

Forward Together: Constitution

1 Aims

The aims of Forward Together shall be:

To honour the name of our Lord Jesus Christ by obeying his commission to reach the people of Scotland and the whole world with the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour, and to do so sensitively, practically and persuasively.

To support and encourage all evangelicals in the Church of Scotland in their witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour;

To promote effective unity among evangelicals in the Church of Scotland;

To present an biblical perspective on the life and work of the Church of Scotland, in order to maintain the Church's evangelical heritage, especially on contemporary issues of debate.

2 Basis of Faith

The Basis of Faith of Forward Together shall be the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith declared in the ecumenical creeds and the confessions of the Reformed churches, especially as summarized by the Reformation watchwords; Christ alone, grace alone, Scripture alone, faith alone, God's glory alone. In particular we affirm:

Faith in the triune God – eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

Faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord through whose incarnation, earthly ministry, death, resurrection and ascension forgiveness and new life in the Holy spirit are freely offered to all on repentance and faith;

Belief in the gospel of the sovereign grace and love of God, uniquely revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are God-breathed and entirely trustworthy in all that they teach, and the Church's supreme rule of faith and life;

Confidence in the personal and visible return of Christ in glory to reign.

3 Membership

Membership shall be open to all in the Church of Scotland who declare in writing their agreement with the aims and the Basis of Faith.

Members shall annually reaffirm their agreement with the aims and Basis of Faith and pay the subscription agreed by the Annual General Meeting.

All members shall receive an annual report together with an audited statement of accounts and agenda prior to the advertised Annual General Meeting.

4 Objectives

Through its Steering Group Forward Together shall initiate and promote such activities as will advance its aims. On behalf of and in consultation with the membership, the Steering Group shall seek:

- 4.1 To identify the key issues of debate in our Church, to work for the development of a common mind and united action and, should this not prove possible, to outline the different views held;
- 4.2 To encourage members to participate faithfully in the courts, boards and committees of the Church, to assist them to do so as effectively as possible, and to this end to liaise with appropriate officers of the Church and its constituent bodies;
- 4.3 To encourage the publication of such papers, journals and books and other media of communication as may represent an evangelical position on the issues and opportunities facing us in the Church and the nation;
- 4.4 To make statements expressing an evangelical view on relevant issues as these arise to the courts, boards and committees of the Church and to the media;
- 4.5 To establish and monitor a network of local groups, led by members, for the purpose of support and encouragement, and local work and action, with particular regard to the presbyteries of the Church.
- 4.6 To relate to and interact with other groups which have similar aims and bases of faith, both within and outwith the Church of Scotland.

5 *Steering Group and office-bearers*

The Steering Group shall oversee and seek to develop the work of Forward Together. Elected by the Annual General Meeting, it shall be not less than eight and not more than fifteen in number, and shall broadly reflect the membership of Forward Together.

The Steering Group shall have power to co-opt a member to serve in the event of a vacancy arising. Any co-opted member shall serve until the next Annual General Meeting. In accord with 4.6 above, the Steering Group may also co-opt corresponding members who may be members of other Churches, to a maximum of three.

The period of service for Steering Group members shall be four years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election for one further four-year term. They may be elected for a third term provided that at least one year has elapsed after the completion of their second term.

The office-bearers of the Steering Group shall be: convenor and vice-convenor, secretary, treasurer and press officer. The convenor shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote.

The period of service for office-bearers shall be four years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election for a further term of four years. They may be elected for a further term of office, provided that at least one year has elapsed after the completion of their second term.

The Steering Group shall call an Annual General Meeting each year and shall publish an annual report and audited statement of accounts.

The Steering Group shall meet not less than three times per year. The quorum for its meetings shall be 50% of its membership.

The Steering Group shall admit into membership of Forward Together those who are eligible in terms of 3.1 above.

The Steering Group shall have power to employ secretarial and other paid staff.

The Steering Group shall through the treasurer maintain a bank account in the name of Forward Together. The bank account shall be operated by two out of four signatures of the office-bearers, of whom one shall be the treasurer.

The Steering Group shall have power to seek charitable status for Forward Together, and/or status as a company limited by guarantee.

6 Rules

The constitution shall be altered only at an Annual General Meeting, or Extraordinary General Meeting, with an 80% agreement of the membership present and voting.

An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Steering Group if it considers there is a need for such a meeting. Any member may request the Steering Group to consider calling such an Extraordinary General Meeting. The Steering Group shall be required to call an Extraordinary General Meeting upon receipt of a letter requesting an Extraordinary General Meeting signed by not fewer than 25 members.

Forward Together may enter into partnership with other groups only on the recommendation of the Steering Group and with a majority agreement of the membership present at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

In the annual report and at the Annual General Meeting the Steering Group shall be accountable to the membership for any action taken in the name of Forward Together.

Forward Together may be dissolved only on the recommendation of the Steering Group and by an 80% majority of those voting following circulation of the full membership. Any residual funds shall be applied by the decision of the Steering Group to an agreed evangelical cause or causes in Scotland. Any liabilities shall be shared equally by the paid-up membership.

Office-bearers shall be (re)elected at the Annual General Meeting upon written nomination by at least two members. Nominations must be received by the secretary at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. No member shall make more than two nominations. Office-bearers shall stand for (re)election on a rotational basis so that the continuity of the Steering Group's work shall be maintained. Ordinary members of Steering Group shall also be (re)elected on the same rotational basis. It shall be competent for the vice-convenor to succeed the convenor.