

**LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP  
TUDELEY CUM CAPEL WITH FIVE OAK GREEN**

**PROPOSED CONSTITUTION (as amended and approved 21 April 2004 by the Participating Churches, as below, and ratified 7 June 2004 by the Joint Council of Five Oak Green United Church)**

Interpretation

Common terms and abbreviations are shown in bold type with initial capitals (**Like This**) where first used, and in initial capitals (Like This) thereafter. These expressions are listed in the glossary (*at the end of this document*).

**1. Name, Scope and Area**

This **Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP)** shall be known as *The Local Ecumenical Partnership of Tudeley cum Capel with Five Oak Green*.

The objectives of the LEP are set out in its **Declaration of Intent**.

The LEP is an association of **Participating Churches** (the Church of England in the parish of Tudeley cum Capel with Five Oak Green, and the United Reformed Church as participant in the Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) presently based at Five Oak Green), owing allegiance to the Constituting Denominations (the Church of England [CE] and the United Reformed Church [URC]).

The LEP primarily serves the community of **Capel** (the Civil Parish of Capel, approximately equivalent to the Church of England ecclesiastical parish of Tudeley cum Capel with Five Oak Green) and those who are associated with the Church in Capel.

**2. Sponsoring Body and Denominational Authorities**

The LEP looks to its **Sponsoring Body**, Churches Together in Kent, for support and review. The Sponsoring Body shall provide a link person to act as a two-way contact between the LEP and the Sponsoring Body

The **Denominational Authorities** (including the Diocese of Rochester [CE], Southern Synod and Medway District [URC]) shall continue to exercise oversight as appropriate. The LEP shall participate fully in the **Area Church Councils** of its Constituting Denominations (Tonbridge Deanery Synod [CE], Medway District Council [URC]).

The LEP shall maintain a proper relationship to the Denominational Authorities, fulfilling necessary canonical, constitutional and denominational requirements. **Denominational Councils** (CE: Parochial Church Council; URC: Church Meeting) will be constituted annually and shall meet when denominational approval is necessary.

**3. Baptism and Membership**

Baptism shall be administered according to the rite and practice of one or other of the Constituting Denominations and shall be set, in normal circumstances, within a joint act of congregational worship.

Confirmation (CE) and/or reception into church membership (URC or CE) shall normally be administered at a joint act of congregational worship, as authorised by the Constituting Denominations.

Preparation shall be undertaken jointly and shall include specific denominational teaching and instruction.

Membership of the LEP shall be open to all baptised persons who are at least sixteen years of age and who are eligible for admission to full membership in at least one Participating Church. Those received into membership of the LEP are recognised as full members of each Constituting Denomination.

There shall be a **Common Roll**, including the names and addresses of all members of the LEP. Separate membership lists / electoral rolls shall also be maintained for each Constituting Denomination.

Membership carries certain responsibilities and duties: these include regular attendance at worship, active sharing in the life of the church, regular financial giving, witness to God's holiness and love in the world by word and deed.

#### **4. Worship and Holy Communion**

The LEP shall respect the faith and practice of the Constituting Denominations. Worship shall be so conducted as to safeguard and present the doctrines, traditions and developing practices of the Constituting Denominations, according to denominational rules and using an authorised rite of the appropriate denomination.

Ordained ministers and/or other duly authorised persons shall preside at Holy Communion, as permitted by the Denominational Authorities. All those who are recognised as communicants by a Participating Church are welcome to receive Holy Communion at such a service.

In arranging services, consideration and encouragement shall be given to the participation of lay ministers authorised by the Constituting Denominations (including **Lay Preachers** and **Readers**).

#### **5. Ecumenical Leadership Team**

The **Pastorate Team** shall consist of the duly appointed clergy and authorised lay ministers of the Participating Churches. The Pastorate Team, together with **Elected Lay Representatives** of the Constituting Denominations (CE: two churchwardens; URC: two elders), shall constitute the **Ecumenical Leadership Team (ELT)**.

The ELT shall oversee the ministry of the LEP as a whole and all matters concerning the life and mission of the local church.

The members of the ELT shall be subject to the normal discipline of the Constituting Denominations.

Non-URC ministers appointed to the LEP are, by virtue of that appointment or call, members of the Medway District Council and the Southern Synod.

Newly appointed ministers shall assent to the Declaration of Intent at a service of induction and/or welcome.

#### **6. Ecumenical Church Council**

Decision-making for the LEP shall be by means of an **Ecumenical Church Council (ECC)**, to consist of:

- eight members elected annually by, and from among, those on the Common Roll of the LEP;
- the two Churchwardens and two URC elders;
- the ordained ministers appointed to lead the Participating Churches and such other ordained or authorized ministers of the Participating Churches as are designated by the ECC;
- any members of the Area Church Councils who are also enrolled members of the LEP, ex-officio;
- up to two co-opted members.

The ECC's chairperson shall be one of the ministers appointed to lead the Participating Churches (who shall serve in rotation, where possible). The ECC as a whole shall elect such other officers as it may require (including a vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer), from among its lay members.

The ECC shall be free to adopt its own rules of procedure, and to establish any committees it deems necessary, subject to the preceding provisions and any directions of the Denominational Authorities.

#### **7. Congregational Meetings**

**Congregational Meetings** shall be held as may be required, and at least twice a year. The purposes of these meetings shall be to encourage all members to share in the vision and policy of the LEP, and to be a forum for debating current issues of importance.

Those entitled to be present shall be those on the Common Roll, and/or on the membership list / Electoral Roll of a Participating Church.

Normally, non-members may attend and speak, but not vote. The chair will normally be taken by one of the ministers appointed to the Participating Churches, or another member of the Ecumenical Leadership Team.

## 8. Appointment and Deployment of Ministers

The usual denominational procedures shall be followed in the appointment and deployment of clergy and lay ministers.

Recognising, however, the importance of continuity, the LEP expects that those responsible for the appointment of ministers to the Pastorate Team should select persons who will continue to develop the parish ecumenically. To this end, the ECC shall nominate two persons to join a **Staffing Consultative Group**, which shall follow procedures to be laid down by the Sponsoring Body (agreed with each Constituting Denomination in every case).

The Staffing Consultative Group will also be concerned with significant changes to the Pastorate Team (such as a member leaving, or adjustment of other responsibilities such as chaplaincy, or oversight of additional churches).

## 9. Premises

The premises comprise All Saints Church, Tudeley, and Five Oak Green United Church, which shall be subject to a **Sharing Agreement** under the provisions of The Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969 and the Sharing of Church Buildings Measure 1970. The terms of the Sharing Agreement shall take precedence if any conflict is perceived with this Constitution

A **Joint Council** as specified by the Sharing of Church Buildings Act, 1969 will cover all the shared buildings in the LEP. This body is distinct from the ECC and from the Denominational Councils.

The Joint Council shall consist of:

- representatives of the Denominational Authorities (such as the Moderator of the Southern Synod [URC] and the Archdeacon of Tonbridge [CE], and/or their ecumenical officers);
- the URC Minister and the CE Priest-in-Charge of Tudeley cum Capel with Five Oak Green;
- two of the Elected Lay Representatives, selected by the ECC;
- a secretary appointed by the ECC.

The Joint Council shall meet at least once per calendar year.

## 10. Finance

The ECC is responsible for the proper management of the LEP's funds, subject to the requirements of the Charities Act 1993 and other relevant legislation and regulation.

Out of the LEP's combined income there shall be discharged:

- the expenses of ministry and the administrative costs of the LEP, as agreed with the Sponsoring Body and with the Denominational Authorities;
- financial obligations to the central and other funds of the Constituting Denominations, as agreed with the Sponsoring Body and with the Denominational Authorities;
- upkeep and development of the premises, subject to the provisions of the Sharing Agreement and any directions of the Joint Council;
- gifts to other societies and charities, as determined by the ECC;
- such other expenditure as the ECC may direct.

The ECC shall negotiate fair, transparent and consistent arrangements with the Denominational Authorities for reporting membership statistics and determining financial assessments.

## 11. Wider Participation

The LEP welcomes the informal involvement of other churches and individual Christians in the area.

Other churches in or near Capel may negotiate for formal participation in the LEP at any time, subject to the agreement of the Sponsoring Body, Denominational Authorities and Participating Churches.

## **12. Review, Continuity and Amendment**

The Sponsoring Body shall ensure that at least once every seven years, the LEP shall be evaluated with reference to its objectives (as set out in its Declaration of Intent) and to this Constitution.

The LEP may be terminated only in accordance with the rules of the Participating Churches, given the approval of the Sponsoring Body and Denominational Authorities.

This Constitution may be amended only by the Ecumenical Church Council with the endorsement of a Congregational Meeting called for that purpose, after consultation with the Sponsoring Body and with the approval of the Denominational Authorities.

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## GLOSSARY

Area Church Councils	The local denominational associations of the Participating Churches. <i>in the first instance</i> CE: Tonbridge Deanery Synod and Rochester Diocesan Synod; URC: Medway District.
Capel	The Civil Parish of Capel, Kent.
CE	= Church of England.
Common Roll	A list of the names and addresses of the LEP's members.
Congregational Meetings	Meetings, open to all enrolled members of the LEP, intended to encourage all members to share in the vision and policy of the LEP, and to be a forum for debating current issues of importance.
Constituting Denominations	The denominations to which the Participating Churches belong. <i>in the first instance</i> The Church of England and the United Reformed Church.
Declaration of Intent	A document setting out the objectives of the LEP.
Denominational Authorities	The denominational governing bodies of the Participating Churches. <i>in the first instance</i> CE: Diocese of Rochester; URC: Medway District, Southern Synod.
Denominational Councils	The local decision-making bodies of the Participating Churches. <i>in the first instance</i> CE: Parochial Church Council; URC: Church Meeting.
ECC	= Ecumenical Church Council.
Ecumenical Church Council	Joint decision-making body for the LEP.
Ecumenical Leadership Team	The Pastorate Team together with the Elected Lay Representatives.
Elected Lay Representatives	The senior elected lay representatives of the Participating Churches. <i>in the first instance</i> CE: churchwardens; URC: elders.
ELT	= Ecumenical Leadership Team
Joint Council	A supervisory group, overseeing a Sharing Agreement. It includes representatives of the Denominational Authorities, ELT and ECC.
Lay Preacher	An authorised lay minister in the URC.
LEP	= Local Ecumenical Partnership.
Local Ecumenical Partnership	An association of Participating Churches.
Participating Churches	The local churches participating in the LEP. <i>in the first instance</i> The Church of England in the parish of Tudeley cum Capel with Five Oak Green, and the Five Oak Green United Church.
Pastorate Team	The duly appointed clergy and authorised lay ministers of the Participating Churches. <i>in the first instance</i> CE: Priest-in-Charge, Parish Deacon and Readers; URC: Minister and Minister's Assistant.
Reader	An authorised lay minister in the CE, as defined in Canons E4-E6.
Sharing Agreement	A legal agreement, concerning shared church premises.
Sponsoring Body	Churches Together in Kent (the regional ecumenical organisation).
Staffing Consultative Group	An interdenominational group (facilitated by the Sponsoring Body), to which two members of the LEP are delegated to represent its views to the Denominational Authorities in respect of ministerial appointments.
URC	= United Reformed Church.