

# **SHEFFIELD CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

---

## **PREAMBLE**

The Sheffield Chinese Christian Church (SCCC) first began in 1972 as the former Sheffield Chinese Christian Fellowship (SCCF) by the grace of God, through the support of the Birmingham Chinese Christian Fellowship (BCCF) and the then Manchester Chinese Christian Fellowship (MCCF), and the encouragement of the Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM). We are and shall remain closely associated with the COCM, other Chinese Christian Churches and Chinese Christian Fellowships with whom we shall continue to seek the closest cooperation in order to further one another's purposes.

We, the members of the Sheffield Chinese Christian Church, believe that the two-fold mission of evangelism and discipleship, given by our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ in His Great Commission in Mt 28:18-20, is scriptural imperative for all Christians. Although we realise that denominational difference do exist in the present state of Christianity, we recognise the need for this mission among the Chinese to be free from denominational controversies. Therefore, we wish to emphasise that we are an inter-denominational Church.

We maintain that God's Word, the Holy Bible, shall remain our final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. We also affirm that the daily life of the Church shall be constrained by the power, love and discipline of the Holy Spirit.

## **ARTICLE 1 : CHURCH NAME & CONSTITUTION CONTENTS**

- 1.1 The name of the Church shall be the Sheffield Chinese Christian Church, hereinafter referred to as "the Church".
- 1.2 The Constitution of the Church, hereinafter referred to as "the Constitution", shall be available in both the Chinese and English languages. Where the two translations differ, the content and meaning of the English version shall prevail.
- 1.3 The articles of the Constitution are as follows:
  - Article 1. Church Name & Constitution Contents
  - Article 2. Aims of the Church
  - Article 3. Doctrinal Basic of the Church
  - Article 4. Church Sacraments
  - Article 5. Church Government
  - Article 6. Church Membership
  - Article 7. Church Council
  - Article 8. Councillors
  - Article 9. Ministry Committees
  - Article 10. Department Committees
  - Article 11. Sub-committees
  - Article 12. Church General Meetings
  - Article 13. Church Finance
  - Article 14. Board of Trustees
  - Article 15. Miscellaneous

## **ARTICLE 2 : AIMS OF THE CHURCH**

- 2.1 To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ primarily amongst persons of the Chinese race in Sheffield and its surrounding area;
- 2.2 To support the worldwide fulfilment of the two-fold mission of evangelism and discipleship given by Jesus Christ;
- 2.3 To meet together regularly for worship, prayer, the ministry of God's Word and fellowship;
- 2.4 To encourage and build one another up, in faith, truth and love, as witnesses for Jesus Christ;
- 2.5 To develop an active social concern within the Church for the surrounding community; and
- 2.6 To co-operate with other Christian churches, societies and organisations who share our general aims and beliefs, especially local churches, the Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM), other Chinese Christian Fellowships (CCFs) and Chinese Churches.

## **ARTICLE 3 : DOCTRINAL BASIS OF THE CHURCH**

- 3.1 The divine inspiration of the Holy Bible and its consequent entire infallibility and supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct;
- 3.2 The unity, sovereignty and grace of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in the triune of Godhead as Creator, Provider, Revealer, Redeemer and Judge of all;
- 3.3 The divine creation of man in the image of God but since the subsequent fall of man, the universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature has rendered man incapable of saving himself and subject to God's wrath and condemnation;
- 3.4 The substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the incarnate and only-begotten Son of God, as the only, once-for-all and wholly sufficient atonement and redemption for all mankind from guilt and penalty of sin and its eternal consequences;
- 3.5 The justification of sinners solely and entirely by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified, died and was resurrected bodily from the dead, giving new and eternal life to all believers;
- 3.6 The illuminating, regenerating, indwelling and sanctifying power necessary work of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, in all believers;
- 3.7 The priesthood of all believers who form the one, holy apostolic and universal Church, the Body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head; and
- 3.8 The personal and visible Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in power, glory and final judgement.

## **ARTICLE 4 : CHURCH SACRAMENTS**

- 4.1 The Church believes and maintains the sacraments of Believer's Baptism and Holy Communion which were instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4.2 Believer's Baptism is the public act of testimony performed before God and man by the believer who has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her personal Saviour and Lord. The Church affirms that all believers should be baptised and adopts adult baptism by immersion although sprinkling may also be acceptable in special cases.
- 4.3 Holy Communion (or the Lord's Supper) is the commemoration of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church encourages all baptised believers to partake of it.

## **ARTICLE 5 : CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

- 5.1 The Church shall be governed by the Church Council which shall be accountable to the Congregations at the Church General Meetings.
- 5.2 The Church Council shall be assisted in its administrative duties by the Ministry Committees, the Department Committees, and Subcommittees.
- 5.3 Although the Congregations shall work corporately in the establishment of the Church and in the two-fold mission of evangelism and discipleship, the Cantonese Ministry shall be responsible primarily for the work amongst the Cantonese speaking peoples group and their families whilst the English Ministry shall be responsible primarily for the work amongst international students and their families, and English speaking Local peoples group, the Mandarin Ministry shall be responsible primarily for the work amongst the Mandarin speaking peoples group and their families. The Services Department, the Education Department and the Resources Department shall be responsible for the worship services, the Church educational programme, and the resources of the Church respectively.

## **ARTICLE 6 : CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

- 6.1 Application for Church Membership shall be open to any adult believer who has received Jesus Christ as his/her personal Saviour and Lord, has been baptised, and agrees to uphold the Constitution.
- 6.2 Application for Church Membership shall be submitted in writing on prescribed forms to the Church Council for approval. Applicants shall have attended the worship services of the Church regularly for no less than three months before their application.
- 6.3 Church members shall be entitled to vote at the General Meetings of the Church and hold office in the Church Council, the Ministry Committees, the Department Committees, and their respective Subcommittees, provided that members of the same immediate family shall not serve together in the same Council. Church Members shall not be members of any other local church.
- 6.4 Church Members shall maintain the doctrinal basis of the church, actively support the aims of the Church by participating regularly in its life and fellowship, seek personal growth in scriptural holiness; promote the well-being of other members through care, love and concern; exercise prayerful stewardship of time, talents and money in service; and attend and vote at the General Meetings of the Church.

- 6.5 A Church Member may withdraw his/her membership voluntarily by giving notice in writing to the Church Council.
- 6.6 When a Church Member leaves Sheffield or its surrounding area for an extended period and is unable to carry out his/her duties as a Church Member, his/her membership shall be deemed by the Church Council to be voluntarily withdrawn with effect from the date of his/her departure. His/her name shall be transferred to the list of “Corresponding Members of the Sheffield Chinese Christian Church” for future correspondence.
- 6.7 If a Church Member has been absent for more than one year from the worship services of the Church or three consecutive General Meetings of the Church without any valid reason, and does not respond to visits or letters of enquiry, his/her membership shall be deemed by the Church council to be voluntarily withdrawn.
- 6.8 If a Church Member is found to live or teach contrary to the doctrinal basis of the Church, he/she shall be admonished in love and his/her membership may be temporarily suspended. If there is no repentance, his/her membership shall be terminated by the Church Council.

**ARTICLE 7 : CHURCH COUNCIL**

- 7.1 The main governing body of the Church shall be the Church Council, which shall:
  - 7.1.1 develop and implement the long range plans for individual and corporate growth in the Church;
  - 7.1.2 plan and coordinate the programme of group and corporate Sunday worship and the ministry of God’s Word in the Church;
  - 7.1.3 oversee the management of the staff, finances, external relations, correspondence and other affairs of the Church;
  - 7.1.4 oversee the administration of the Ministries and Departments of the Church;
  - 7.1.5 determine the bye-laws and other regulations of the Church for the orderly transaction of all Church affairs in accordance with the Constitution; and
  - 7.1.6 maintain Church order and discipline.
- 7.2 The Council shall comprise the following Councillors: the Pastor, the Assistant Pastor(s), the Elders, the Deacons, and the Church Worker(s).
- 7.3 The following Council Officers shall each be elected within the Council to serve for a term not exceeding one year: the Council Chairman, the Council Secretary, and the Council Treasurer. No Councillor may serve for more than three consecutive terms in the same office.
  - 7.3.1 The Council Chairman shall prepare the agenda for and chair all Council and Church General Meetings and coordinate the work of the other Councillors.
  - 7.3.2 The Council Secretary shall maintain the minutes of all Council and Church General Meetings, and the notices, memoranda, correspondence and records of the Church.

7.3.3 The Council Treasurer shall manage the finances; maintain proper books of accounts; and prepare the consolidated quarterly financial reports and annual budget of the Church. The Council Treasurer shall not be concurrently the Treasurer of either Ministry.

7.4 The Council shall meet at least once a quarter.

## **ARTICLE 8 : COUNCILLORS**

8.1 The Pastor, Assistant Pastor(s) and Elders shall be appointed in accordance with the scriptural principles laid down in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Ti 1:6-9.

8.1.1 The Pastor/Assistant Pastor(s) shall be salaried staff of the Church; the Pastor shall preferably be ordained. The recommendation to appoint, re-appoint or dismiss the Pastor/Assistant Pastor, including the terms and conditions of his service, shall be made by the Council and approved by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting. The Pastor/Assistant Pastor(s) shall each be appointed to serve for a term not exceeding five years; the appointment is renewable at the end of the term. He and his wife shall be deemed Members of the Church upon his appointment for the duration of his appointment.

8.1.2 If Elders are appointed, there should preferably be at least two at any one time. Prior to his appointment, an Elder shall have been a Member of the Church for at least three years and served well as Deacon in the Church. One of the Elders shall be appointed by the Council as the Council Chairman to serve for a term not exceeding one year. The recommendation to appoint, reappoint or dismiss an Elder shall be made by the Council and approved by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting. The Elders shall each be appointed to serve for a term not exceeding five years; the appointment is renewable at the end of the term.

8.2 The Pastor, Assistant Pastor(s), the Preacher(s), and the Elders shall minister God's Word, exercise pastoral care and spiritual authority, promote spiritual development, maintain order and discipline, and guard the faith in the Church.

8.2.1 The Pastor shall preach and teach God's Word, promote the spiritual development of the Church; administer the sacraments of the Church, and officiate at Church weddings, funerals and other ceremonies.

8.2.2 The Assistant Pastor(s) shall assist the Pastor and, in his absence, carry out the duties of the Pastor with the assistance of the Elders.

8.2.3 The Elders shall guard the faith and maintain Church order and discipline. The Elders shall also assist the Pastor and, in his absence, ensure that duties of the Pastor are discharged accordingly.

8.2.4 The Preacher(s) shall assist the Pastor or the Assistant Pastor(s), or in the absence of Pastor or the Assistant Pastor work under the direction of the Council and ensure that duties of the Pastor are discharged accordingly.

8.3 If there are no suitable persons available, any or all of the offices of Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Preacher or Elder shall remain vacant.

- 8.4 The Deacons shall be appointed in accordance with the scriptural principles laid down in Act 6:1-7 and 1 Tim 3:8-13. The number of Deacons at any one time shall be recommended by the Council. He/She shall be elected by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting to serve for a term not exceeding two years. The recommendation to dismiss a Deacon shall be made by the Council and approved by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting.
- 8.5 The Deacons shall be responsible for the general administration of the Church. They shall each be appointed by the Council to serve in the following offices: Council Chairman (in the absence of Elders), Council Secretary, Council Treasurer, Cantonese Ministry Chairman, English Ministry Chairman, Mandarin Ministry Chairman, Services Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Resources Coordinator and any other office in the Church deemed necessary by the Council for the work of the Church.
- 8.6 The Preacher(s) shall be either salaried staff of the Church involved in Christian missionary or full time staff of a missionary organisation. He/she shall be theologically trained, and a spiritually mature Christian of good reputation with a strong desire to work in the Church. He/she shall assist the Council in carrying out its responsibilities under the direction of the Council. The recommendation to appoint, reappoint or dismiss a Preacher, including the terms and conditions of his/her service, shall be made by the Council and approved by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting. The Preacher shall be appointed to serve for a term not exceeding three years, the appointment is renewable at the end of the terms. He/she and his/her spouse shall be deemed Members of the Church upon his/her appointment for the duration of his/her appointment.
- 8.7 The Church Worker(s) shall be a staff of the Church. He/she shall be a mature Christian of good reputation, with a strong desire to work in the Church. He/she shall be employed by the Council, and carry out his/her responsibilities under the direction of the Council. The Church Worker shall be appointed to serve for a term not exceeding one year, the appointment is renewable at the end of the term.

## **ARTICLE 9 : MINISTRY COMMITTEES**

- 9.1 The main administrative body of each Ministry shall be the Ministry Committee which shall be accountable to the Council. The Ministry Committee shall, in consultation with the Council:
- 9.1.1 plan and coordinate the evangelism and discipleship programmes of the Ministry
  - 9.1.2 manage the finances, correspondence and other affairs of the Ministry; and
  - 9.1.3 promote and support the work the Church.
- 9.2 The Ministry Committee shall comprise the following Committee Officers: the Chairman, the Vice-chairman/Discipleship Coordinator, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Evangelism Coordinator. The Committee Officers shall each be appointed by the Council to serve for a term not exceeding one year. No Committee Officers shall serve for more than three consecutive terms in the same office.
- 9.2.1 The Chairman shall prepare the agenda for and chair all Committee Meetings and coordinate the work of the other Committee Officers.
  - 9.2.2 The Vice-chairman/Discipleship Coordinator shall assist the Chairman in his duties and, in his absence, act as the Chairman. He/she shall also plan and coordinate the discipleship activities of the Ministry.

- 9.2.3 The Secretary shall maintain the minutes of the Committee Meetings; and the notices, memoranda, correspondence and records of the Ministry; and assist the Council Secretary in his/her duties.
  - 9.2.4 The Treasurer shall manage the finance; maintain proper books of accounts; and prepare books of accounts, and prepare the quarterly financial reports and annual budget of the Ministry; and assist the Council Treasurer in his/her duties.
  - 9.2.5 The Evangelism Coordinator shall plan and coordinate the evangelism activities of the Ministry, and promote concern and support in the Ministry for worldwide mission.
- 9.3 The Ministry Committee shall be advised either by the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Elder or an Adviser who shall be a mature Christian of good reputation and preferably a member of an established local church, with a strong desire to work amongst the Chinese. The Adviser shall be appointed by the Council to serve for a term of one year; the appointment is renewable at the end of the term.
- 9.4 The Ministry Committee shall meet at least once a month.

**ARTICLE 10 : DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES**

- 10.1 The main administrative body of each Department shall be the Department Committee which shall, in consultation with the Council, manage the finances, correspondence and other affairs of the Department, and promote and support the work of the Church.
- 10.1.1 The Services Department Committee shall plan and coordinate the music, interpretation, stewardship and other activities supporting the worship services of the Church. It shall also oversee the work of the Musician(s), Interpreter(s), Steward(s) and other people serving in the Services Department.
  - 10.1.2 The Education Department Committee shall manage the Sunday School, Youth Group(s) and Adult Group(s) of the Church, plan and coordinate their Christian education and other programmes; and oversee the work of the Sunday School Teachers, the Youth Group Coordinator(s) the Adult Group Coordinator(s), and other people serving in the Education Department.
  - 10.1.3 The Resource Department Committee shall manage the property, equipment, library, publication and other resources of the Church. It shall also oversee the work of the Warden(s), Librarian(s), Editor(s), and other people serving in the Resources Department.
- 10.2 The Department Committee shall comprise: the Coordinator and two Deputy Coordinators, who shall each be appointed by the Council to serve for a term not exceeding one year. No Committee Officer shall serve for more than three consecutive terms in the same office.
- 10.2.1 The Coordinator shall prepare the agenda for and chair the Committee and Department Meetings; and coordinate the work of the other Committee and Department Officers.
  - 10.2.2 The Deputy Coordinators shall assist the Coordinator in his/her duties; in addition, each Deputy Coordinator shall be responsible for a specific area of the work the Department which shall be defined by the Coordinator.

10.3 The Officers in each Department shall be nominated by the respective Coordinator and appointed by the Council to serve for a term not exceeding one year; the appointment is renewable at the end of the term.

10.4 The Department Committee shall be advised by the Pastor, Assistant Pastor or Elder who shall be appointed by the Council to serve for a term not exceeding one year; the appointment is renewable at the end of the term.

10.5 The Department Committee shall meet at least once a month.

#### **ARTICLE 11 : SUB-COMMITTEES**

11.1 The Council, Ministry Committee or Department Committee may appoint any Sub-Committee deemed necessary to further the aims of the Church or transact the affairs of the Church.

11.2 The terms of reference of the Sub-committee shall be specified by the Council, Ministry Committee or Department Committee. The Sub-committee shall be chaired by an appropriate Councillor or Committee Officer. Any suitable Church Member may be appointed to serve in the Sub-committee.

11.3 All Sub-committees shall report back fully and promptly to the Council.

#### **ARTICLE 12 : CHURCH GENERAL MEETINGS**

12.1 The General Meetings of the Church shall comprise: the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Ordinary General Meeting (OGM), and the Extra-ordinary General Meeting (EGM).

12.1.1 The AGM shall be held no later than the second month of each financial year. The AGM shall receive and approve the annual report of the Council. The AGM shall also receive the Church Auditor's report; approve the annual budget for the forthcoming financial year, and consider other Church matters.

12.1.2 The OGM shall be held during each financial year to provide a forum for Church Members to review and discuss the life and work of the Church.

12.1.3 The EGM may be requested by any Church Member to consider urgent Church matters. The request for an EGM shall be submitted in writing to the Council and seconded by at least one-quarter of the Church Membership. If necessary, the EGM may also be called by the Council.

12.2 At least fourteen days' written notice (including the agenda of matters to be considered) shall be given by the Council Secretary for a General Meeting. Any additional matter which requires special consideration may be submitted in writing by any Church Member to the Council Secretary provided it is received at least seven days before the General Meeting and seconded by no less than one-tenth of the Church Membership.

12.3 The quorum at all General Meetings shall be no less than one half of the Church Membership. If the quorum is not met, the Council may postpone the General Meeting by at least fourteen days. At least seven days' notice shall be given for that subsequent General Meeting at which the number of the Church Members present shall be the quorum.



12.4 Voting at the General Meetings shall be in person by secret ballot. Only “YES”, “NO” and “ABSTAIN” ballot slips shall be returned. Decision or resolution on all matters raised, except amendments to the Constitution and appointments to the office of Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Preacher or Elder, shall be carried by a simple majority of the Church Members present. Appointments to the office of Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Preacher or Elder shall be approved only by a two-thirds majority of the Church Members present.

12.5 The returning officer shall normally be the Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Elder, or the Council Chairman.

12.6 All the work and responsibilities of the outgoing officers of the Church shall be formally handed over to the incoming officers no later than one month after the AGM.

### **ARTICLE 13 : CHURCH FINANCE**

13.1 The Church shall be supported primarily by the free-will offering of the Church Members and friends of the Church and be registered as a Charity-at-Law.

13.2 The financial year of the Church shall be from 1st January to 31st December of each year.

13.3 The books of accounts of the Church shall be subjected to audits at the end of each financial year by the Church Auditor. The Church Auditor shall be nominated by the Council and appointed by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting to serve for a term not exceeding three years, the appointment is renewable at the end of the term.

### **ARTICLE 14 : BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

14.1 The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall be the board of Trustees of the Church.

14.2 All property of the Church shall be held by the Board on behalf and for the benefit of the Church. The decision to lease, purchase, develop, mortgage, substantially alter or dispose of any Church property shall be recommended by the Board and approved by the Church through a resolution at a Church General Meeting before being carried out, subject to such consents as may, from time to time, be required by law, and to this end, the Charities Commissioners shall be consulted.

14.3 In the event of the Church ceasing to function, the dissolution of the Church may be approved by a resolution at a Church General Meeting. The Board shall then be empowered either to continue to hold or give the property of the Church in part or whole to one or several Christian charities.

### **ARTICLE 15 : MISCELLANEOUS**

15.1 Articles 2, 3 and 4 of this Constitution shall not be amended. Any amendment to the Articles of this Constitution shall be carried only through a resolution at a Church General Meeting with a two-thirds majority of the Church Members present, provided that no amendment shall be made which will cause the Church to cease to be a Charity-at-Law.

15.2 All other matters not covered by the Constitution shall be resolved according to scriptural principles laid down in the Holy Bible.

15.3 The Constitution was adopted by a resolution carried at an EGM on 7th February 1988 and amended by a resolution carried at an EGM on 2nd January 1990 and an AGM on 27th March 1994 and an AGM on 27th February 2000 and then an AGM on 27th February 2005 and then an EGM on 12 July 2016.

————— The End —————