

Social Work Christian Fellowship



For Christians in Social Work,
Care, Action and Welfare

CONSTITUTION

Social Work Christian Fellowship

Constitution

Preamble

The Social Work Christian Fellowship was established in 1963 as a Section of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship Associates, and became an independent body in 1979, when the first constitution was adopted. The constitution underwent minor amendments in 1988 and 1989. However, in the light of changes in the aims and structure of the Fellowship, and in the professions of social work, social care and social welfare, a more substantial revision was felt to be necessary.

I hereby certify that the following Constitution was approved as the Constitution of the Social Work Christian Fellowship at the Annual General Meeting held on 11th March, 2005.

Signed



.....
Jan Billington Chair

Date

.....18.3.06.....

Clause 1: Name

The full name of the Fellowship shall be “The Social Work Christian Fellowship” (herein referred to as “the Fellowship”).

Clause 2: Membership

The Fellowship constituted hereby shall be a union of Christians in social work, social care and social welfare. Membership shall be open to anyone who satisfies the following four conditions.

- 2.1 Members shall be those who
 - a) are, or have been, employed as social workers or social care workers, or who
 - b) have a professional interest in social work or allied social welfare occupations, either as practitioners, trainers, researchers, managers or students.
- 2.2 Members shall accept the Aims set out in Clause 3 below.
- 2.3 Members shall signify their agreement with the Statement of Faith set out in Clause 4 below.
- 2.4 Members shall have paid and continue to pay such subscription as shall be determined from time to time by the Committee.
- 2.5 Members may be required to supply evidence to the Membership Secretary of their ability to satisfy one of the conditions under 2.1 above.

Clause 3: Objects and Aims

The objects of the Fellowship shall be:-

- a) The advancement of the Christian Faith in accordance with the Statement of Faith set out in Clause 4.
- b) The advancement of education for the benefit of the public in accordance with Christian principles.

In furtherance of the above objects, but not further or otherwise, the Fellowship shall seek:-

- 3.1 To witness to Jesus Christ in the fields of social care and social welfare.
- 3.2 To encourage Christians in social work, social care and social welfare to integrate their personal faith with their professional practice.
- 3.3 To enable Christians in social work, social care and social welfare to meet together for personal and professional support, fellowship, prayer, and study, by establishing and sustaining a network of local groups, and the sharing of information.

- 3.4 To develop the thinking, action and practice of members on professional matters in the light of Christian principles by such means as conferences, publications, workshops and research.
- 3.5 To encourage and support Christians undergoing training in social work, social care and social welfare.
- 3.6 To help the churches better discharge their responsibilities by making available the professional knowledge and experience of members.
- 3.7 To promote Christian thinking, action and practice on social issues in the fields of social work, social care and social welfare at all levels of decision-making, and in response to policy initiatives and debates.
- 3.8 To maintain links with professional and/or Christian bodies who share some or all of these Aims.

Clause 4: Statement of Faith

The following shall be the Statement of Faith of the Fellowship, which all Members shall sign to affirm their agreement.

I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; I trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ as Saviour; and I seek in every aspect of life to be guided by biblical truth.

Clause 5: Honorary Members and Associate Members

- 5.1 By the unanimous decision of the Committee, persons having a special interest in, or connected with, social work, social care or social welfare may be admitted as Honorary Members of the Fellowship, provided that such persons are in full sympathy with the aims of the Fellowship, and who would otherwise be able and willing to sign the Declaration of Membership. Such persons shall be eligible to vote at any meeting of the Fellowship, and to serve on any of its Committees.
- 5.2 Persons who are in sympathy with the aims of the Fellowship, who are unable to meet Sub-clause 2.1 or 2.3 above, shall be eligible to become Associate Members provided that they pay such subscription as shall be determined from time to time by the Committee. Associate Members shall not have the right to vote at any national meetings of the Fellowship, nor to serve on the Committee of the Fellowship.
- 5.3 Subscriptions may be waived for a limited period of time for Associate Members who fulfil the conditions of Sub-clause 5.2, and carry out a particular service for the Fellowship. Such persons shall be deemed Complimentary Associate Members.

Clause 6: Council of Reference

The Committee at the Annual General Meeting, or at any other meeting, may elect members of a Council of Reference from amongst prominent members of the social work profession, and others associated with the profession. Such election shall be subject to the proposed persons being in sympathy with, and in active support of, the aims of the Fellowship, and willing to sign the Statement of Faith to affirm their agreement with it.

Clause 7: National Executive Committee

The affairs of the Fellowship shall be managed by a Committee to be known as “The National Executive Committee of the Social Work Christian Fellowship” (herein referred to as ‘the Committee’), which shall comprise the following:-

- 7.1 The Chair of the Committee elected in accordance with Sub-clause 8.2 below;
- 7.2 The Secretary elected in accordance with Sub-clause 8.2 below;
- 7.3 The Honorary Treasurer elected in accordance with Sub-clause 8.2 below;
- 7.4 The Membership Secretary elected in accordance with Sub-clause 8.2 below;
- 7.5 The Conference Convenor elected in accordance with Sub-clause 8.2 below;
- 7.6 Area Co-ordinators nominated or elected in accordance with Clause 9 below;
- 7.7 Such other posts as the Committee shall, from time to time, stipulate to be nominated or elected in accordance with Sub-clause 8.6 below;
- 7.8 The Committee shall be free to invite the attendance at a meeting of the Committee of non-voting observers from affiliated groups or organisations as defined by Clause 18;
- 7.9 The Committee will seek where possible to reflect in its membership representations of the different interests in social work, social care and social welfare (e.g. work with families, care management, residential care, voluntary organisations, probation work, mental health social work, social work education).

Clause 8: The Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Other Committee Posts

- 8.1 The Chair, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Membership Secretary, and the Conference Convenor of the Committee shall hereinafter be referred to as the Officers of the Fellowship.
- 8.2 The Officers shall each be appointed by the Committee, shall assume office at the first Annual General Meeting after election, shall hold office for three years, and may thereafter be appointed for a further period not exceeding three years, unless the Committee reviews the appointment annually. The Chair shall be appointed from among

existing Committee members only. All other Officers may be appointed from among the members of the Fellowship.

- 8.3 In respect of the first Annual General Meeting held under this Constitution, the existing *Officers* of the Social Work Christian Fellowship who are signatories to this Constitution shall continue to hold their respective offices for a period of either one, two or three years thereafter as the Committee shall decide so that at each Annual Meeting only one of the Chair, Secretary or Treasurer shall leave office (unless he or she be eligible for re-election for a further three years term, and be so re-elected).
- 8.4 The Committee may appoint from among their number a Vice Chair for such period and on such terms as it may decide, but so that the Vice Chair shall immediately resign from such office if he or she ceases to be a member of the Committee.
- 8.5 The Committee may from time to time by Standing Order create any additional posts on the Committee in order to further the aims of the Fellowship. Such Standing Orders should designate the title of the post, and the nature of the post holder's responsibilities. Subsequently, the Committee shall be empowered by Standing Order to vary or annul such an Order if and when it appears necessary to further the aims of the Fellowship.
- 8.6 Post holders under such Orders shall each be appointed by the Committee, shall assume office immediately, and shall hold office for three years, and may thereafter be appointed for a further period not exceeding three years, unless the Committee reviews the appointment annually. Such appointees may be co-opted on to the Committee from among the members of the Fellowship.

Clause 9: Area Co-ordinators and Special Interest Group Co-ordinators

- 9.1 For the purpose of electing representatives to the Committee, the British Isles shall be divided into such geographical areas as the Committee shall from time to time decide.
- 9.2 Members in each area may elect from among themselves a Co-ordinator for that area by such means as the members in that area may determine, and whenever the post falls vacant upon the resignation, or completion of the term of office of the previous post-holder. The Area Co-ordinator shall serve for a period of three years, and thereafter may serve in that area for a further period not exceeding three years, unless the Committee reviews the appointment annually. Once appointed, the name of the Co-ordinator shall be communicated in writing forthwith to the Secretary of the Fellowship. The Area Co-ordinator, duly elected, may serve on the Committee, and assume all other offices immediately thereafter.
- 9.3 In the event of a Co-ordinator for any area not being duly elected at the required time, the Committee may nominate a person to that office from among the members in that area.
- 9.4 An Area Co-ordinator must
 - a) be a member of the Fellowship in accordance with Clause 2; and
 - b) be resident or employed in the area of which he or she is Co-ordinator; and

- c) be a holder of no other office on the Committee; and
 - d) promote the Fellowship in their area; and
 - e) give account of their activities to the Officers before each Annual General Meeting.
- In the event of any of these conditions ceasing to apply, an Area Co-ordinator shall be obliged to resign.

- 9.5 The Committee shall be empowered from time to time to alter by Standing Orders any of the aforesaid electoral and appointment procedures.
- 9.6 The Committee shall be empowered to appoint as appropriate Special Interest Group Co-ordinators to assist members with specific professional interests in common to join together for personal, spiritual and/or professional development. Such co-ordinators will normally be subject to the usual 3 year terms of appointment and re-appointment.

Clause 10: Proceedings at Meetings of the Committee

- 10.1 The Committee shall meet at least once a year at the Annual Conference at which the Annual General Meeting shall also be held, and at other times as it may itself determine, with the intent that there shall be at least one other Committee Meeting during a year.
- 10.2 The Chair shall normally convene any meeting of the Committee. The Secretary shall give written notice of the agenda items three weeks prior to the meeting. Committee meetings may also be convened by any of the Officers together with any three members of the Committee or by a simple majority of the members of the Committee.
- 10.3 A quorum shall be one third of the members of the Committee currently in post, including at least two of the Officers.
- 10.4 All decisions at Committee Meetings shall be determined by a majority of votes of those in attendance.
- 10.5 The Chair of the Committee shall be the Chair of the Fellowship, or if absent any other Officer appointed by the meeting. The Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 10.6 At a meeting of the Committee, a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands of those personally present and entitled to vote unless before, or upon, the declaration of the result of a show of hands a postal vote of all the members of the Committee be demanded by the Chair of the meeting or by at least three members personally present and entitled to vote. If a postal vote be so demanded, it shall be taken in such a manner as the Chair of the meeting shall determine.
- 10.7 The Secretary shall ensure that Minutes are kept of every meeting of the Committee, and of every sub-Committee of the Committee, and that such Minutes shall be signed by the Chair of the meeting at the next Committee meeting.

- 10.8 The Treasurer shall ensure that suitable books of account are kept, and that the Fellowship's income and expenditure are correctly entered therein. The Fellowship's books and accounts shall be audited by a qualified Accountant, if the Committee so decide. The Treasurer shall have power to give receipts for all monies paid to the Fellowship, and shall administer the funds of the Fellowship in accordance with the instructions of the Committee. The Treasurer shall send a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts to the Charity Commissioners annually, after the Annual General Meeting.
- 10.9 The Conference Convenor shall ensure that suitable books of account are kept in respect of all monies connected with the Annual conference, and that the income and expenditure connected with the Conference are correctly entered therein. The Conference books and accounts shall be audited by a qualified Accountant, if the Committee so decide. The Conference Convenor shall have power to give receipts for all monies paid in connection with the Conference, and shall administer the funds of the Conference in accordance with the instructions of the Committee.

Clause 11: Powers and Duties of the Committee

- 11.1 The Officers of the Fellowship shall be ex officio Trustees of the Fellowship in accordance with the Charities Act, 1991, and shall be subject to the duties and responsibilities of charity Trustees as set out in the legislation. As such, the Officers shall act as Trustees of all or any of the property and investments of the Fellowship.
- 11.2 No members of the Fellowship may serve as Officers if they are disqualified from being Trustees under S.72 of the Charities Act, 1993. All Officers shall sign a statement declaring that they are not so disqualified.
- 11.3 The Committee shall have the power to appoint and remove Honorary or paid staff or other employees to fulfil the aims of the Fellowship, and assist in the administration thereof upon such terms as the Committee shall decide, but subject to the duty under the Charities Act, 1991, to give each employee a proper contract of employment, and a written job description, making clear the extent of his/her authority to act on behalf of the Fellowship. This power shall include the power to employ part time staff, or to contribute towards the salary and expenses of persons employed by another body who supply services to the Fellowship.
- 11.4 The Committee shall have the power to invest the funds of the Fellowship in the purchase of, or at interest upon the security of, such stocks, funds, shares, securities or other investments of whatsoever nature, and whatsoever situate, and whether involving liability or not, as the Committee shall think fit. This power is subject to the duties under the Charities Act to monitor constantly the performance of all investments, to avoid speculation and invest in such a manner as to achieve both income and capital growth insofar as it is in the power of the Committee to do so, and to seek such professional advice as is most likely to secure that end.
- 11.5 The Committee shall have the power to open banking accounts as required for the Fellowship, using the Fellowship's name for such accounts. Cheques or orders for

payment from such accounts may be authorised by the signature of any two Officers who are authorised by the Committee to act for such a purpose.

- 11.6 The Committee shall have the power to receive grants, legacies, donations and Subscriptions payable under Deeds of Covenant.
- 11.7 The Committee shall have the power to borrow money, with or without security, and lend money with security, and if necessary to charge all or any of the property and assets of the Fellowship.
- 11.8 The Committee shall have the power to enter into contracts of any kind for the furtherance of the objects of the Fellowship.
- 11.9 The Committee shall have the power to purchase, sell, take on lease or mortgage any property, and to erect, pull down, rebuild, enlarge, alter and equip any premises purchased or leased to be used for any of the objects hereinbefore declared, and to pay all rent, taxes, insurance, repairs and other outgoings payable in respect thereof.
- 11.10 The Committee shall have powers of affiliation in accordance with Clause 17 below.

Clause 12: Standing Committee

The Committee may annually elect not more than five members of the Committee to hold office for the following twelve months as members of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall have power to take decisions between meetings of the Committee. Two of the Officers of the Fellowship shall be *ex officio* members of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall undertake by all means to further the aims of the Fellowship as set out in this Constitution. For this purpose, it shall have power at meetings of the Standing Committee to take all steps which it may consider desirable and practicable in the interests of the Fellowship. Members of the Committee shall be kept informed of all decisions taken by the Standing Committee.

Clause 13: Sub-committees

Where need is proved, the Committee may resolve to authorise sub-committees to assist in its work, and shall determine their Constitution, and for this purpose the following conditions shall apply:-

- 13.1 All members of such sub-committees shall be members of the Fellowship in accordance with the conditions set out in Clause 2, and shall be appointed as the Committee shall itself decide.
- 13.2 Where there is any possibility of doubt whether a decision will receive the approval of the Committee, the agreement of the Chair of the Fellowship must be obtained before any such decision can be implemented.

- 13.3 Sub-committees may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn, and otherwise regulate their meetings as they think fit, and determine a quorum necessary for the transaction of business. Questions arising at meetings shall be determined by a majority vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the sub-committee shall have a second or casting vote.
- 13.4 Each sub-committee shall elect a Chair and shall determine for what period he or she is to hold office. He or she shall be entitled to preside at all meetings at which he or she be present or, in default, members present shall appoint one of their number to preside.
- 13.5 Every sub-committee shall report their acts and proceedings fully and promptly to the Committee.

Clause 14: General Meetings

- 14.1 A General Meeting to be called the Annual General Meeting of the Fellowship shall be held once in each calendar year, and not more than fifteen months shall elapse between Annual General Meetings, unless otherwise resolved by the Committee.
- 14.2 The Annual General Meeting shall be held for the purpose of considering, and, if thought fit, passing annual audited (or un-audited) balance sheet and accounts, and receiving a report of the activities of the Fellowship for the previous year. The meeting shall also review the composition of the Committee, and the meeting shall have the right to make recommendations to the Committee with regard thereto and any other matters of which proper notice has been given.
- 14.3 Any other General Meeting shall be called an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Fellowship, and shall be convened by the Secretary on the request of the Committee or at least 20 members of the Fellowship specifying the business that they wish to put to the meeting. No other business than that specified in the notice convening the meeting shall be transacted.
- 14.4 Fourteen days written notice shall be given to all members in respect of any General Meeting stating the business to be transacted, and twenty one days written notice shall be given to all members in respect of the Annual General Meeting.
- 14.5 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever constitutes the greatest number of members, shall form a quorum.
- 14.6 A resolution put to a General Meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, and shall be duly passed if approved by a majority of those present and entitled to vote, unless it be decided, in advance of the General Meeting, by the Committee or at least 20 members of the Fellowship, that a resolution be put to a postal vote, in which case it shall be duly passed only if approved by a majority of those returning properly completed postal ballot papers.

14.7 The Chair of a General Meeting shall be the Chair of the Fellowship at such time, and if he or she is not present the Chair of the General Meeting shall be the Secretary of the Fellowship, or some other Officer or member of the Fellowship chosen by the General Meeting and in that order of priority.

Clause 15: Annual Conference

A conference shall as far as is possible be held at least once in every year (at which the Annual General Meeting shall normally be held).

Clause 16: Literature

The Committee may promote the publication of literature and a periodical or periodicals which shall be planned to be in accordance with the aims of the Fellowship.

Clause 17: Affiliation

17.1 For the purpose of this Constitution, the term 'affiliation' shall be taken to mean 'a close connection with a society or institution'.

17.2 The Fellowship shall have the power to affiliate with any group or organisation

- a) whose aims and policies are substantially in accordance with those of the Fellowship;
- b) whose work the Fellowship particularly wishes to affirm and support;
- c) with whom the Fellowship intends to co-operate for the furtherance of the aims of the Fellowship; and
- d) which is in agreement with the Statement of Faith.

17.3 Such an affiliation would be subject initially to the agreement of the Committee, and then to a two thirds majority of a General Meeting of the Fellowship.

17.4 The Fellowship shall have the power to pay such subscriptions as shall from time to time be determined by those groups or organisations to which the Fellowship is affiliated in accordance with Sub-clause 17.2, and which require subscription as a condition of continued affiliation.

Clause 18: Complementary Associations

The Fellowship shall have the power to designate as a Complementary Association any group or organisation

- a) which shares some of the aims and policies of the Fellowship; and
- b) with whom the Fellowship wishes to correspond and share literature in the pursuit of those aims and policies.

Clause 19: Relations with Other Religious Bodies or Speakers

19.1 No joint activities shall be arranged in the name of the Fellowship with any religious body whose representatives are unwilling to affirm agreement with the Statement of

Faith, if by doing so it is implied that the Fellowship is giving assent to beliefs not in accordance with the Statement of Faith.

19.2 No Speaker who is unwilling to affirm agreement with the Statement of Faith shall be asked to address a gathering of the Fellowship, if by doing so it is implied that the Fellowship is giving assent to beliefs not in accordance with the Statement of Faith.

Clause 20: Amendment of the Constitution

No alteration shall be made to this Constitution except by a resolution put to a General Meeting of the Fellowship by the Committee (a simple majority of whom at a duly convened Committee meeting shall have decided to put such resolution to a General Meeting) and passed at such General Meeting (of which at least 21 days notice has been given) by three quarters of those present and voting at such General Meeting, provided that no alteration shall be made which shall have the effect of the Fellowship ceasing to be a charity. Such a resolution to alter the Constitution may be decided on a postal vote at the request of the Committee or at least 20 members of the Fellowship, made in advance of the General Meeting, in which case the resolution shall be duly passed only if approved by three quarters of those returning properly completed postal ballot papers.

Clause 21

The dissolution of the Fellowship may be effected only by a Special Resolution of the Fellowship in General Meeting, such Resolution having been put to the General Meeting by the Committee (who shall have agreed to have put such resolution by a simple majority of members present at the Committee meeting in question). Such dissolution may only be effected after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, and any property remaining shall be given or transferred to such other charity or charities having aims similar to the aims of the Fellowship as shall be determined by the Committee.