

**Rules And Constitution
Of
Charminster Spiritualist Church**

1 Designation

The Church Shall be designated as
“Spiritualist Church, Charminster Road”

2 Principles

This Church recognises and aims to observe:-

1. A God of Divine Truth, Beauty and Goodness, Omnipotent Law and an ultimate perfection of Spiritual man requiring the ethical and moral standards of Universal Love, Absolute Honesty and Absolute Selflessness.
2. The continuation of Life and Mental and Spiritual Progression after physical death and positive communication with the Spiritual World.

3 Objects

The Objects of the Church are:-

- (a). The Holding of religious services for public worship.
- (b). The holding of Healing Services and the administering of Spiritual Healing and Counselling
- (c). The advancement of the Principles, Teachings and Practices of Spiritualist Philosophy.
- (d). The support of such other charitable objects as may be decided upon by the membership in general meeting.

4 Membership

- (a). The Church shall be composed of an unlimited number of members
- (b). Applications for membership shall be submitted through the Secretary to the Committee, which may accept, defer or refuse applications at its discretion without being required to state its reasons. The secretary shall forthwith notify each application of the Committee’s decision.
- (c). If, in the opinion of the Committee, the actions or activities of any member appear to be detrimental to the interests or objects of the Church, then the membership concerned may be terminated by the committee, the member first been given the opportunity of representation before the committee or representatives thereof.
- (d). If the subscription of a member becomes more than three months overdue, then the membership shall lapse, subject to the discretion of the committee under Rule 15(d)

5

General Meetings

- (a) The control of the affairs of the Church shall be vested in the members in General Meeting, subject to the Trustee('s) requirements (and approval)
- (b) The Annual General Meeting shall be held in April or at such other time as may be determined by the members in General Meeting by Ordinary Motion with Special Notice. The Committee shall arrange the exact date and time each year.
- (c) The Committee shall submit to the Annual General Meeting a report of the activities of the Church for the preceding year and an audited financial statement (consisting of a Balance Sheet, an Income and Expenditure Account and such other accounts as may be necessary), made up to the end of the preceding financial year, being the 31st December.
- (d) A Special General Meeting or an informal Members' Meeting may be convened by authority of the Committee or of the President and Secretary or by the Trustees.
- (e) On the signed requisition of one third or twenty five (whichever is the smaller number) of the members being sent to the President or Secretary, a Special General Meeting shall be convened for a date within seven weeks of receipt. The requisition shall state the business to be considered and no other business shall be dealt with except such other business as may be placed on the agenda by the Committee
- (f) Notice of the date of a General Meeting and its agenda shall be given either in writing to every member at least twenty-one days before the meeting or by public announcement at all services during the four weeks before the meeting
- (g) Similar notice shall be given of an adjourned General Meeting unless the adjournment is for a shorter period.

6

Special Motions and Motions Requiring Special Notice

- (a) A motion which, whether by direction of the Trustees or the Trust Deed of the Church, requires a Special Resolution (being a motion which can be carried only if supported by two-thirds of the number of members who vote on it) or an Ordinary Motion with Special Notice (being a motion which can be carried by a simple majority vote) may be dealt with only at an Annual or Special General Meeting and the following procedure must be observed
- (b) A copy of the proposed motion must be sent to the Secretary not less than six weeks before the date of the meeting at which it is to be moved, unless the Trustees and the Committee agree to accept shorter notice.
- (c) Either a copy must be sent to each member at least twenty-one days before the meeting or the motion must be publicly intimated at all services and otherwise displayed during the four weeks before the meeting, a copy being made available for any member upon request
- (d) An amendment to a motion may be accepted, but an amendment which seeks to alter the basic intention of the motion is not in order
- (e) An amendment requires only a simple majority of those voting and, if it is carried, then the motion as amended shall be put to the meeting
- (f) If the majority who support a Special Motion is less than one-half of the number of members of the Church, it shall not become operative until fourteen days after the meeting. If, during that period, a requisition signed by one-third or twenty five (whichever is the small number) of the members is received by the President or Secretary, asking that the motion be subject to a postal vote, then the Committee shall arrange for this procedure to take place as soon as possible by providing each member of the Church with a copy of the motion and a form on which to record a vote (for or against the motion), returnable within seven days. Where an

amendment has been carried at the meeting, the postal procedure shall require voting as follows:-

- (i) For or Against the amendment
- (ii) Assuming the amendment to be carried, For or Against the motion as amended
- (iii) Assuming the amendment to be rejected, For or Against the Motion in its original form

The Trustees shall open and check the voting papers and shall declare the motion carried if it has received two-thirds of the votes cast, or otherwise shall declare it void.

7

Voting

- (a) Each member present at a General Meeting, who has been a member of the church for not less than three consecutive months, shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each motion or issue. Proxy votes shall not be allowed, (with the exception of cases where the member is unable to attend due to verifiable medical reasons). The Chairperson of the meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to his (/her) deliberative vote.
- (b) All elections shall be by ballot. Other matters shall be decided by a show of hands unless a ballot is called for by the Chairperson or by any five members present.

8

Church Committee

- (a) The Church shall be administered by a Committee elected by the members in General Meeting. The Committee shall be subject to the direction of the members of the Church in General Meeting and to the requirement of the Trustees
- (b) All offices and appointments shall be honorary except the Auditors and special requirements of the Trustees
- (c) The Church Committee shall consist of eight members (where possible) to include the President and two Vice-Presidents. In addition, the Committee shall appoint a General Secretary and a Treasurer as administrative officers from the members of the Church or from members of the Committee. Such appointments shall be, of themselves, without voting power.
- (d) The Committee shall appoint a Fabric Secretary and a Librarian and such other officers as it deems necessary and may co-opt such members of the Church who, by virtue of qualification, would be of assistance. These appointments and co-options shall be, of themselves, without voting powers.
- (e) The Committee may, by affirmative vote supported by a majority of its members, resign as a whole and shall, in co-operation with the Trustees, forthwith call for nominations and convene a Special General Meeting to elect a new Committee. The resignation shall take effect and the new Committee shall take office at the close of the Special General Meeting
- (f) A General Meeting of the members may, by Special Resolution and in co-operation with the trustees, terminate the appointment of the Committee or of any Officer or member of the Committee. The meeting may thereupon elect a new Committee or member as the case may be, nominations, in this case being taken from the floor of the meeting.
- (g) The resignation of any member of the Committee shall be submitted to the President in writing

- (h) The Committee shall fill vacancies caused by death or resignation by the co-option of members of the Church. Such members shall hold office for the unexpired terms of office of their appropriate predecessors and entitled to vote in committee
- (i) Subject to the foregoing, all members of the Committee shall remain in office until the close of the Annual General Meeting at which elections are held
- (j) All of the voting members of the Committee shall be subject to election annually at the Annual General Meeting and retiring members shall be eligible for re-election, except that no President shall hold office for more than three consecutive years
- (k) The offices of General Secretary, Treasurer, Fabric Secretary, Librarian and such others as are held by co-optees shall be individually reviewed by the Church Committee Biannually or at such other times within that period as it may require.
- (l) All acts done and votes cast in good faith by members of the Committee shall be valid notwithstanding that it be afterwards discovered that there was some defect in the appointment of any or all of them
- (m) Should the actions or activities of any Committee Member appear to be detrimental to the interests or objects of the Church, or bring its name into disrepute,, the other committee members may vote by majority to terminate the aforesaid committee member's position. Such decision shall be given in writing to the member, stating the reason(s), but need not include the details of the vote. The committee member shall have leave to appeal this decision in writing to the Trustees within 30 days. Any decision of the Trustees shall be given in writing and considered to be final. Any committee member so removed shall also be referred to rule 4(c) (above)

9

Qualification for Membership of Committee

- (a) A Candidate for election as President or Vice-Presidents shall have been a member of the Committee for a period of one year before the date of election. (In the case of no suitably qualified person being prepared to stand for election to such post, then the Trustees may at their discretion appoint a suitable person of their choosing to the post)
- (b) A candidate for election to the Committee shall have been a member of the Church for a period of one year before the date of election. (In the case of no suitably qualified person being prepared to stand for election to such post, then the Trustees may at their discretion appoint a suitable person of their choosing to the post)

10

Nominations for Committee

- (a) At least four weeks before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting, a nomination sheet shall be displayed in a prominent position in the Church, indicating the positions to be filled or, alternatively, nomination forms shall be issued to all members. The display shall be publicly announced at all services until the closing date for nominations.
- (b) Each candidate must be nominated by at least two members of the Church and must confirm a willingness to stand. No member may nominate more candidates than there are vacancies to be filled.
- (c) Nominations for President shall automatically include nominations for Vice-Presidency
- (d) Nominations shall close seven days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

11

Election of Committee

- (a) The election of the President, Vice-Presidents and Committee shall take place by ballot at the Annual General Meeting and in that order
- (b) Any deficiency in the number of nominations required at the Annual General Meeting may be filled by the newly elected committee. Such appointments shall have full voting rights. Nominations shall not be permissible at the Annual General Meeting.
- (c) No member shall hold more than one office or appointment except under special circumstances.

12

Meetings of the Committee

- (a) The Committee shall meet not less than bi-monthly and at such other times as shall be deemed expedient
- (b) A special meeting of the Committee may be called by the Trustees, the President or by a requisition to the Secretary signed by not fewer than three voting members, which shall state the purpose for which the meeting is to be called
- (c) A quorum shall consist of not fewer than four voting members
- (d) Any Member may attend a committee meeting as an observer, with no voting rights, with the prior consent of the Committee. Consent for attending such a meeting must be sought by writing to the Committee via the Secretary and refusal or acceptance of this request will be supplied in writing. The Committee is not obliged to accept any attendance and shall not be required to give reason for a refusal of a request to attend.

13

Duties of Officers

- (a) Whenever possible, the President shall preside at all meetings for Public Worship, General and Committee meetings and Public Meetings, except where otherwise agreed by the Committee or he (/she) shall appoint deputies from the Vice Presidents, The Trustees or from suitable members of the Committee.
- (b) The General Secretary shall attend all General and Special Meetings of the members and all Committee meetings , record the business transacted, attend to all matters relating to the general secretarial work of the Church and act generally under the instruction of the Church Committee and the Trustees
- (c) The Treasurer shall receive and bank all monies, keep and produce such books, vouchers and receipts as may be required by the Auditors, render an audited balance sheet at each Annual General Meeting and act generally under the instruction of the Church Committee and the Trustees
- (d) The Fabric Secretary shall maintain in good order all the Church property and provide for its insurance against all risks and the indemnity of the Church members against all other liabilities, to the satisfaction of the Church Committee and the Trustees
- (e) Committee members shall generally assist in the efficient administration of the Church, acting as Stewards, carrying out other duties as detailed by the President, Vice Presidents and Trustees and encouraging membership.

14 Auditors

- (a) At the Annual General Meeting, a professional accountant or a similarly qualified person or two members of the Church, not being members of the Committee, shall be appointed annually as Auditor or Auditors
- (b) The Auditors shall examine all account books, all vouchers and all documents relating to investments and shall report to the Trustees and to the Annual General Meeting as to whether, in their opinion, the books are properly kept and the accounts presented give a true and fair view of the state of the finances of the Church

15 Subscriptions

- (a) The amount of the annual subscriptions to be paid by members shall be decided from time to time by the Church Committee
- (b) Subscriptions shall be due in advance and unless otherwise decided, shall be payable on the 1st of May following the Annual General Meeting each year
- (c) The first subscription shall be payable upon application for membership and subject to acceptance of the applicant into membership by the Church Committee, dating as from the first day of the month of application and expiring on the following 30th of April. Should membership be declined, a refund will be offered Any application for membership made and accepted between February 1st and the date of the AGM shall at the discretion of the committee cover the period of subscription until the following AGM.
- (d) Payment of any subscription may be waived by decision of the Church Committee

16 Church Finance

- (a) The income of the Church shall be derived from subscriptions, collections, voluntary contributions, special efforts and any other methods approved by the Trustees and (or) the members in General Meeting
- (b) Funds of the Church not required to meet the ordinary recurring expenditure shall be banked and not less than two officers shall be appointed as signatories to operate the account.
- (c) Any funds of the Church which are not likely to be required for a considerable time shall be treated as capital and shall be placed in the name of the Church in a bank or invested in the joint names of the Trustees in investments prescribed for the investment of trust monies by Act of Parliament for the time being in force.

17 Church Records

- (a) All necessary books of account and records in connection with the Church shall be and shall remain the property of the Church. They shall be handed over together with any Church documents to the Church Committee through the President upon the resignation, retirement or termination of appointment of any member in whose possession they are

- (b) Subject to the approval of the President or the Committee, any member of the Committee shall have the right to inspect any of the books and documents of the Church, excluding the Trust Deeds and papers relating thereto

18

Subsidiary Activity

Any subsidiary activity, as required by the members in the General Meeting or by the Church Committee or by the Trustees, shall form an integral part of the Church and shall be administered either by the Church Committee or by an ad hoc sub-committee or by a special officer appointed by the Church Committee. A sub-committee or special officer shall be accountable at all times to the Church Committee. Independent collection and distribution of funds for the carrying out of functions shall be allowed and statements of accounts shall be submitted regularly to the Church Treasurer for submission to the Church Committee and the Annual General Meeting

19

Healing

- (a) Healing services shall be conducted under the leadership of the Healing Group Leader or leaders whose appointment shall be made annually by the Church Committee. The leader(s) shall be responsible to the Committee through the President
- (b) The appointment of healers shall be determined by the Church Committee in consultation with the Healing Group Leader or leaders. All healers must be members of the Church

20

Disputes and Complaints

- (a) Any dispute arising within the Church shall be dealt with in the first instance by the Church Committee which shall allow each party a full opportunity to state his (/her) case either orally or in writing or both
- (b) Any complaint of misconduct against a member shall be submitted in writing to the General Secretary and shall be dealt with by the Church Committee which shall take evidence and allow full opportunity of defence and explanation to the member concerned. In the event of the charge or complaint being considered to be proved or justified, the Church Committee may ask the member to resign from membership of the church and failing compliance the Committee may remove him (/her) from membership or alternatively it may suspend him (/her) from membership for a period.

21

Notice to Members

- (a) Any notice required by these Rules to be sent to a member shall have deemed to have been properly given if posted to the member's last known address and shall be deemed to have been received after, in the opinion of the Church Committee, a reasonable time
- (b) A meeting or motion shall not be invalidated by reason of the accidental failure of the General Secretary to send a notice to a particular member.

22

Alterations and additions to these rules

- (a) Notwithstanding a regular five-yearly review by the Church Committee, these rules may be submitted for amendment by Special Motion at a General Meeting at the discretion of the Trustees and the Church Committee at any time
- (b) No alteration, amendment or addition, however made, shall be valid if the effect thereof would be to impugn the status of the Church as a religious charity or to render the Objects of the Church not wholly charitable
- (c) Every alteration, amendment or addition, however made, must be recorded in the rule books issued to members as an entitlement upon joining the Church

23

Legal

- (a) Any decision or action of the Church Committee or Officers shall, notwithstanding these rules comply with the rule of Law in England as in force at that time
- (b) All records held by the church for healing or membership purposes shall remain confidential and shall be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act as amended

24

Trustees

- (c) All the land and buildings belonging to the Church shall be vested in Trustees under a suitable Trust Deed. Subject to any provisions to the contrary in the Trust Deed, the provisions of the Trust Deed shall in any case of conflict prevail over the provision of these Rules.
- (d) The Trustees shall not be less than two in number and new Trustees shall be appointed by serving Trustees
- (e) At the request of the Trustees, a Church Committee meeting or a Special General Meeting shall be convened to consider any matter concerning the property held in trust
- (f) The Trustees may attend, in an advisory capacity and without vote, any meeting of the Church Committee