



Constitution - Version 4.0 (01/07/2025)

Stour Church | Church, but Different

Covenant

"We, this Church of Christ, having given ourselves to the Lord and to one another, according to the will of God, do promise and covenant and dedicate ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in love and in all the laws and ordinances of Christ, according to the commands of His blessed Gospel, through the same Jesus Christ so strengthening us. Amen."

Article 1 - Name & Governance

1. The name of this fellowship shall be Stour Church
2. Stour Church is a fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ, gathered to worship, serve, and grow together under His authority
3. Governance of this Church rests in the Church Meeting, being the Members gathered under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to seek the mind of Christ
4. The Standing Orders set out the detailed procedures by which this Constitution is implemented. Where any conflict arises, the Constitution shall take precedence

Article 2 - Mission Statement

The purpose of this Church is to glorify God and serve His kingdom by:

1. Maintaining a centre of Christian worship, teaching, and community life within the local area
 2. Supporting and sharing fellowship with other churches of Jesus Christ throughout the world
 3. Proclaiming the Gospel, encouraging personal faith in Christ, and nurturing spiritual growth among believers
- Undertaking any lawful activities that advance these aims, as may be determined by the Church Meeting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Article 3 - Role and Responsibility of Members

Membership of Stour Church is open to all who profess faith in Jesus Christ and are willing to support the life, witness, and ministry of the Church. Members commit to:

1. Regular prayer and private devotion
2. Gathering for worship and the Lord's Supper
3. Supporting the ministry and mission of the Church practically and prayerfully
4. Working together in unity under the leadership of the Holy Spirit
5. Attending Church Meetings regularly

Article 4 - The Pastor

The Pastor shall have responsibility for the spiritual leadership, teaching, and pastoral care of the Church. The Pastor is appointed by the Church Meeting in accordance with the procedures defined in the Standing Orders, and serves for an indefinite term, continuing in office by mutual agreement between the Pastor and the Church. The Church may request the Pastor's resignation in accordance with the procedures defined in the Standing Orders.

Article 5 - The Diaconate

The Diaconate shall consist of the Pastor, the Church Secretary, the Church Treasurer, and such additional Deacons as the Church Meeting shall appoint. The Diaconate is responsible for the general day-to-day running, organisation, and administration of the Church, acting under the authority of the Church Meeting. The Diaconate serves to support the Pastor in matters of worship, care, and leadership. The process for the election, co-option, or removal of Deacons shall be defined in the Standing Orders.

Article 6 - The Church Meeting

1. The Church Meeting shall be the principal decision-making body of Stour Church:
2. A quorum for any Church Meeting shall be 25% of the total Membership
3. All decisions shall require a simple majority (51%) of those present and voting, unless otherwise specified in the Standing Orders
4. Meetings shall be conducted prayerfully, seeking unity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit
5. The frequency and format of Church Meetings shall be defined in the Standing Orders

Article 7 - Finance and Property

1. All funds and property of Stour Church shall be used solely to advance its Christian mission and purposes
2. The Church Treasurer shall maintain accurate accounts of all income and expenditure, which shall be reviewed annually and presented at the AGM
3. The Church Meeting shall approve all budgets and financial decisions of major significance
4. No Member shall receive any financial benefit from the Church other than legitimate reimbursement of expenses incurred in its service
5. If Stour Church ceases to exist, all remaining assets and property shall, after settlement of debts and liabilities, be transferred to another Christian charity or fellowship with similar aims and beliefs, as determined by the Church Meeting

Article 8 - Safeguarding and Conduct

1. Stour Church is committed to providing a safe environment for all people and shall maintain appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in line with national and statutory guidance
2. All those working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults shall undergo relevant background checks and training as required by law and the Church's Safeguarding Policy
3. The Church expects all Members and leaders to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Christian faith, integrity, and respect for others

Article 9 - Conflict Resolution

1. The Church affirms its call to unity and reconciliation in all matters
2. Where disagreements arise, Members are encouraged first to seek personal resolution through prayer and conversation
3. If unresolved, the matter should be referred to the Pastor and Diaconate for mediation
4. Where necessary, the issue may be brought before the Church Meeting for prayerful and confidential consideration
5. All proceedings should reflect the spirit of Matthew 18:15–17, seeking restoration and peace

Article 10 - Amendments

1. This Constitution may be amended at any Church Meeting, provided that all Members are notified in writing at least two weeks in advance and that notice of intention appears on the agenda
2. Amendments require a simple majority (51%) of those present and voting
3. Any change takes effect from the close of that Meeting