



Governance Policy

We are committed to operating the life and business of TRBC in an orderly and transparent manner. The purpose of this document is to set out principles and policies for the operation of TRBC, and to reflect decisions taken by the church members' meeting where those matters are not covered by TRBC's approved Governing Document.

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Section A - Governance policy

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 Trafalgar Road Baptist Church (TRBC) is a charitable unincorporated association governed by its constitution. TRBC is registered as a charity by the Charity Commission.
- 1.2 TRBC's constitution is referred to as TRBC's Governing Document. The Governing Document has been approved by the Charity Commission. TRBC operates in accordance with its approved Governing Document.
- 1.3 TRBC is committed to operating lawfully and with transparency and integrity in all matters.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Governance Policy is to record policy decisions taken by the church members' meeting from time to time on matters that the Governing Document states are to be determined by the church meeting. It also reflects TRBC's approach to other matters affecting its operations where those matters are not explicitly covered by the Governing Document.
- 1.5 This Governance Policy must be read in conjunction with the approved Governing Document. It is intended to be consistent with the Governing Document. In the event of any conflict between this Governance Policy and the approved Governing Document, the Governing Document shall prevail.

2 Context

- 2.1 The original mission at Trafalgar Road began in 1922. The land and original buildings were placed into a trust dated 21 February 1928 (the Foundation Trust). Trafalgar Road Baptist Church was constituted by a resolution made on 8 November 1955, subject to the provisions of the Foundation Trust.
- 2.2 In 2004, the church meeting voted to appoint the Baptist Union Corporation (BUC) as a corporate trustee of the Foundation Trust, alongside the remaining two personal trustees. One of those trustees died in 2006 and the other retired from the role in March 2010, leaving the BUC as the sole trustee.
- 2.3 At a special church meeting held on 31 March 2010, the members voted to ask the BUC to declare the Baptist Trusts for Churches 2003 in respect of the land and buildings forming the church's premises and to hold the church's manse on the Baptist Trusts for Manses 2004.
- 2.4 The Baptist Trust for Churches 2003 overrides the provisions of the Foundation Trust except for the clause in the Foundation Trust restricting the use of the funds raised by the sale of the church's premises and land in the event of the church's permanent closure.
- 2.5 The BUC acts as custodian trustee for TRBC's premises and manse. The Leaders of TRBC are the charity's managing trustees, responsible for the management of TRBC's charitable activities in accordance with the Governing Document and subject to the authority of the church meeting.

Section B - Matters determined by the church meeting

3 Applications for church membership

- 3.1 Paragraph 7.4 of the Governing Document states, "A person wishing to become a Church Member shall apply in a manner determined by the Church Members' Meeting."
- 3.2 At a special church members' meeting held on 8 November 2008, TRBC agreed that *"Individuals wishing to become members of the Church will be interviewed by two members, one to be a baptised member, appointed by the church Leaders and a report of the interview made at the next convenient church meeting. Nominations for membership will be proposed and voted on by the members of the church in attendance. If approved, membership will be effective immediately, and new members will be welcomed publicly into the Church at the first convenient Church service, preferably at a communion service."*

4 Collecting and counting postal votes

- 4.1 Paragraph 13.4 of the Governing Document states, "...the Church Members' Meeting may authorise postal voting for the election of individuals to roles or responsibilities within the church (except for decisions relating to a Minister) where the names of those nominated are known in advance of the meeting. The process for collecting and counting postal votes shall be determined by the Church Members' Meeting."
- 4.2 At a special church members' meeting held on 8 November 2008, TRBC agreed that, *"Where a member, by reason of illness, old age or infirmity, or due to an unavoidable commitment, including a work commitment, is unable to attend a church meeting which is to include the election of individuals to roles or responsibilities within the church (except for decisions relating to a Minister) where the names of those nominated are known in advance of the meeting, he or she may apply to the church administrator for a postal vote."*
- 4.3 *"At each Annual General Meeting, the Church will appoint a standing committee of three members (one of whom should be an elected Leader) to consider and decide upon applications for postal votes received by the administrator. In the case of dispute, the elected Leaders will meet to decide the matter."*
- 4.4 *"The administrator will issue ballot papers to those members whose applications are approved. Completed papers must be returned to the administrator in accordance with clause 15.12.3."*

5 Minimum age for voting at a church members' meeting

- 5.1 Paragraph 13.11 of the Governing Document states, "Although Members of any age may attend and participate in a Church Members' Meeting the minimum age for voting will be determined by the Church Members' Meeting."
- 5.2 At a special church members' meeting held on 8 November 2008, TRBC agreed that *"The minimum age at which a member may vote at a church meeting is 16 years."*

6 Maximum number of charity trustees

- 6.1 Paragraph 15.4 of the Governing Document states, "Charity Trustees shall with the possible exception of any newly appointed Minister be chosen from among the Church Members with the maximum number of Charity Trustees being agreed from time to time by the Church Members' Meeting."
- 6.2 At a special church members' meeting held on 8 November 2008, TRBC agreed that *"The maximum number of Charity Trustees who may serve at any one time is eight, in addition to the Minister, if any, who will be a Charity Trustee by virtue of the nature of the role and responsibilities of a Minister."*

Section C - Delegated powers of the church members' meeting

7 Reserved authority of the church members' meeting

- 7.1 Paragraph 9.2 of the Governing Document states, "The Church Members' Meeting shall have reserved authority in the appointment and removal of a Minister, the appointment and removal of Charity Trustees, decisions related to church property including (without limitation) any purchase, sale, lease, mortgage, or redevelopment of property, the administration of the membership list, and the closure of the Church."
- 7.2 Consequently, decisions on anything related to the matters covered by paragraph 9.2 of the Governing Document must be brought to a suitably convened church members' meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Governing Document.

8 Documented policies of TRBC

- 8.1 In addition to this Governance Policy, TRBC has, or intends to have, documented policies in the following subject areas:
- Alcohol
 - Complaints handling
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Data Protection
 - Environmental
 - Equal opportunities & diversity
 - Financial Management and Accounting
 - Fire safety
 - Food safety
 - Health & Safety
 - IT
 - Lettings
 - Paying staff
 - Reserves and Investment
 - Risk Management
 - Safeguarding
 - Social media
 - Volunteers
- 8.2 In approving this Governance Policy on the date recorded in Section E - Version Control, the church members' meeting has agreed that the trustees may approve new and amended policies in respect of the subjects listed in paragraph 8.1 and new policies on additional subject areas. The trustees will report any amended or new policies to the next church members' meeting, usually through the trustees' report circulated with the agenda.
- 8.3 Paragraph 8.2 shall not prevent the trustees from bringing any amended or new policy to a church members' meeting for approval where, at their discretion, they feel the subject matter warrants wider discussion and agreement.
- 8.4 Any changes to this Governance Policy will require the approval of a church members' meeting.
- 8.5 TRBC's approved policies will be published on the church's website.
- 8.6 Any church member who is concerned about the contents of an amended or new policy that has been approved by the trustees in accordance with paragraph 8.2 may raise the matter with the trustees and may request that the matter be discussed at a church members' meeting or a special church members' meeting convened in accordance with the Governing Document.
- 8.7 Each documented policy will be reviewed at least once every two years. The review of a policy should be brought forward if there are changes to legislation, regulation or the circumstances of TRBC that give rise to the need for the policy to be revised.

Section D - Giving to home and overseas mission

9 Amount of income donated to mission

- 9.1 It was noted at a church members' meeting held on 24 November 2010 that TRBC aims to give 15% of its income to mission activities. At that time, this had been TRBC's practice for several years.
- 9.2 The target amount to be given to mission activities in a financial year is determined as 15% of:
- Sunday offerings to the general fund, plus
 - Standing orders to the general fund, plus
 - Other donations to the general fund, excluding amounts raised through gift days, plus
 - Gift Aid on the above.
- 9.3 TRBC allocates 10% of the proceeds of gift days to mission causes. Those amounts count towards the total given to mission when checking that the target amount determined in accordance with paragraph 9.2 has been achieved in any financial year.
- 9.4 Any gifts made for specific mission causes supplement the target amount. An example would be any Sunday offering on Leprosy Mission Sunday, which would be passed to the Mission directly. Such amounts are not included in the calculation set out in paragraph 9.2 or the check mentioned in paragraph 9.3.

10 Support for Baptists Together Home Mission

- 10.1 TRBC aims to give 5% of its income, as determined in paragraph 9.2, to UK mission activities. TRBC's support for Baptists Together Home Mission is included within that amount and is approximately 3% of the income included within the target calculation.

11 Support for other Christian mission

- 11.1 The balance of TRBC's income allocated to mission is used to support a number of Christian mission organisations working within the UK and overseas. Some receive regular support on a committed annual basis, as decided by the trustees. Some receive donations on the basis of Sunday offerings at particular services in which those missions are featured.
- 11.2 The missions featured in specific Sunday services, for which offerings are taken, are determined by the trustees in consultation with the church members who champion the individual missions.

12 Reporting to the church members' meeting on mission giving

- 12.1 The trustees' annual budget, usually presented to the November church meeting, includes the amounts proposed for giving to mission each year. The annual report and accounts show the amounts actually given under the headings of home and overseas mission.
- 12.2 Church members may obtain more detailed information on mission giving on request from the Church Treasurer.

Section E - Version control

Version	Comment	Date	Approved by
v0.1	First draft	24/11/2022	
v0.2	Trustees review	22/02/2023	
v0.3	Redraft including Trustees' review	13/03/2023	
v0.4	Draft for final review	14/03/2023	
v0.5	Final draft for church meeting review	15/03/2023	
v1.0	Approved first version	26/03/2023	Church meeting