



*A Christian Community, in the Community, for the Community*



# **Worle Baptist Church**

## **Our Handbook**



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## Overview of WBC

Worle Baptist Church is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a CIO. We have a Constitution that is a legal document. It has been prepared by solicitors and uses a template that has been agreed by the Baptist Union and the Charity Commission.

You are encouraged to read the whole document although it can be difficult to understand in places.

This Handbook provides a summary of the contents of our constitution and provides some more information on some points for clarification.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the Constitution.

The **principal purpose** of Worle Baptist Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination

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.



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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."

## The Activities of WBC

Activities include, but are not limited to:

- regular public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching
- baptism, as defined in the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle
- the Communion of the Lord's Supper which shall normally be observed at least once a month
- evangelism and mission, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- the teaching, encouragement, welcome and inclusion of young people
- nurture 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, and



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- encouraging relationships with and supporting Baptists and other Christians.

We are a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (the family of Baptist Churches across England and Wales) and Webnet (our local regional association).

## What we own

We can own property. If Worle Baptist Church chooses to have a mortgage or borrow money for this purpose we will follow the Baptist Union guidance.

Any income that Worle Baptist Church generates must be used for the purposes of the Church.

Any property that Worle Baptist Church owns must be used for the purposes of the Church.

Worle Baptist Church will follow the rules (provided by the Charity Commission and guidance from Baptist Union) in relation to people who loan money to the church and how this is repaid.

We will ensure that Leaders (Trustees) or the Minister are not being unfairly remunerated for out of pocket expenses.

Leaders (Trustees) will be required to declare any conflicts of interest.

If the Church has to close, or makes a decision to close, neither the members or the trustees of the church have any liability to



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contribute to its assets and have no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

## Insurance

Worle Baptist Church will ensure we always have buildings, employers and public liability insurance.

## Membership

of the Church is open to those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ and wish to become members, and who, by applying for membership have indicated acceptance of the Baptist Union's Declaration of Principle.

Anyone seeking membership will need to have a conversation with two members (normally the Minister and/or other Leaders) to talk about their faith, their journey to faith and why they feel called to be a member of Worle Baptist Church. If someone has not been baptised by full immersion then they may, at the discretion of the Church Members' Meeting, still be accepted into membership based on their own public profession of faith. Members would aim to make a decision about membership within 3 months of the request being made. In the rare event membership is not considered appropriate, there is a process for appeal. Full details can be found in the Constitution.

Members have responsibilities:



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- to further the purposes of our church
- to attend worship and participate in church activities
- personal prayer and Bible study
- participation at the Communion of the Lord's Supper
- help the church by using gifts and abilities
- attend and participate in church members' meetings
- give financial support in proportion to personal resources and circumstances
- uphold Christian values

Church Membership will be terminated if the member dies, transfers their membership to another church, or otherwise resigns in writing to the Church Secretary. These routine changes to the membership list shall be reported at the next convenient Church Members' Meeting.

In very exceptional circumstances the Church Members' Meeting could decide to end someone's membership. This situation would have to meet the circumstances outlined in the Constitution.

Membership will be re-confirmed each year.

## Church Members' Meetings

will be held at least 4 times a year and one of these meetings will include the AGM.

Annual Accounts will be presented at the AGM. Accounts will be audited annually. Who audits the accounts will be agreed by the membership at a church members' meeting. Annual budget will



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be presented for approval at the last members meeting of the year ready for the new financial year.

A Special Church Meeting is needed to appoint or dismiss a minister; some other exceptional situations also require a Special Church Meeting.

Worship and reading scripture will be a key feature of Church Members' Meetings.

The main rules about our Church Members' Meetings are as follows:

- Church members can request a meeting if 10% of the membership request this and say why. The reason must be clear and in line with the full details in the Constitution;
- At least 7 days notice will be given of the date of a meeting
- Meetings must have a Chairperson;
- There must be a quorum of people at a meeting – 25% of members or 5, depending on which is the greater;
- Members must be consulted and involved in decision making;
- Decision making would usually not need a vote but would involve a show of hands to support a proposal;
- If a formal vote is needed, then this will be recorded in the minutes; each member will be given one vote; only members present will be able to vote; 2 people will be assigned to count the votes; votes will be made on appropriate ballot papers. New members can vote at the meeting at which they become a member if the meeting has agreed their membership before the vote takes place;





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- A decision at a Church members' meeting needs the support of 50% or more of those present and entitled to vote;
- A decision at a special meeting needs the support of 67% or more of those present and entitled to vote.

If a meeting cannot be held in person for 2 months then it can be offered by suitable electronic means or a combination of electronic and in person.

## Church Leaders (Trustees)

The role of a Leader is detailed in the constitution. Church Leaders are Charity Trustees and therefore the terms Leader and Trustee are synonymous. The Minister is automatically a Trustee.

The church will appoint Leaders (Trustees) from the membership. They must be over 16 years old. The maximum number for Worle Baptist Church, excluding the Minister, is 12.

Leaders (Trustees) need to be nominated. Nominations will need to be made (in writing, with the signature of support of 2 members and the consent of the nominee) at least 3 Sundays before the date of the Church Meeting. Church members will be notified of the opportunity to make a nomination on the 2 Sundays prior to this by way of announcement in the service. The Minister or Leaders will talk and pray with all potential members being nominated before the nomination is announced. Nominations will



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be announced 14 days before the Church Meeting to enable members to prayerfully consider the nominations.

The Leaders (Trustees) will appoint a church Secretary and Treasurer.

Leaders (Trustees) are elected for 3 years and need to be re-nominated and elected every 3 years. Church Leaders can serve two 3 year terms before they need to step down for a period of at least a year.

Care will be taken to ensure that Leaders (Trustees) are on different 3 year cycles.

Leaders' (Trustees) meetings should be held at least bi-monthly. Worship and scripture reading are to be a part of the meetings.

## Minister

Worle Baptist Church can appoint a minister, or more than one minister; the minister will be expected to become a member of the church.

A Minister can only be called at a Special Church Meeting and by a formal vote. The Special Meeting must have a quorum of people present (25% of membership or 5, depending on which is greater). The decision needs the support of 67% or more of those present and entitled to vote.

Whilst this follows the requirements within our Constitution, it is expected that attendance will be much greater than 25% for such an important decision and the membership shall be strongly encouraged to attend.



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The role of the minister is detailed in the constitution.

## Record Keeping

All minutes of all church meetings will be kept and will include:

- Date of meeting;
- Names of those present;
- Details of any decision made and reasons why, and;
- Details of decisions made by voting papers.

Meetings will always review the minutes of the previous meeting and confirm whether agreed as an accurate record.

Any agreed changes will be recorded.

If approved, the minutes will be signed by the person chairing the meeting.

## Changing or adding to our Handbook

A copy of the Worle Baptist Church Handbook will be made available to all church members.

Changes to our Handbook can be made by agreement at a Church Members' Meeting. Any changes to our Handbook must be necessary or helpful for the conduct and well-being of Worle Baptist Church and its members and must be consistent with our Constitution.



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## Changing the Constitution

Worle Baptist Church constitution can only be amended by:

- resolution agreed in writing by all members of the Church, or;
- a resolution passed by a 75% majority of votes cast at a Special Church Members' Meeting.