**Constitution for the Congregations in Covenanted Partnership at Kelsall:**

**This Covenanted Partnership shall be known as Kelsall Churches**

 The partner churches are:

* St Philip’s Parish Church, Kelsall
* Kelsall Methodist Church

The Partnership is supported and endorsed by the Diocese of Chester and the Chester and Delamere Forest Methodist Circuit for encouragement, advice and overview and also by Churches Together in Cheshire, as they travel together in pursuit of even greater unity. This agreement is the tool to allow the appointment of a single minister to be shared by the two churches, to be known as the Ecumenical Minister. This document identifies that which should be regarded as a minimum requirement of the Partnership and should not preclude or prevent further and deeper shared work to be developed as agreed in the Annual Covenant.

**Christian Initiation**

The partner churches shall continue to follow their own practice with regard to baptism, confirmation and church membership.

**Ministry**

Pastoral responsibility for the churches and the community which they serve shall be exercised by the partner churches collectively. The Ecumenical Minister shall exercise within this collective ministry the specific roles to which s/he has been appointed, and shall be regarded and authorised as both the Vicar of St. Philip’s and the Minister of Kelsall Methodist Church.

Those responsible for the appointment of ministers shall seek to select persons who will respect, support and develop the Partnership and the ecumenical nature of the appointment shall be clearly indicated in any ‘job description’.

When a ministerial vacancy occurs, or a new ministerial appointment is in view, there shall be consultation between the two churches. It shall be the aim of those responsible for the appointment of ministers that the ecumenical consultation shall include

* the involvement of representatives of the partner church in the procedures of the appointing denomination as far as is possible and permitted;
* the opportunity for existing minister(s) to meet with prospective candidates and to pass on their opinions to those responsible for making the appointment;

Ministers shall be subject to the normal discipline of the denomination to which each belongs.

The cost of ordained ministry shall be determined having regard to the appropriate stipend, accommodation cost and charges, travel, training and other accepted expenses. The cost shall be divided between the partner churches on a basis agreed across the partner churches and their denominational authorities.

Areas of shared activity shall be agreed in the annual covenant between the two churches. A partner church shall not act individually in any of the areas of ministry listed therein unless there are compelling reasons to do so and that church has, in advance, explained those reasons to appropriate representatives of the partner church.

The Ecumenical Minister’s time shall be managed by the Ecumenical Minister according to the pastoral needs of the community and of the individual churches, and of agreed patterns of worship.

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**Worship**

The partner churches shall continue to follow their own practice with regard to worship. The members of either church shall be welcome to attend worship in the partner church and shall be encouraged to take part in worship in all of the ways permitted by that parent denomination. Normally at least one joint service per month will be held, but there will be special services which may also be joint services.

The churches will agree service times on a Sunday to enable the Ecumenical Minister to attend both main services if required. The two churches will continue to share their work with children and young people.

Generally, the Ecumenical Minister will be expected to be in St Philip’s for three out of four Sundays.

**Decision-Making**

The partner churches shall continue to follow their own practice with regard to decision-making processes, and representation at denominational meetings and events.

Each partner church shall invite representatives of the other partner church to attend meetings of its decision-making body as observers.

A small representative group, to be known as the Partnership Enabling Group, will meet at least twice a year to review progress, eliminate problems and or identify areas for improved ministry to the village, and will also meet when called upon by either of the church councils.

**Buildings**

The partner churches shall continue to use, maintain and develop the buildings for which they already have responsibility.

Any partner church considering a change of use of its buildings, items of maintenance involving expense in excess of £5000, or the construction of new buildings, shall, in the first instance, share its proposals with the other partner churches. St Philip’s modernisation project will not be covered by this and will proceed.

Every effort shall be made to share the use of buildings and to enter into agreements, formal or informal, to do so. Each church will make their church available to the other at the usual going rate, when possible.

**Ongoing Development**

The two denominations shall ensure that every five years the Partnership shall be reviewed with reference to its operation and the terms of this constitution. In the first instance this will be undertaken after the first four years to coincide with Methodist settlement timescales.

The Partnership may only be terminated with the approval of the relevant denominational authorities. A partner church may only withdraw from the Partnership with the approval of its own denominational authority.

This constitution may only be amended by a proposal of the Partnership Enabling Group. No amendment shall take effect until it has been approved by both the partner churches and their denominational authorities.

Signed on…………………………………… (date)

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On behalf of St Philip’s Parish Church

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On behalf of Kelsall Methodist Church

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On behalf of Chester Diocese On behalf of Chester and Delamere

 Forest Methodist Circuit

Constitutional Agreement 24/04/19