

This marked up version shows the proposed changes to the current WCC Constitution (2014). It is for information only.

Revised 29/08/22

WESTHILL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Scottish Charity Number: SC015206

Constitution

- 1 Charge** – The Charge shall be an Incumbency known by the name of Westhill Community Church, an Episcopal congregation in the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney: (“the Diocese”). The Charge shall be evangelical in character and shall, in its mission within the Parish of Westhill, seek to proclaim in both word and action its adherence to the basis of faith set out in the creeds of the church, as expressed in the statement of faith of the congregation as set out at Appendix A hereof.
- 2 Charitable Status** – The Charge is established for exclusively charitable purposes, primarily for the advancement of the Christian faith and to provide public benefit. (The expression “charitable purposes” shall mean charitable purposes as defined in section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended from time to time (“the 2005 Act”) which is also regarded as a charitable purpose in relation to the application of the Taxes Acts from time to time in force.)
- 3 Authority and Limitation of Constitution** – The Charge shall form part of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Clergy, Congregation and all Officials thereof shall be subject to the Canons of that Church in force from time to time.
- 4 Heritable Property and Shares** – The heritable property and shares of the Charge shall at the date of adoption of this constitution be vested in ~~the Trustees~~those holding the office of Bishop, Synod Clerk, Chancellor and Registrar from time to time of the Diocese (“the Original Property Trustees”) until they are vested in such trustees as the said Bishop, Synod Clerk, Chancellor and Registrar may in writing assume and convey to be their successors to hold the heritable property and shares of the Charge (“the Final Property Trustees”) in each case in trust for the Charge. Reference in this constitution to the “Bishop” shall mean reference to the Bishop of the Diocese from time to time.

Save as hereinafter provided in Article 28 hereof, the Original Property Trustees and the Final Property Trustees shall be under no duty to take active part in the management of the property vested in them, and shall have no personal responsibility in regard thereto, but may rely upon the proper management thereof by the Vestry, and the Original Property Trustees shall be indemnified out of the funds of the Charge against any liability undertaken or incurred by them.

- 5 Relationship with the General Synod** – The Rector and Congregation shall conform to the resolutions of the General Synod or such other body as may at any time be substituted by canonical enactment therefor.
- 6 Constituent Members** – The constituent members of the Congregation shall be the communicants of not less than eighteen years of age whose names are on the Roll of Communicants of the Congregation, kept as provided for in the Code of Canons (Canon 41) or such other roll as may be substituted by canonical enactment for the Roll of Communicants.
- 7 Annual Meeting** – Once in every year, within three months after 30th September a Meeting of the constituent members of the Congregation shall be summoned by the Vestry and notice thereof shall be given during Divine Service on the two Sundays immediately preceding such Meeting: ~~the~~The Meeting may be held on the Sunday on which the notice has been given for the second time. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting shall not invalidate the proceedings at that meeting. The Rector, if present, shall preside but in his/her absence, or during a vacancy in the Charge, the Meeting shall elect its own Chair. ~~Twenty~~Three shall be a quorum. In the event that a quorum is not present the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date not less than twenty-one days later, when the constituent members there present shall constitute a quorum. The Chair shall vote only in the case of an equality of votes.
- 8 Business at Annual Meeting** – It shall be the duty of the Constituent Members of the Congregation at the Annual Meeting (a) to elect from among the Constituent Members the required number of persons within the limits hereinafter specified to act as members of Vestry; (b) to elect, if not appointed at a special meeting called for the purpose from among the Constituent Members, the Lay Representative and Alternative Lay Representative (provided that no clerical Constituent Member shall vote in such election); (c) to appoint an independent examiner or auditor as required by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended or superseded from time to time to examine or audit the accounts and report thereon declaring that in the event of a vacancy arising in the office of independent examiner or auditor between Annual Meetings, the Vestry shall appoint an interim independent examiner or auditor who shall hold office until the next Annual Meeting; (d) to receive the Report and Accounts of the Vestry and the reports of the Lay Representative; and (e) to deal with any other competent business. Unless otherwise determined by the Vestry, the names of all candidates for election together with the names of their proposers and seconders shall be lodged with the Chair prior to the commencement of the meeting; no speeches in connection with the elections shall be permitted and all elections, if contested, shall be conducted by secret ballot.
- 9 Special Meetings** – Special Meetings of the Constituent Members of the Congregation may be called at any time by the Rector or at the request of either a majority of the Vestry or not less than 15 Constituent Members given in writing addressed to the Rector, or during a vacancy in the Charge, to the Secretary of the Vestry. The same notice of Special Meetings shall be given as in the case of Annual Meetings (and the accidental omission to give notice shall not invalidate the

proceedings at any such meeting). The notice shall specify the purpose for which the Special Meeting is to be held.

10 Variation of Periods of Notice of Meetings – Notwithstanding Article 26 hereof the Bishop may, at the request of the Vestry and if he is satisfied that special circumstances have arisen, authorise the holding of the Annual Meeting ~~out~~without ~~with~~ the time specified in Article 7 and the giving of shorter notice of meetings than that specified in Articles 7, 9 and 26.

11 Seats in Church – provided for the worshippers, shall be free and unappropriated.

12 Vestry – The temporal affairs and the general management and control of the Charge shall be under the management of a Vestry consisting of the Rector ex-officio, the Lay Representative ex-officio, and not more than twelve nor fewer than five constituent members, three to be a quorum. The members of the Vestry from time to time shall be considered “Charity Trustees” of the Charge and have the consequent duties and responsibilities arising from that position. Any person disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee for the purposes of the 2005 Act as amended or superseded from time to time shall be disqualified from being a Vestry member. The Vestry shall meet at least twice a year, and the Chair, who shall have a casting but not a deliberative vote, shall be the Rector, or in the case of his/her absence or in the event that (and for so long as) he/she wishes to relinquish this role, a member elected by the Vestry. Special Meetings of the Vestry may be called at any time (a) at the request of three members by notice in writing stating the subject matter of the meeting and the notice being addressed to the Secretary of the Vestry and the Rector and giving at least fifteen ~~days~~days’ notice (unless the Rector consents to a shorter period of notice) or (b) at the request of the Rector.

Members of the Vestry shall be elected at an Annual Meeting of the Congregation for a ~~three~~-year term. At the expiry of such term the individual shall be eligible for re-election for one further three year term. Thereafter that individual shall not be eligible for re-election at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation next following the completion of (or resignation during) their second consecutive term of service, or if such be the case their ceasing to be a member of the vestry. Notwithstanding that members are elected for a ~~three~~-year term, at each Annual Meeting of the Congregation commencing from the date on which this constitution is adopted sufficient elected members of the Vestry shall retire so as to ensure that there shall be no fewer than four vacancies for election at the Annual Meeting. The retiring Members of Vestry shall be selected on the basis of the longest continuous service as an elected Member of the Vestry. In the event of there being an equality of seniority then the retiring member(s) shall be selected by lot.

Casual vacancies in Vestry membership occurring between Annual Meetings of the Congregation may be filled by the Vestry until the next Annual Meeting of the Congregation. All members of the Vestry shall be selected from the constituent members of the Congregation. The Secretary and Treasurer appointed by the Vestry, if constituent members of the Congregation, shall be members of the Vestry, ex-officio and shall be entitled to vote. Any Vestry member who in the reasonable

opinion of the Vestry becomes incapable of adequately discharging their functions by reason of ill health or otherwise conducts themselves inappropriately may be removed from Vestry membership upon the unanimous vote of the other Vestry members at a meeting of the Vestry after they shall have heard the Vestry member concerned unless he or she has declined to be heard or is prevented from doing so by disability, illness or long term absence from attending and the reasons for such removal shall be recorded in the minutes of any such meeting and any such removal shall be subject to the written authority, which authority can be withheld, of the Bishop within 28 days of the Vestry's vote on the matter and the Vestry member concerned shall be entitled to make written representations to the Bishop before the Bishop provides any written authority on this matter.

13 Duties of Vestry – the Vestry shall ensure that the needs of the whole Church in regard to mission work at home and overseas and the other objects of the General Synod may receive the interest and support of the Congregation. The Vestry shall generally assist the Rector (subject always to his/her canonical rights and duties) in every way in their power in all matters affecting the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

The Vestry shall have charge of the fabric and property of the Church, and of any Rectory (or Parsonage), Schools, Halls or other property which may be acquired in connection with the Charge, as well as all gifts and bequests for endowment, charity or other purposes which may accrue to the Church from time to time. They shall be bound to keep the buildings and properties in repair and insured against fire and other risks including public liability, and to discharge all property burdens and responsibilities, and to assist the Rector in the safe custody of the Church plate, registers and other documents. The Vestry shall be responsible for keeping the Rectory (or Parsonage) wind and water tight, and in proper sanitary condition, the Rector being responsible to the Vestry for ordinary internal repairs – unless otherwise arranged between the Rector and Vestry.

The funds of the Charge so far as not used for the acquisition of property to be used as a Rectory or Parsonage or otherwise in connection with the Charge may be invested in any kind of investment (including an investment in heritable property) but such investment may only be made after the Vestry have had regard to the suitability of the proposed investment for the Charge and the need for diversification in so far as appropriate for the Charge and before exercising any power of investment and when reviewing the Charge's investments, the Vestry shall comply with the provisions of the 2005 Act, including consideration of whether proper advice requires to be obtained. The Vestry shall have the power to delegate its investment management function in accordance with the provisions of the 2005 Act.

The Vestry should take cognisance of good practice guidance that may be issued by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (“OSCR”) or by the Church from time to time in relation to issues of practice or procedure affecting the Vestry's activities and responsibilities.

The Vestry may only apply the property and funds of the Charge in furtherance of the Charge's charitable purposes. Article 3 hereof is noted as being in advancement of the Charge's purpose and not in itself the purpose of the Charge. Subject to obtaining the prior written consent of the Bishop the Vestry and the Final Property Trustees may transfer the heritable and moveable property and funds of the Charge to Westhill Community Church SCIO (a charity registered in Scotland with number SC049910) on such terms as the Bishop may in writing approve (which terms may include, without limit, the SCIO paying the Charge sufficient consideration to enable the Charge to settle its debts and meet its anticipated expenditure prior to its dissolution). The Vestry and the Final Property Trustees shall not otherwise transfer the heritable property of the Charge.

The Vestry shall be entitled to borrow funds on behalf of the Charge subject to the following conditions:

- (a) each loan shall be on terms that are approved in advance by the Vestry;
- (b) each loan shall be on terms that are recorded in writing in a loan agreement prior to it being accepted;
- (c) each such loan agreement shall be signed (i) by the lender; and (ii) on behalf of the Charge by two members of the Vestry;
- (d) each loan shall incorporate a provision whereby the lender acknowledges that the Vestry and its members act only as trustees of the Charge and that the recourse of the lender against the Charge, the Vestry and/or its members for the enforcement of any liabilities or obligations of the Vestry or the Charge under and in relation to the loan is limited to the extent of the value of the assets from time to time held on behalf of the Charge;
- (e) if the loan is to be, or may be, secured then prior written approval of that is first obtained from the Bishop;
- (f) each such loan agreement shall stipulate that the lender shall not be entitled to assign its rights to any other person, firm or company without the prior written consent of the Vestry;
- (g) the Treasurer shall procure that copies of all loan agreements are made available for inspection by any member of the Vestry at all reasonable times; and
- (h) the Charge shall obtain the prior written consent of the Bishop prior to accepting any loan or loans that cumulatively would result in the Vestry and/or Charge borrowing in excess of the value of one million pounds sterling.

The Vestry may agree to and may procure the granting of security over assets held on behalf of the Charge to secure borrowing on behalf of the Charge subject to first obtaining the written consent of the Bishop.

The Vestry on behalf of the Charge may guarantee the obligations of any company in which the Diocese Trustees holds the entire issued share capital on behalf of the Charge subject to the terms of the guarantee (a) being approved by the Bishop and (b) limiting the liability thereunder of the Vestry, its members and the Charges to the value of the assets held from time to time on behalf of the Charge.

- 14 Office-bearers to be appointed by the Vestry** – The Vestry shall appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. It shall be the duty of the Secretary (a) to ensure the keeping of minutes of the proceedings of the Vestry and of the meetings of the constituent members of the congregation; (b) to exhibit same when called upon to any member of the Vestry; (c) to issue notices of meetings; (d) to conduct necessary correspondence, and generally (e) to conform to instructions received from the Vestry. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer (a) to prepare and keep the accounting records of the Charge; (b) to prepare annual accounts, and submit them to the independent examiner/auditor appointed in terms of Article 8 hereof; (c) to ensure lodgement in a bank or building society, in an account opened in name of the Charge for that purpose, all monies received by him/her on behalf of the Congregation; (d) to exhibit when called upon his/her accounting records to any member of the Vestry, and generally (e) to conform to instructions received from the Vestry. The bank or building society account shall be operated in such manner as the Vestry may direct.
- 15 Annual Report of the Vestry** – The Vestry shall, at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, present a (written) report upon their transactions during the preceding year, including the congregational accounts under their charge, with the independent examiner's/auditor's report thereon. The report and accounts shall be made available to the Congregation before, at or after the Annual Meeting and a copy shall be provided to any member of the Congregation upon request to the Treasurer. A copy of the accounts and of any other written reports submitted to the Annual Meeting shall be appended to the minutes of the Annual meeting.
- 16 Appointment of Rector** – the appointment of the Rector shall rest with the Bishop (in consultation and agreement with the Vestry or representatives nominated by the Congregation for the purpose), and upon his/her choice of a duly qualified person the institution or licensing shall follow as soon as possible. The person appointed shall enjoy as Rector all rights secured to him/her by the Canons or this Constitution as from the date of his/her institution, collation, or licensing.
- 17 Remuneration for Services – Vestry members** – Vestry members may be remunerated for services provided to the Charge but only if any such remuneration for services satisfies the provisions of the 2005 Act as amended or superseded from time to time and any such remuneration shall be decided in accordance with the provisions of [Clause Article 22](#).
- 18 Remuneration for Services – Stipend of Rector** – In the event of the Rector being appointed on a stipendiary basis, the stipend of the Rector shall be decided in accordance with the provisions of [Clause Article 22](#) and be of such amount, and be provided in such manner, as may be agreed between him/her and the Vestry to the satisfaction of the Bishop, at not less than the rate of the sum approved by the General Synod as the Standard Stipend for the time being (or an appropriately reduced sum as agreed between the Vestry and Rector and approved by the Bishop in the event of the appointment being part-time). The Stipend shall be payable by equal monthly instalments not later than the last Thursday of each month less income tax and national insurance contributions and, unless otherwise agreed by the Bishop, after

deduction of any sums received by the Rector by virtue of employment or other ecclesiastical or secular work. Where the Rector is a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church Pension Fund pension contributions shall be made to the fund at the rate established by the General Synod from time to time. No person shall, by reason only of his/her being a member of the Vestry, be deemed responsible personally for payment of stipend or pension contributions.

- 19 Rectory (or Parsonage)** – Where a Rectory (or Parsonage) has been erected or acquired for the Charge, it shall be for the use and benefit of the Rector, and he/she shall not let it or any part of it without the consent of the Bishop and the Vestry. In the event of the death of the Rector his/her widow(er) and/or dependents permanently resident in the Rectory shall have use of the Rectory (or Parsonage) for three months thereafter.
- 20 Appointment and Stipend of Assistant Clergy** – The Rector shall, after consultation with the Vestry, have the right to appoint any Assistant Curate or Curates whom the Bishop may license for the work of the Charge. The stipends of stipendiary Assistant Curates shall be such as are agreed upon by the Rector and the Vestry, but shall be of an amount not less than the scale approved by the General Synod for the time being.
- 21 Appointment to Other Offices** – The Vestry may, with the concurrence of the Rector, appoint suitable persons as Organist, Choirmaster, Verger, etc. In the case of such officials, the Rector shall have the right to require their dismissal, subject to an appeal to the Bishop by the Vestry should the latter disapprove.
- 22 Conflict of interest** – (i) Any decision by the Vestry as to stipend, remuneration, contract, arrangement or other personal benefit received by a Vestry member and any discussion on such items shall take place in the absence of the Vestry members concerned and shall be made in accordance with the provisions relating to remuneration in the 2005 Act as amended or superseded from time to time; and (ii) Vestry members shall declare any conflict of interest and the Secretary, or other Vestry member, shall keep a record of conflicts of interest and any Vestry member with a conflict of interest shall refrain from participating in any deliberation or decision of the Vestry with respect to the matter in question: [other than where the conflict of interest is in being a member of Westhill Community Church SCIO and the matter before the Vestry is the transfer of assets to Westhill Community Church SCIO in accordance with Article 13.](#) Where there is any doubt as to whether a conflict has arisen or may arise, appropriate professional advice should be sought.
- 23 Resignation of Rector** – If the Rector shall desire to resign his/her Charge, he/she must give at least three months' notice of such intention in writing to the Patron (or Patrons), to the Vestry and to the Bishop. During the interval he/she shall be responsible for the usual duties, except with the sanction of the Bishop.
- 24 Enforced demission of Incumbency** – The Incumbency shall become vacant, and the Patron or Patrons shall proceed to a new appointment as if the vacancy had occurred by resignation, taking immediate effect, in any of the following events, viz:

- (1) If the Rector shall renounce or forsake Communion with the Scottish Episcopal Church.
- (2) If he/she shall be canonically removed from office, disqualified from holding office or prohibited from the exercise of the ministry of a priest under the provisions of Canon 54 of the Code of Canons or similar canonical provision.
- (3) If he/she is the subject of canonical suspension for a definite period of time (but not including suspension under Canon 54 of the Code of Canons pending the outcome of proceedings under that Canon), and the Vestry resolve in respect thereof that it is expedient that the Incumbency becomes vacant, and the Bishop approves in writing.
- (4) If the Charge is declared to be vacant under the provisions of Canon 13 of the Code of Canons or similar canonical provision.
- (5) If the Charge is declared to be vacant under the provisions of Canon 64 of the Code of Canons or similar canonical provision.
- (6) If the Charge is declared to be vacant under the provisions of Canon 53 of the Code of Canons or similar canonical provision.

25 Arrangements during a Vacancy – The care of the vacant charge both in the provision of services and the pastoral care of the congregation shall be the responsibility of the Bishop, who may after consultation and agreement with the Vestry appoint a priest to act as interim pastor or place the charge in the care of a Diocesan Chaplain or invite some other cleric to take services and attend to other pastoral duties. The emoluments and expenses during a vacancy shall be provided by the Vestry. The Communicants and other Rolls and Registers of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Funerals and Burials shall be held by such person and in such manner as the Bishop may direct.

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Alterations in Constitution – No alteration shall be made in this Constitution as regards Article 3 hereof, which is fundamental. As regards the other Articles hereof, alterations may be made by [either](#):

[\(i\)](#) a Resolution passed at a special meeting of the constituent members of the Congregation by a majority of two-thirds of those present and voting, confirmed at a special meeting held not sooner than one nor later than three calendar months thereafter by a simple majority of those present and voting, and afterwards assented to in writing by the Bishop. The notice calling such meetings shall specify their purpose and shall state where a copy of the suggested alteration may be inspected. [-or](#)

[\(ii\)](#) [a Resolution passed at the Diocesan Synod, with the consent of the Bishop in Synod, in the event that the Charge has not been wound up and dissolved by 1 January 2025.](#)

Any such alteration must be notified or consented to by OSCR in accordance with the 2005 Act as amended or superseded from time to time.

- 27 Possible Suspension of the Constitution** – If at any time (whether during a vacancy in the incumbency or not) it shall happen that the Charge shall become so reduced in numbers or in financial resources that the Constitution of the Church can no longer be kept in operation nor provision made for the maintenance of a Rector, this Constitution may be suspended, in accordance with the provision laid down for such an eventuality in the Code of Canons (Canon 36) or similar canonical provision.
- 28 Possible Extinction of Charge** – If it shall be decided by the Bishop in Synod, with the concurrence of the Diocesan Synod, that it is impracticable to maintain the services of the Charge, all the rights and duties of the Vestry as guardians of the property and funds shall devolve upon the ~~Property Trustees as previously appointed in Article 4 hereof,~~ Final Property Trustees (or Original Property Trustees if the Final Property Trustees are not holding office at the time of the decision), a majority of whom – subject always to the veto of the Bishop – shall form a quorum for transacting any necessary business, ~~and all required in relation to the winding up or dissolution of the Charge. To the extent (if any) there is property and funds not reasonably required in relation to the winding up or dissolution of the Charge~~ such properties and funds as may be disposable shall be disposed of or utilised as ~~the Bishop in Synod, with the concurrence of the Diocesan Synod, may from time to time determine. In the event of an emergency, pending the summoningsuch trustees decide (subject to the written consent of the Diocesan Synod, the Bishop in consultation with the Property Trustees will take such steps as may seem to him to be necessary and right. The Bishop or Property Trustees).~~ Such trustees shall ensure that appropriate consents are obtained from OSCR in relation to ~~any amalgamation,~~the winding up or dissolution of the Charge.
- 29 Custody and Registration** – This Constitution shall be authenticated in duplicate and one part shall be lodged with the Diocesan Registrar, the other part being retained by the Vestry. A copy shall be engrossed in the minute book and a docquet shall be signed therein by the Rector and Assistant Clergy upon entering office, declaring their willingness to abide thereby. Any constituent member may obtain a copy on payment of the cost thereof to the Treasurer. Any person may request the Charge to provide them with a copy of this Constitution and the Charge’s most recent statement of account in terms of s23 of the 2005 Act and any such request, if reasonable, should be implemented by the Charge upon payment of the cost of supplying the document to the Treasurer. Titles or other original documents referring to the property and assets of the church shall be lodged with the Diocesan Registrar, and an inventory of them engrossed in the minute book for convenience of reference.
- 30 Reference** – In the event of any difference arising among the Rector, Assistant Clergy, Vestry or constituent members of the Congregation or any of them with regard to the interpretation of this Constitution or the rights or obligations of parties hereunder or otherwise relating hereto, the same shall be referred to the Bishop of the Diocese for his/her decision, whose award or awards, interim or final, shall, subject to a right of appeal to the Episcopal Synod, be final and binding.

31 Indemnity Insurance – The Vestry may purchase and maintain from the Charge’s funds insurance against any liability and associated matter which by virtue of any rule of law may attach to a Vestry Member ~~or, [Original Property Trustee or Final Property Trustee](#)~~ in respect of negligence, default, breach of duty of care of which he/she may be guilty in his/her capacity as a Vestry Member ~~of, [Original Property Trustee or Final Property Trustee](#)~~.

Appendix A

Statement of Faith

The one true God who lives eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world;

The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written word of God – fully trustworthy for faith and conduct;

The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement;

The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ - born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin;

The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God;

The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection, his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only saviour of the world;

The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ;

The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us to Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness;

The Church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers – given life by the Spirit and endowed by the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love;

The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.