as possible, practical issues are not perceived as being separate from the spiritual aspects of the church.

Members shall be entitled to raise matters under "any other business". These will be discussed at the discretion of the Chairman.

A Church Members' Meeting may be called at the discretion of the majority of deacons or at the written request of at least one tenth of the church membership.

At all Church Members' Meetings, the greater of twenty percent or 30 members of the church membership shall constitute a quorum.

Voting

The following table provides a summary of the voting requirements at HBC.

	Church Members' Meeting	Special Church Members' Meeting
All decisions except the appointment of Charity Trustees, a Church Secretary or a Church Treasurer*	Simple majority	
Appointment of trustee	Two thirds majority	
Removal of trustee		Two thirds majority
Appointment of Minister		Two thirds majority
Special resolution		Two thirds majority
Amendment to the Constitution		Seventy five percent majority
Winding up or dissolution of the church		Seventy five percent majority**

*The appointment of the Church Secretary and Church Treasurer is decided by the church officers from among their number.

**Alternatively, by a resolution agreed in writing by all members of the church

Hereford Baptist Church does not allow votes to be submitted by post. There are a number of reasons for this.

- a) We encourage our members to be involved in as much of the decision making as possible by regularly attending members' meetings where members can participate in discussions and questions can be asked and answered before voting takes place.
- b) Allowing postal votes runs the risk of members not attending meetings where their valuable contribution to discussions would be missed by those members who do attend.
- c) Postal votes can run the risk of causing delays to decisions, often frustrating the process from moving forward quickly.
- d) There is an administrative impact of managing relatively few postal votes.

Electronic meetings

Should circumstances require, any meeting may be held by suitable electronic means or a combination of a physical meeting and suitable electronic means, agreed by the church officers.

Points to note:

- Such meetings should take place on rare occasions. Meeting in person should always be the preferred method.
- As per the constitution, the officers will decide whether a meeting may be held through electronic means.
- The means of meeting electronically should allow for everyone to participate in the meeting. The process by which a vote would take place during an electronic meeting will be determined at the time, if such a vote is ever required.

MEMBERS CHOOSING THEIR OFFICERS AND MINISTERS

All deacons of the church are to be chosen by the church members from amongst themselves, for the purpose of managing the affairs of the church. The process for appointing deacons, alongside their duties and qualities, is detailed in the church constitution. With regard to appointing a minister, the process is different, with the constitution detailing the different rules that apply in Clause 16.

Hereford Baptist Church may have anything from 3 to a maximum of 12 officers, excluding the minister at any point in time depending on the specific needs of the church. Deacons should normally be elected from amongst church members of not less than 6 months standing and may serve for a period of three years. Deacons may be appointed to serve for a further three years, however, any deacon who has served for the maximum period of six years is not eligible for re-appointment until they have had a break of at least one year.

Officers (serving in their biblical capacity of a deacon or elder) will need to have the necessary qualifications both spiritual and practical (Acts 6: 1-6, 1 Tim 3:7-13, Phil 1:1, Titus 1:6-9).

CHURCH GIVING

The church receives income from donations made by members and individuals who attend the church. Taxpayers are encouraged to complete a Gift Aid declaration so that tax can be recovered, giving added benefit to the church, and increasing its income.

All our money is used to advance the Christian faith. This involves any payments that are practical and that are associated with the organisation and maintenance of the church.

Our principle expenses include:

- Paying our minister and other staff salaries
- Buying materials to be used in our young people's work
- Paying gas, electricity and water bills
- Maintaining the church grounds and buildings
- Reimbursing reasonable expenses to those who volunteer for the church
- Meeting our commitments to support various charities and Christian organisations

An Independently Examined statement of the Church Accounts are presented at the Annual General Meeting.

GENERAL

This Handbook may be altered (providing the alterations do not conflict with the church's constitution) based on input and proposals at a Church Members' Meeting. Changes will become effective based on a simple majority vote of church members.

The Handbook has been drawn up in the best interests of the fellowship in conjunction with the Church Constitution.

Dated: April 2025

ADDENDUM A – Quick reference guide to the Church Constitution

Clause Number	Clause Title	Clause Details
1	Name	The name of our church. Consent to change the name of Hereford Baptist Church would be required from the Charity Commission.
2	National location of principal office	Indicates whether our principle location is in England or Wales.
3	Purpose	Includes the principle purpose of our church, what it does that makes it a charity and includes scope to allow us to carry out other charitable purposes in the UK and overseas that are normally associated with a Baptist Church.
4	Beliefs	The alignment of Hereford Baptist Church to the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle.
5	Activities	A list of typical Baptist Church activities that our church expects to be engaged in either on our own or with others. There is no legal mandate to engage in all the activities listed and we are not limited to engaging in only the activities that are listed.
6	Affiliation	Hereford Baptist Church is affiliated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Heart of England Baptist Association.
7	Powers	This clause is a technical clause that confirms that the church will have power to engage in contractual arrangements, remunerate staff and manage bank accounts.
8	Application of income and property	The purpose of the clause is to make sure that charity assets and income are applied to the work of the church by the Charity Trustees who have responsibility for the administration of the funds.
9	Benefits and payments to Charity Trustees and Connected Persons	This section relates to payments to trustees and connected persons in restricted circumstances.
9.1	General provisions	This clause sets out the principles that apply to benefits and payments. The phrase, "No Charity Trustee or connected person" which is used at the beginning of the clause is important because it means that an individual Charity Trustee cannot benefit personally, nor can members of their family household or business partner.

9.2	Scope and powers permitting Charity Trustees' or Connected Persons' benefits	This clause provides for the flexibility to allow Charity Trustees or their relatives, close family members or business partners to receive financial benefits from the church funds where appropriate. This process will be carefully managed and the safeguards observed.
9.3	Payment for supply of goods only - controls	This section concerns payment for goods supplied by a Trustee, e.g. payment for repair materials.
10	Conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty	This clause sets out a specific requirement for the Charity Trustees of the church to withdraw from discussions and decisions where they have a potential or actual personal interest.
11	Liability of members to contribute to the assets of the Church if it is wound up	If the Church is wound up, the members of the Church have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.
12	Membership of the Church	<p>The clauses within this section detail the requirements, processes, procedures of becoming a member of Hereford Baptist Church. It includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12.1 Admission of new members and eligibility 12.2 Admission procedure 12.3 Duty of members 12.4 Termination of membership 12.5 Church Membership List
13	Church Members' Meetings	<p>This section reflects the familiar patterns of Members' Meetings within a Baptist Church. It includes clauses relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13.1 Types, frequency and purpose of Church Members' Meetings 13.2 Calling Members' Meetings 13.3 Notice of Church Members' Meetings 13.4 Guests at a Church Members' Meeting 13.5 Chairing of Church Members' Meetings 13.6 Quorum at Church Members' Meetings 13.7 Taking decisions at Church Members' Meetings 13.8 Taking decisions by consensus and voting 13.9 Decisions that must be taken in a particular way 13.10 Special Church Members' Meetings 13.11 Adjournment of Church Members' Meeting 13.12 Participation in Church members' meetings by electronic means

14	Charity Trustees	<p>In a CIO the Charity Trustees' names are listed on the Charity Commission website. All Charity Trustees have responsibility for the work of the organisation and all need to be involved in taking decisions.</p> <p>This section provides clarity on all matters relating to:</p> <p>14.1 Charity Trustees and the Church Members' Meeting 14.2 Functions and duties of Charity Trustees <i>Charity Trustees have important, shared responsibilities. They need to exercise care and skill and respond to the views expressed by the Church Members' Meeting. They sometimes deal with sensitive issues and there will be times when matters have to remain confidential. This section also points out the particular responsibility of being a trustee of a Christian Church.</i> 14.3 Personal Qualities of Charity Trustees 14.4 Number of charity trustees 14.5 First charity trustees 14.6 Appointment of Elected Charity Trustees 14.7 Nominations 14.8 Voting Method</p>
15	Appointment of Church Secretary and Church Treasurer	Specifies that the Charity Trustees shall decide who from among their number should be the Church Secretary and who should be the Church Treasurer.
16	Ministers	This section provides the constitutional procedures relating to the appointing and dismissing of a minister. The relationship between minister and church, the expectations of the church of the minister and the tasks of the minister are also provided for. It is important to note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive job description but rather to provide for the primary expectations of a minister from a constitutional perspective.
17	Information for new Charity Trustees	Details the minimum information to be provided to any newly appointed Trustee.
18	Retirement and removal of Charity Trustees	Provides the constitutional requirements and/or circumstances surrounding the retirement or removal of a Trustee.
19	Reappointment of Charity Trustees	This clause allows for the reappointment of any Charity Trustee who retires as part of the normal rotation of trustees or has previously resigned.

20	Taking of decisions by Charity Trustees	This clause provides for the manner in which Trustees may take decisions.
21	Delegation by Charity Trustees	The Charity Trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to a committee or committees. This section covers the procedures, processes and responsibilities in the case of such delegation occurring.
22	Meetings and proceedings of Charity Trustees	<p>The Charity Trustees have shared responsibilities and obligations to each other and to the Church Members. It is therefore important that physical meetings of the Charity Trustees are held.</p> <p>The clauses within this section provide the detail around these meetings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22.1 Frequency of Meetings 22.2 Calling Meetings 22.3 Conduct of Meetings of Charity Trustees 22.4 Quorum at Meetings of Charity Trustees 22.5 Chairing of meetings 22.6 Procedure at meetings 22.7 Taking decisions by consensus 22.8 Taking decisions by vote 22.9 Participation in meetings by electronic means
23	Saving provisions	These clauses are intended to 'save' the organisation from becoming involved in technical legal wrangles where it is found that a decisions was made inappropriately because one or more of the Charity Trustees was not qualified to take the decision. It also covers a situation where the quorum provisions have not been followed correctly. This clause helps to solve the problems caused by mistakes.
24	Execution of documents	Companies and Charitable Incorporated Organisations have a legal identity. Therefore they can execute documents in their own right. This will include holding property in their own name. This clause specifies how documents will be properly executed.
25	Use of electronic communications	This clause stipulates the compliance of Hereford Baptist Church to communicate in electronic means with its Members and with the Charity Commission in accordance with the requirements of the Communications Provisions in the CIO General Regulations.
26	Keeping of Registers	This clause stipulates the compliance of Hereford Baptist Church to the particular requirements in the CIO General

		Regulations that relate to the keeping of registers of members and Charity Trustees.
27	Minutes	Details when and how the Charity Trustees will keep minutes of meetings.
28	Accounting records, accounts, annual reports and returns register maintenance	The Charity Trustees must comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 with regard to the keeping of accounting records, to the preparation and scrutiny of statements of accounts, and to the preparation of annual reports and returns.
29	Proper Rules or a Church Handbook	The Charity Trustees may from time to time with the agreement of the Church Members at any Ordinary Church Members' Meeting make such reasonable and proper rules or prepare a Church handbook as they may deem necessary or helpful for the proper conduct and wellbeing of the Church, but such rules or handbook must not be inconsistent with any provision of this constitution. Copies of any such rules or bye laws currently in force must be made available to any member of the Church.
30	Disputes	This clause is intended to provide a safety net and structure for resolving differences within the church.
31	Amendment of constitution	This section provides a framework for alterations, including a clause which creates a protection for certain important clauses which are fundamental to the church's Baptist identity. Changes to these clauses can only be made after careful thought and consultation with the Baptist Union and the local Baptist Association.
32	Voluntary winding up or dissolution	There are specific regulations dealing with the closure of a CIO. This section covers the specific legal arrangements required from the church if it closes.
33	Interpretation	<p>Section 118 to the Charities Act 2011 applies for the purposes of interpreting certain terms used in the constitution. The terms and their interpretation provided in this section include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33.1 Association 33.2 Baptist Union 33.3 Beliefs 33.4 Church Member 33.5 Church Members' Meeting 33.6 Connected Person 33.7 Elected Charity Trustees 33.8 General Regulations 33.9 Charity Trustee 33.10 Communications Provisions

		<p>33.11 Dissolution Regulations</p> <p>33.12 Poll</p> <p>33.13 Purposes</p>
34	Postal Voting	HBC does not allow voting by post
35	Use of electronic communications	This clause is not to be confused with clause 25 and relates specifically to electronic communication to and from the church and the members of the church.

DOCUMENT HISTORY:

This will be updated to reflect resolutions made in church meetings and any other forums where valid changes are agreed.

Version (ccyymmdd_Initials)	Summary of changes	Affected paragraphs
20200127_GT	Initial draft based on constitution	All
20200414_GT	1 st draft submitted for review - Complete rewrite to create a less “legal” document	All
20200426_KB	Feedback from Kate on initial draft	All
20200518_GT	Draft 2	All
20200528_KB	Feedback from Kate on Draft 2	All
20200604_GT	All changes accepted - to be submitted to CIO team for review	All
20210614_GT	Final updates after meeting 24 May 2021	The Leadership Team, Church Members’ meetings – electronic meetings, Members choosing their leaders and ministers
20220118_GT	Amendments and additions after church meeting of 17 Jan 2022	Our constitution, Church Governance, Leadership team
20230620_GT	Review – Gary Taberner and Mo Wilcox in preparation for presentation to the church	Whole document, Inclusion of Statement of Faith
20230710_GT	Spelling, grammar and minor content amendments provided by Jon Stark, Mo Wilcox, Iain Darwood and Ian Burrell. Amendments to the addendum provided by Mike Kerrigan in line with the final version of the constitution.	Whole document
20250507_JS	Content and terminology amendments made throughout the text in response to feedback from the church members, ahead of the 2025 AGM.	Whole document
20250508_GT/JS	Further refinements made by the diaconate regarding the language used in the section detailing the choosing of Church Officers, ahead of sending the document out.	Church Governance, Church Officers