

The Society for Ecumenical Studies

Registered Charity Number 1096515

A Body in Association with Churches Together

CONSTITUTION

adopted on the twelfth day of February 2003

A Name.

The name of the Association is The Society for Ecumenical Studies ("the Society")

B Administration.

Subject to the matters set out below the Society and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the Executive Committee, constituted by clause G of this constitution ("the Executive Committee")

C Objects.

The Society's objects ("the objects") are the advancement of religion and the education of the public by fostering as widely as possible the Christian ecumenical movement, in a way that combines practical experience in social, international and inter-faith fields with theological reflection and exploration in regard to divisions between Christian denominations, in particular by providing occasions and a regular forum within which persons and groups of different backgrounds, generations, races and theological convictions can meet for exchange of information, for discussion and to work together on study projects, where appropriate in collaboration with other groups or agencies .

D Powers.

In furtherance of the objects but not otherwise the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers:

- (i) power to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Executive Committee shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
- (ii) power to buy, take on lease or in exchange any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain and equip it for use;
- (iii) power subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Society;
- (iv) power subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Society with repayment of the money so borrowed;
- (v) power to employ such staff (who shall not be members of the Executive Committee) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the objects and to make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants;
- (vi) power to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;
- (vii) power to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;
- (viii) power to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Executive Committee may think fit;

- (ix) power to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

E Membership.

- (1) Membership of the Society shall be open to:
 - (i) individuals (over the age of 18 years) who are interested in furthering the work of the Society and who have paid any annual subscription laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee, and subject to the discretion of the Executive Committee.
 - (ii) any body corporate or unincorporated association which is interested in furthering the Society's work and has paid an annual subscription (any such body being called in this constitution a "member organisation").
- (2) Every member shall have one vote.
- (3) Each member organization shall appoint an individual to represent it and to vote on its behalf at meetings of the Society; and may appoint an alternate to replace its appointed representative at any meeting of the Society if the appointed representative is unable to attend.
- (4) Each member organization shall notify the name of the representative appointed by it and of any alternate to the secretary. If the representative or alternate resigns from or otherwise leaves the member organization, he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the member organization.
- (5) The Executive Committee may unanimously and for good reason terminate the membership of any individual or member organization: Provided that the individual concerned or the appointed representative of the member organization concerned (as the case may be) shall have the right to be

heard by the Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

F Honorary Officers.

At the annual general meeting of the Society the members shall elect from amongst themselves a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

G Executive Committee.

- (1) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than 4 members nor more than 12 Members being:
 - (a) the honorary officers specified in the preceding clause;
 - (b) Between 1 and 9 members elected at the annual general meeting who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting;
 - (c) The Executive Committee may in addition appoint from amongst the members of the Society not more than 2 co-opted non-voting members but so that no-one may be appointed as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one third of the members of the Executive Committee would be co-opted members. Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at a special meeting of the Executive Committee called under clause J and shall take effect from the end of that meeting unless the appointment is to fill a place which has not then been vacated in which case the appointment shall run from the date when the post becomes vacant.
- (2) All the members of the Executive Committee shall retire from office together at the end of the annual general meeting next after the date on which they came into office but they may be re-elected or re-appointed.

- (3) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by an failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member
- (4) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee whether on a first or on any subsequent entry into office until after signing in the minute book of the Executive Committee a declaration of acceptance and of willingness to act in the trusts of the Society.

H Determination of Membership of Executive Committee

A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- (1) is disqualified from acting as a member of the Executive Committee by virtue of section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision);
- (2) becomes incapable by reasons of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs within a period of twelve months; and
- (3) is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Executive Committee resolve that his or her office be vacated; or
- (4) notifies to the Executive Committee a wish to resign (but only if at least three members of the Executive Committee will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect).

I Executive Committee Members not to be personally interested.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause (2) of this clause no member of the Executive Committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Society (otherwise than as a trustee for the Society) or receive remuneration

or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Executive Committee) in any contract entered into by Executive Committee.

- (2) Any member of the Executive Committee for the time being who is a solicitor, accountant or other person engaged in a profession may charge and be paid all the usual professional charges for business done by him or her or his or her firm when instructed by the other members of the Executive Committee to act in a professional capacity on behalf of the Society: Provided that at no time shall a majority of the members of the Executive Committee benefit under this provision and that a member of the Executive Committee shall withdraw from any meeting at which his or her own instruction or remuneration, or that of his or her own firm, is under discussion.

J Meetings and proceedings of the Executive Committee.

- (1) The Executive Committee shall hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. A special meeting may be called at any time by the Chairman or by any two members of the Executive Committee upon not less than 4 days' notice being given to the other members of the Executive Committee of the matters to be discussed
- (2) The Chairman shall act as chairman at meetings of the Executive Committee. If the Chairman is absent from any meeting, the members of the Executive Committee present shall choose one of their number to be Chairman of the meeting before any other business is transacted.
- (3) There shall be a quorum when at least one third of the number of members of the Executive Committee for the time being or three members of the Executive Committee, whichever is the smaller, are present at a meeting.
- (4) Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the Executive Committee present and voting on the question but in the case of equality of votes the Convener of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

- (5) The Executive Committee shall keep minutes, in books kept for the purpose, of the proceedings at meetings of the Executive Committee and any sub-committee.
- (6) The Executive Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this Constitution.
- (7) The Executive Committee may appoint one or more sub-committees consisting of three or more members of the Executive Committee for the purpose of making any inquiry or supervising or performing any function or duty which in the opinion of the Executive Committee would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee: provided that all acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees shall be fully and promptly reported to the Executive Committee.

K Receipts and expenditure.

- (1) The funds of the Society, including all donations contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Executive Committee in the name of the Society at such bank as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two members of the Executive Committee.
- (2) The funds belonging to the Society shall be applied only in furthering the objects.

L Property.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause (2) of this clause, the Executive Committee shall cause the title to:

- (a) all land held by or in trust for the Society which is not vested in the Official Custodian for Charities; and
- (b) all investments held by or on behalf of the Society;

to be vested either in a corporation entitled to act as custodian trustee or in not less than three individuals appointed by them as holding trustees. Holding trustees may be removed by the Executive Committee at their pleasure and shall act in accordance with the lawful directions of the Executive Committee. Provided they act only in accordance with the lawful directions of the Executive Committee, the holding trustees shall not be liable for the acts and defaults of its members.

- (2) If a corporation entitled to act as custodian trustee has not been appointed to hold the property of the Society, the Executive Committee may permit any investments held by or in trust for the Society to be held in the name of a clearing bank, trust corporation or any stockbroking company which is a member of the International Stock Exchange (or any subsidiary of any such stockbroking company) as nominee for the Executive Committee, and may pay such a nominee reasonable and proper remuneration for acting as such.

M Accounts.

The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to:

- (1) the keeping of accounting records for the Society;
- (2) the preparation of annual statements of account for the Society;
- (3) the auditing or independent examination of the statement of account of the Society; and

- (4) the transmission of the statements of account of the Society to the Commission.

N Annual Report.

The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual report and its transmission to the Commission.

O Annual Return.

The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual return and its transmission to the Commission.

P Annual General Meeting.

- (1) There shall be an annual general meeting of the Society which shall be held in the month of February in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- (2) Before any other business is transacted at the first annual general meeting the persons present shall appoint a Chairman of the meeting. The Chairman shall be the Chairman of subsequent annual general meetings, but if he or she is not present, before any other business is transacted, the persons present shall appoint a Chairman for the meeting.
- (3) The Executive Committee shall present to each annual general meeting the report and accounts of the Society for the preceding year.
- (4) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by any member of the Society in writing duly seconded by any other member and must be in the hands of the secretary of the Executive Committee at least 3 days before the annual general meeting together with an indication in writing from the person nominated that he or she is willing to serve, if elected. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by ballot.

Q Special General Meetings

The Executive Committee may call a special general meeting of the Society at any time. If at least ten members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered the Secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

R Procedure at General Meetings.

- (1) The Secretary or other person specially appointed by the Executive Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of the Society.
- (2) There shall be a quorum when at least one tenth of the number of members of the Society for the time being or ten members of the Society, whichever is the greater, are present at any general meeting.

S Notices.

- (1) Notices under this constitution may be sent by hand, or by post by all suitable electronic means or (where applicable to members generally) may be published in any suitable journal or national newspaper or any newspaper distributed by the Society.
- (2) The address at which a member is entitled to receive notices is the address noted in the register of members (or, if none, the last known address)
- (3) Any notice given in accordance with the Constitution is to be treated for all purposes of having been received:
 - (i) 24 hours after being sent by electronic means or delivered by hand to the relevant address
 - (ii) Two clear days after being sent by first class post to that address
 - (iii) Three days after being sent by second class post or overseas post to that address

- (iv) On the date of publication of the journal or newspaper containing the notice.
- (v) On being handed to the member personally or, if earlier,
- (vi) As soon as the member acknowledges actual receipt

(4) A technical defect in the giving of notice of which the members or the Executive Committee are unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken at the meeting.

T Alterations to the Constitution.

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
- (2) No amendment may be made to clause A, clause C, clause T, clause U or this clause without the prior consent in writing of the Commissioners.
- (3) No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Society cease to be a charity at law.
- (4) The Executive Committee should promptly send to the Commissioners a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

U Dissolution.

If the Executive Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Society it shall call a meeting of all members of the Society, of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Executive Committee shall have power to

realize any assets held by or on behalf of the Society. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Society as the members of the Society may determine or failing that shall be applied for some other charitable purpose. A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Society must be sent to the Commissioners.

V Arrangements until first Annual General Meeting.

Until the first annual general meeting under this constitution takes place this constitution shall take effect as if references in it to the Executive Committee were references to the persons whose signatures appear at the end of this document.

This constitution was adopted on the date mentioned above by the persons whose signatures appear below

Signed: D M Conway, Chairman
P McPartlan
David Carter
Maximos (Lavriotes)
Anne Daly, Treasurer
B M Woodruff, Secretary
Gareth Powell