

**WARWICK ROAD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,
COVENTRY CONSTITUTION - 2002**

The Church

1. The Church shall be known as Warwick Road United Reformed Church.
2. The Church is a constituent member of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom and as such accedes to the current Scheme of Union of that said Church.

Membership

3. The essential conditions for membership are confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, a resolution to live day by day according to Christ's teaching, and a willingness to uphold the honour, discipline, work and worship, that is the mission of the Church by the dedication of individual gifts of time, skills and financial resource.
4. The privileges and obligations of membership necessitate regular attendance at worship, Holy Communion and Church Meeting.
5. Persons wishing to become Church Members should make their desires known to the Minister, either personally or through an Elder of the Church. The Elders of the Church shall nominate to Church Meeting those persons who, normally, after attending membership groups or having been transferred to the Church by letter of transfer from another Church, wish to become Church Members.
6. Persons accepted by the Church Meeting shall be received into Membership of the Church by extending to them the right hand of fellowship, or where appropriate, by the laying on of hands and/or baptism. This will normally take place within a service of Holy Communion.
7. Members who move residence from the district should notify the Church Secretary of their new address. The Secretary should then write a letter of introduction to the URC, or some other Church near to their new home.
8. The Church Roll shall normally be reviewed annually by the Elders of the Church so that it may be brought up to date.
9. Upon that review of the Church Roll persons who have left the district and have made no provision for retaining or transferring their membership shall be deleted from the roll. Members absent from the life of the Church, without reasonable cause, for a period of one year shall be sent a letter advising them of their deletion from the Church Roll. Under no circumstances shall a name be deleted from the Church Roll without both the knowledge of the person concerned and the concurrence of the Church Meeting.

The Church Meeting

10. The Church Meeting shall consist of those persons who have been admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership of Warwick Road URC. Other persons

who are part of the life of the Church, but who are not on the Church Roll, are entitled to attend and be invited to speak on certain issues, but have no vote.

11. The Church Meeting is the Church assembled in order that the Spirit of Christ may direct its Members in all things concerning the work of God. All Members should therefore regard it as a privilege and obligation to attend. In the Church Meeting, Members have the opportunity through prayer, discussion, responsible decision and care for one another, to strengthen each other's faith and to foster the life, work and mission of the Church.
12. The functions of the Church Meeting are as laid down in the current Manual of the URC.
13. The Church Meeting shall be held at least once a quarter. Additional Church Meetings can be called by the Minister, the Elders, Trustees or by 25% of the current Church Membership. Two clear Sunday's notice must be given of all Church Meetings. A majority of those present and voting shall be required for all decisions taken by Church Meeting unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.
14. No member shall bring any item of business before a Church Meeting without previously having given notice to the Church Secretary.
15. In the absence of the Minister, the Elders Meeting shall appoint from their number, a person to preside at the Church Meeting. During a vacancy, the Interim Moderator appointed by the District Council, shall normally preside.
16. An Annual General Meeting shall normally be held in the month of May each year.

Elders' Meeting and Election of Elders

17. The Elders' Meeting shall consist of the Minister and the Elders and it shall exercise leadership and oversight of the spiritual life of the Church. Its functions are as outlined in the current Manual of the URC with the exception of function (x) regarding the arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all the financial responsibilities of the church which is the responsibility of the trustees.
18. The Elders shall meet whenever necessary and always between Church Meetings. A quorum of 50% of serving Elders must be present.
19. The number of Serving Elders shall be sufficient for the continuing needs of the Church. As a guideline, the number shall be one for every 7 Church Members plus Elders with special responsibilities. This figure shall be reviewed and confirmed each year prior to election of Elders.
20. Terms of office shall be for three years, after which time re-election by the church meeting is required. After two successive terms of service, an Elder shall be encouraged not to seek re-election for one year.
21. Elders shall be at least 18 years of age and shall normally have been a Church Member for at least one year.

22. Elders shall be recommended, nominated and elected by Church Members.
23. During the weeks before the Annual General Meeting church members nominations will be sought. A person nominated must have agreed to stand and be nominated by six church members. The nomination to be submitted in writing to the church secretary.
24. All those whose names have been recommended for the Eldership, should be fully informed by their Minister and/or one or more of the Elders about the nature of the call of Eldership and the implications of the role of Elder's, before their name goes forward to the church meeting.
25. The Election of Elders shall take place at the Annual General Meeting by secret ballot. Each Elder must receive 75% of the votes cast to be elected, and any vacancies not filled are to be referred to the Elders Meeting for further consideration.
26. The elders will consider mid-term vacancies as they arise and may arrange an election as appropriate.
27. All committees of the Church shall be responsible to the Elders Meeting and / or Trustees, which being made clear in the committees remit. The Minister is ex-officio in every case. The Elders and / or Trustees with the consent of the Church Meeting may at any time authorize the setting up of a committee to meet a specific requirement. All committees report to the Church Meeting.

The Trustees

28. The trustees are responsible for the physical and financial assets of the church and, act in accordance with the terms of the Trust scheme, approved by the Charity Commissioners, and dated 8th October 1918 as amended. The trustees are to administer and manage the assets with due care and diligence.
29. Trustees are appointed by the Church Meeting from existing church members and shall continue in office as long as he/she does not: -
 - a) Relinquish church membership
 - b) Become bankrupt
 - c) Remain out of the United Kingdom for more than one year
 - d) Become otherwise unfit or incapable of acting due to legal, physical or mental circumstances.
30. Trustees shall number up to 16 and not less than five. Trustees may retire by giving two months written notice to each of the other trustees and to the Minister and Church Secretary.
31. Trustees must act at all times under the authority of the Trustees meeting. These shall be held as often as necessary to ensure that the responsibilities of the Trustees are complied with, and at least twice yearly.
32. The Chairperson and Secretary of the Trustees shall be appointed by the Trustees meeting and these posts shall be reviewed annually, normally at the meeting prior to the

Church Annual General Meeting.

33. The Minister, and if not duly appointed Trustees, the Church Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be invited to meetings of the Trustees.
34. The specific duties of the Trustees shall include the administration and management of the Church budgets and the income and expenditure control in consultation with the Church Treasurer and the Elders.
35. These specific duties also include the care and maintenance of buildings, fixtures and fittings which may be devolved on a day to day oversight basis as appropriate.
36. Staff appointment and employment matters shall be a responsibility of the Trustees. This shall not apply to the call of a Minister.

The Minister

37. Ministers are called with concurrence of District Council, to exercise leadership in and through the Church, to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments and by influence, character and service, to build up the faith of the Church in its experience of Christ. The life and witness of the Minister is dependent on the love and loyalty of all people within the Church, and will be enriched by their prayers, cooperation, support and friendship.
38. The Call to a Minister shall issue from a Church Meeting, and, according to custom, no period is set to his/her ministry except retirement. The vote will be by secret ballot and a minister must receive 75% of the votes cast to be called.
39. In no case shall the name of more than one Minister be placed before a Church Meeting.
40. During a vacancy the Elders Meeting shall consult with the Synod Moderator and the District Council, through the appointed Interim Moderator, in order to find a new Minister. Before bringing any candidate before the Church Meeting, the Elders shall make careful enquiries as to the record and suitability of the person in question.

Church Officers

41. The Elders Meeting shall nominate from among its members a Church Secretary to be elected by the Church Meeting to serve both the Church Meeting and the Elders meeting.
42. The Trustees, who are responsible for financial matters of the Church, shall make, from within the membership of the Church, a nomination for the post of treasurer. This appointment must be confirmed by Church Meeting.
43. The Treasurer and Secretary shall not normally serve for more than four consecutive 3 year terms.

Postscript

44. This constitution, when adopted by the Church Meeting, shall supersede all rules and previous constitutions of the Church.

45. Believing that in the light of added Christian experience the Church may be led to form a new constitution, the present constitution makes no claim to be permanent.
46. The Constitution shall be reviewed every ten years or earlier if required. Any alterations to the Constitution must be given in the form of notice at one Church Meeting, for discussion at the next Church Meeting.
47. A copy of this constitution shall be given to each new Member and made available to every Church Member.

This constitution was agreed at the Church Meeting on 27th May 2002 and ratified by the Church Meeting on 10th June 2002. From this date, it is operable and supersedes all previous constitutions.