

History:

Our new Constitution was approved on 29 March 2009, after several years intensive work.

Previously, churches that were members of certain denominations were exempt from charity registration (or were included in an overarching registration). LEPs were a particularly confusing issue and poorly understood by the Charity Commission (and churches?). Charity commission registration is now compulsory for us, and overdue. The main barrier to application is our Constitution. There is a standard text which we must adopt.

In the defence of the Constitution stalwarts, this standard text was defined (by Churches Together in England, and approved for Charity Commission use by Local Ecumenical Partnerships) after our constitution work was already done (and in fact incorporates much of the learning we went through!)

Process:

Upshot – we, the Partnership, need to approve a new new constitution.

Our current constitution (the old new March 2009 one), has Section 14 Amendments, at

http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/constitution/c08_c14amendments.html

The Constitution of the West Swindon and The Lydiards Church Partnership may be amended by agreement of the

- Partnership Council, and of either
 - the Partnership Annual General Meeting, or
 - a Special General Meeting (of those qualified to vote at AGMs) called for that purpose.
- Such proposed amendments shall also require the approval of the appropriate Parent Body committees and the Sponsoring Body.

Approvals by the Parent Body committees are in progress (3 of 4 received). The Sponsoring Body approval is almost inevitable. We, Partnership Council need to adopt and agree it, ideally tonight. Then we need to get it approved by a Partnership General Meeting, either the Annual one in March 2011 or a Special one.

So to the future:

The new new text is broadly similar to, but more comprehensive than, the old new text. There are some terminology changes that the Charity Commission insist on, but we only need to use them in the Guidance Document (as they call our Constitution). Anything important from our old new Constitution that's not otherwise captured in the new new, will be incorporated into local documents: standing orders, vision statements etc, which we are encouraged to have.

The new constitution is in 3 parts. No, I don't know why either.

- Statement of Ecumenical Vision.
This is exactly the same text as the old new Declaration of Intent
- Constitution
This is all standard required text, we have altered as much as we could in the red/brown sections only, where we have the option to do so.
- Constitution Schedule
This is all standard required text, we have altered as much as we could in the red/brown sections only, where we have the option to do so.

Feel free to compare with the old new at

<http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/constitution/constitution09.html>