

DRAFT March 2014

Constitution of Gellionnen and Graig Unitarian Church, Trebanos

1. Name

The congregation shall be called Gellionnen and Graig Unitarian church and in this document shall be called the 'Trebanos congregation' and is registered with the Charity Commission as number 1042313

2. Aims

The Trebanos Congregation is established for the service of humankind and public worship in accordance with the principles and practices of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. The Trebanos Congregation respects the right of each individual to hold their own spiritual beliefs and there will be no imposition of any Doctrine or Creed.

3. Powers

A Management Committee will administer the affairs of the Trebanos congregation in accordance with principals and practice of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches as set out by The General Assembly and required by the membership.

3.1 The Trebanos Congregation is established for the advancement of religion, through services of public worship, prayer, discussion and other religious activities. No Doctrinal Test, Creed or Subscription shall be imposed on or required from any Minister or any member of the Trebanos congregation.

3.2 In furtherance of the said aims but not otherwise the Trebanos congregation may:

3.2.1 Employ and pay any person so elected to be their appointed minister and make all reasonable and necessary provision for the payment of pensions to or on behalf of the ministers, their widows or widowers and other dependents. It may also employ any other persons required as necessary for the provision and upkeep of the two places of worship and the burial ground,(e.g.a caretaker).

3.2.2 Arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of Sunday Schools, Youth Movements, social activities, exhibitions, meetings, lectures, classes, seminars and training courses.

3.2.3 Cause to be written and printed or otherwise reproduced and circulated, gratuitously or otherwise, such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets or other documents or films or recorded tapes or electronic media as shall further the said aims and seek to secure the ownership of materials for the Trebanos congregation or Unitarian and Free Christian Church.

3.2.4 Purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and any rights and privileges necessary for the promotion of the said aims and construct, maintain and alter any buildings or erections necessary for the work of the Trebanos congregation.

3.2.5 Make regulations for any property which may be so acquired.

3.2.6 Subject to such consents as may be required by law, sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or assets of the Trebanos congregation.

3.2.7 Subject to such consents as may be required by law and subject to confirmation at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting called for that purpose, borrow or raise money for the said objects and accept gifts on such terms and on such security as shall be deemed to be necessary.

3.2.8 Raise funds and invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscriptions and otherwise PROVIDED THAT the Trebanos congregation shall not undertake permanent trading activities in raising funds for the said aims.

3.2.9 To issue appeals, hold public meetings and take such steps as may be required for the purpose of procuring contributions to the funds of the Trebanos congregation in the shape of donations, subscriptions and otherwise.

3.2.10 To insure and arrange insurance cover as required by law for and to indemnify its officers, servants and voluntary workers and those of its members from and against all such risks incurred in the course of the performance of their duties on behalf of the Trebanos congregation in respect of acts either properly undertaken in the administration of the Trebanos congregation or so undertaken improperly but under an honest mistake.

3.2.11 To ethically invest the moneys of the Trebanos congregation not immediately required for the said aims in or upon such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions (if any) as may for the time being be imposed or required by law.

3.2.12 Do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of the said aims.

4. Membership of the Trebanos congregation

4.1 A person may make a request to the Management Committee for membership of the Trebanos congregation.

4.2 They must be able to demonstrate that they:

- understand and adhere to the principles and practices of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches as set out on the General Assembly Website
- respect the rules of the Trebanos congregation as set out in this document
- have attended on a frequent basis for at least three months or have been a member of another Unitarian Congregation
- are aged 18 years and over.

4.3 Once requested, membership will be considered and, if agreed, authorised by the Management Committee at the next committee meeting following the request.

4.4 No fee will be levied but members must agree to contribute financially according to their means, to support the Ministry of the Trebanos congregation and maintain the fabric of the building and the fixtures and fittings therein. The Management Committee reserves the right, for good and sufficient reasons, to refuse or terminate membership. The Trebanos congregation welcomes requests for membership regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation.

4.5 The secretary will keep a register of members, only such members will be eligible to vote at General meetings.

4.6 Those who do not wish to hold full membership or who are under 18 years of age may request associate membership which will be considered by the management committee. If accepted they will not be eligible to vote at general meetings.

5. Management Committee

5.1 The Management Committee of the Trebanos congregation shall consist of the following officers:

- Chairperson,
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary (minutes and membership)
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer
- SEWUS District representative
- One nominated representative from each of the Support Groups.

5.2 All of the above are eligible to vote.

5.3 The officers of the management committee must be full members of the Trebanos congregation and shall be elected on an annual basis and are eligible for re-election.

5.4 The management Committee is required to meet at least six times a year in addition to the AGM.

5.5 For Management Committee meetings a quorum shall be defined as six members or 50% of the current committee membership, whichever is the lower figure.

5.6 The officers reserve the right, from time to time, to appoint a member of the Trebanos congregation with the requisite knowledge and/or experience to carry out specific tasks on behalf of the management committee.

5.7 Officers will not hold more than one office except if required to be the representative of a support group

5.8 The Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to:

- keeping of accounting records of the Church
- preparation of annual statements of account for the charity;
- auditing or independent examination of the statements of account of the Church
- transmission of the statements of account of the Church to the Commissioners.
- preparation of an Annual Report and its transmission to the Commissioners and to members of the General Public if and when requested.
- preparation of an annual return and its transmission to the Commissioners.

5.9 The Committee shall cause the title to all investments held by or on behalf of the Church to be vested in not less than three individuals appointed by them as trustees of the property, who shall have responsibility for all assets and investments of the Church and their use thereof according to the Trust Deed.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Officers

6.1 The Officer's role and responsibility are to manage all of the Trebanos Congregation's affairs and provide a co-ordinating role for the various support groups. For the purpose of Charity Law, the officers are regarded as Trustees.

6.2 The Secretary will be responsible for summoning meetings of the committee and all general meetings. S/He will deal with all correspondence relating to the Trebanos congregation, and any dealings with the District Society and the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. The Secretary shall further keep a register of all burials, marriages and baptisms at the Church.

6.3 The Assistant Secretary will keep minutes of all meetings in a minute book, and a list of all members.

6.4 The Treasurer together with the Assistant Treasurer, will receive the contributions of members, and all other monies intended for the Trebanos congregation and shall apply all such sums in a manner determined by the Membership. The Treasurer will keep proper accounts of receipts and expenditure and shall submit audited accounts to the Annual General Meeting. The annual report shall contain details of the Trebanos congregation's investments.

6.5 The Chair, or in her/his absence, an officer elected at the meeting, shall conduct all Committee and General Meetings and ensure that all rules are properly observed.

7. Management Committee Members Not To Be Personally Interested

No member of the committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Trebanos congregation (otherwise than as Trustee of the Trebanos congregation), or receive remuneration other than the appointed minister serving as ex officio member, or be interested in any contract entered into by the Committee other than by approval of the remainder of the Management Committee.

8. Termination of membership of management committee

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

- Is disqualified from acting as a member of the Committee by virtue of the Charities Act 2011
- Becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs.
- Is absent without the permission of the Committee from all of their meetings within a period of six months and the committee resolve that his or her office be vacated
- Notifies to the Committee a wish to resign.

9. Support Groups

9.1 The Management Committee may set up support groups to do work on behalf of the Trebanos Congregation, for example worship, building, outreach. These groups will act as sub-committees with one representative nominated to attend the Management Committee and report on the activities of the support group.

9.2 The Management Committee will determine Support Groups Terms of Reference, powers and duration of activities, and appoint members.

9.3 Any Officer(s) of the Management Committee can also be a member of a support group.

9.4 As far as is possible no individual should be a member of more than two support groups.

9.5 Any proposals for changes or developments in the administration of the Trebanos Congregation's affairs which come from the support groups must be agreed by the management committee, prior to implementation.

10. General Meetings

10.1 The Annual General Meeting

10.1.1 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Trebanos congregation shall be held within six months of the end of the financial year. The Financial Year is determined 1st January to 31st December. The secretary will give one month notice of the date of the meeting.

10.1.2 The quorum for the Annual General meeting will be 25% of full members of the congregation and a minimum of 3.

10.1.3 The purpose of the AGM is to receive the Annual General Report of the Committee on the affairs of the Trebanos Congregation, the Treasurer's Statement of Accounts and Auditor's Report and to appoint the Officers.

10.1.4 Each year the auditor shall be elected at the AGM who shall neither be an Officer of the Trebanos congregation nor a member of the management Committee

10.1.5 Nominations shall be sought for all officers one month prior to the AGM when nomination forms will be made available to all the members of the Trebanos congregation. If any election is necessary it will be conducted at the AGM. There is no fixed time limit beyond which an officer cannot serve on the committee. However all positions have to be open for new nominees once a year.

At the AGM a representative from each of the Support Groups will present progress reports on the previous year's activities and achievements. Other groups affiliated to the church e.g. Women's League are required to report on their activities.

10.1.6 Resolutions should be sent to the secretary 3 weeks before the AGM for circulation 2 weeks beforehand.

10.2 Special Meetings

In addition to the AGM a special general meeting of members of the Trebanos congregation shall be called by the secretary if so directed by the management committee or chairman, or upon signed, written request of any two trustees ~~-property or charity?-~~ or any three members of the Trebanos congregation.

10.3 Voting Procedure

Save as otherwise herein provided, all questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote thereat. The decision to ballot by show of hands or on paper shall be at the discretion of the presiding chair of the meeting. No person shall exercise more than one vote. There shall be no postal votes or voting by proxy. In case of an equality of votes the chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

11. Finance

11.1 All moneys raised by or on behalf of the Trebanos congregation shall be applied to further the objects of the Trebanos congregation and for no other purpose PROVIDED THAT nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of reasonable and proper remuneration to any Minister or employee of the Trebanos congregation or the repayment to members of the management Committee or of any support group appointed under Clause 9 hereof of reasonable out of pocket expenses.

11.2 The Honorary Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Trebanos congregation.

11.3 The accounts shall be audited at least once a year by the auditor or auditors appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

11.4 An audited statement of the accounts for the last Financial Year shall be submitted by the Committee to the Annual General Meeting as aforesaid.

11.5 Bank accounts shall be operated in the name of the Trebanos congregation with a bank regulated by the Financial Services Authority as the management Committee shall decide. The Committee shall authorise in writing the Treasurer, the Secretary of the Trebanos congregation and two members of the Committee to sign cheques on behalf of the Trebanos congregation. All cheques must be signed by not less than two of the four authorised signatories.

12. Amendments to the constitution

Amendments to the constitution can only be made at a special meeting called for that purpose. Any changes to the Constitution must be endorsed by two thirds of those present who are eligible to vote.

At least 30 clear days notice in writing of such a meeting, setting forth the terms of the alteration, shall be made by public notice and announcement to the members of the Trebanos congregation PROVIDED THAT no alteration shall be made which would have the effect of causing the Trebanos congregation to cease to be a Charity at law.

13. Appointment of employees

13.1 Recruitment of any employee must be via open competition requiring advertisement with a Job Description which sets out the duties of the post. Interview will be held by a panel chosen by management committee.

13.2 All persons appointed will have a written contract of employment.

14. Dissolution and Disposal of the Congregation's Assets

14.1 The decision to close one of the chapels (either Gellionnen or Graig) will be based on a resolution carried by a two thirds majority at an Annual or Special meeting.

14.2 The decision to close both chapels and dissolve the charity will be based on a resolution carried by a two thirds majority at an Annual or Special meeting. In such circumstances every effort will be made to relocate the congregation. The management committee shall have the power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the congregation. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be transferred to the the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Inc, Essex Hall, London or a successor body with similar aims to hold in trust to be used for the advancement of Unitarianism in the South East Wales District with preference for future development in the Swansea Valley area.