

**CONSTITUTION OF THE SIBYLS**  
**Christian Spirituality Transgender Group**

**Adopted on the.....day of.....2019**

**1) Name**

The name of the Group is "The SIBYLS"

**2) Definition**

The term "transgender" is used in this constitution to describe all people whose gender identity does not conform to the sex that is assigned to them at birth: It includes intersex people, and all people who cannot accept or associate themselves with the binary definitions of gender which are enforced by society. The term encompasses people who may call themselves by a variety of names. These include: "trans\*", "trans", "transsexual", "transvestite", "cross-dresser", "gender queer", "non-binary", "non-gender", "gender diverse", "gender variant" and more.

**3) Objectives**

The Group is a UK-based confidential Christian Spirituality Group for transgender people, their partners and other supporters. In furtherance of this the Objectives of the Group are:

- a) *To fulfil the two great commandments of Jesus: To love God and love one another.*
- b) *To nurture and develop all members' faith.*
- c) *To advance and enable forms of spiritual expression and worship in safe, secure and confidential environments where members are able to express themselves in ways which are true to their own identities and their Christian beliefs,*
- d) *To promote greater knowledge, self-acceptance and understanding amongst the Group's members.*
- e) *To generate increased understanding of transgender issues and acceptance of transgender people amongst Churches and Congregations in society at large.*
- f) *To increase knowledge through debates, research and campaigns related to gender identity and faith, to nurture links between denominations and all LGBTI Groups of faith, and to promote the interests of transgender people in any such campaigns and debates.*

#### **4) Activities and Strategies**

The Group shall fulfil the Objectives of the Group by using all means, strategies and approaches which are appropriate to a charitably-based United Kingdom organisation; within the area of the United Kingdom and beyond it, recognising the limitations imposed by the voluntary nature of its membership and as its resources allow.

These may include, but are not confined to the following:

- a) *To provide safe and private spaces in which people are able to be who they are, also where they can explore their concerns and be true to their own identities*
- b) *To provide ways of maintaining and nurturing the faith of members*
- c) *To create confidential networks of members*
- d) *To give support to all transgender people, families, friends and other supporters*
- e) *To give spiritual support including times of worship, teaching, prayer and learning*
- f) *To develop long-term caring relationships among Sibyls and to provide an informed and concerned source of help and support in times of crisis*
- g) *To enable fellowship, friendship and fun for transgender people and their families, friends and other supporters in the context of an inclusive Christian faith*
- h) *To keep abreast of debates and campaigns related to gender identity and faith, and to represent transgender people*
- i) *To use its resources and those of its supporters to advance self-knowledge and self-acceptance and to promote the wider acceptance for transgender people in churches and wider society*
- j) *To supply resources for churches and church leaders who need assistance and information to respond pastorally to gender variance issues among members of Christian communities*
- k) *To further the exploration and the expression of transgender understanding and experience through research, theological writing, drama, art, music and performance*

#### **5) Administration**

Subject to the matters set out below the Group and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the Executive Committee, as described in paragraph 9 of this constitution (“the Executive Committee”) at all times in accordance with the requirements of United Kingdom law and also in compliance with the regulations of the relevant Charity Registration requirements within the United Kingdom , or if not so registered, the charitable status applying to the Group at that time.

## **6) Powers**

In furtherance of the objectives of the Group, the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers:

1. To raise funds, and to invite and receive contributions.
2. To invest the Group's funds of less than £50,000 in a high interest account, or if the amount exceeds £50,000, power to invest following advice from a qualified financial advisor;
3. To buy, take on lease, or rental agreement, or in exchange, any property necessary for the achievement of the Objectives and to maintain and equip it for use;
4. Subject to any consents required by law to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Group;
5. Subject to any consents required by law to borrow money and to charge all or any part of the property of the Group with repayment of the money so borrowed;
6. Power to employ such staff (who shall not be members of the Executive Committee) as are necessary for the proper pursuit of the Objectives and to make all reasonable and necessary provision, if applicable, for the payment of pensions and superannuation for staff and their dependants;
7. To co-operate with charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the Objectives or of similar purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;
8. To establish or support any charitable trusts, Groups, organisations or institutions formed for all or any of the Group's Objectives;
9. To appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Executive Committee may think fit;
10. To make the payment of any premium in respect of any indemnity insurance to cover the liability of the Executive Committee (or any of them) which by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to them in respect of any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust of which they may be guilty in relation to the Group.
11. To operate a bursary fund to subsidise the cost of attending Sibyls events, counselling, support etc. for those in financial need, hardship or distress;
12. To do all such other lawful things that are necessary for the achievement of the Group's Objectives.

## **7) Membership & Affiliates**

- (1) Individual membership of The Group shall be open to any person aged 18 or above who:
  - a) Is committed to furthering the Objectives of the Group,
  - b) Has agreed not to act in any discriminatory, prejudiced or oppressive way,

- c) Has agreed to keep confidential all personal information about Group members and their confidential discussions,
- d) Has paid any individual annual subscription as may be laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee'
- e) Meets the requirements of clause 7 (2) below.

(2) People must apply to join The Group

- a) Those who wish to join The Group shall first make contact with, or be contacted by, The Group Membership or Communications Officer (or equivalent).
- b) All applicants must sign and return a Confidentiality Agreement as laid down from time to time by The Group before their membership can be approved.
- c) Only those applicants who are invited to join the Group may become members.

(3) Every individual member shall have one vote on any question to be decided at a general meeting of the Group.

(4) The Executive Committee may by a majority vote and for good reason terminate the membership of The Group of any individual: provided that the individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend, (who may not speak on their behalf without the express consent of the Executive Committee), before the final decision is made. Upon this termination, such a member shall be deemed to be no longer in good standing with the Group and shall be denied all rights and privileges encompassed in clauses 7 (1) to 7(10) of this Constitution.

(5) Any member who may be considered to have brought the Group into disrepute, or who has acted to breach the confidentiality requirements of the Group or who has acted in any way to breach the confidentiality and security requirements of any individual Group member shall be subject to the disciplinary requirements laid out in section 7 of this constitution.

(6) The Group shall ensure that with regard to all its services, activities and facilities there shall be no discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, gender reassignment, gender diversity or gender non-conformity, marital status, sexual orientation or any other status protected by law.

(7) All the Group's services shall wherever practical be made available to all of its members, but services, activities and facilities shall not be available to anyone who acts in ways that are discriminatory as described above or otherwise disruptive or abusive whilst they are on the Group's premises, or taking part in the Group's activities.

(8) Termination of Membership of the Group: Any individual member of the Group shall cease to be a member:

- a) If they directly resign as a member of the Group
- b) At the Executive Committee's discretion, if they fail to respond to written, verbal, or email communications sent by the Group or if the Group is unable to contact them through the contact details

which they have registered with the Group, for a period of one year or other deadline in accordance with legislation.

- c) If they notify the Executive Committee of a wish to resign.
- d) If membership is terminated as a result of disciplinary procedures taken by the Executive Committee in accordance with clauses 7 (4) and 7(5) above.

(9) The Executive Committee may at its discretion appoint Honorary Membership of The Group to individual people who have rendered significant services to the Group. Honorary Members shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of ordinary Group members and be subject to the same disciplinary procedures. However Honorary Membership shall ordinarily be for life or until the Honorary Member resigns. No annual subscription will be required.

(10) The Executive Committee may appoint people and organisations who have given service to The Group as “Affiliates” of the Group. Affiliates will be provided with information distributed by The Group. Affiliates may also attend selected meetings organised by The Group. However they will not be permitted to take part in the governance of the Sibyls or to vote on the Group’s business. The Affiliate status of the person or organisation may be revoked by the Group Committee at any time. No reason need be given for such revocation.

## **8) Honorary Officers and Periods of Service**

(1) At each Annual General Meeting of the Group the members shall elect from amongst themselves a Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Membership/Communications Officer as the Honorary Officers, who shall hold office on the Executive Committee from the conclusion of that meeting for a maximum period of two years, or if longer, measured to the first date of a subsequent quorate Annual or Special General meeting, before seeking re-election under the provisions of clause 8 (2) of this Constitution.

(2) Honorary Officers and Members of The Executive Committee may immediately seek re-election to the Executive Committee upon the expiry of the term for which they were appointed,

## **9) The Executive Committee**

(1) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than four members and not more than eight members being:

- I. Four Honorary Officers specified in the clause 8 (1) of this constitution; and
- II. Not more than four members elected at the Annual General Meeting who shall hold office for a maximum period of two years, or if longer, measured to the first date of a subsequent quorate Annual or Special General meeting
- III. The Executive Committee may, in addition, appoint not more than 2 co-opted members. Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at an ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee called under clause 12 (1) and shall take effect from the end of that meeting unless the appointment is to fill a place which has not then been vacated, in which case the appointment shall run from the date when the post becomes vacant.

(2) When a vacancy has been created by the failure to elect a person to a specific post during the Annual or Special General Meeting, or to resignation, death or continued indisposition of one of the Honorary Officers of the Group, the Executive Committee shall have power to elect from within itself another member of the Executive Committee to that post. The person so elected to that position shall continue in office until the next Annual General Meeting takes place.

(3) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

(4) Nobody shall be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee who is under 18 years of age.

(5) The Executive Committee may at its discretion appoint ex-officio members of the Committee to fulfil particular roles. At the discretion of the Executive Committee such Ex-Officio members may be invited to attend the Executive Committee meetings to discuss relevant matters but they will not be entitled to vote.

#### **10) Termination of Membership of the Executive Committee**

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

(1) Ceases to be a member of the Group.

(2) Is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from all their meetings held within a period of one year and the Executive Committee then resolve that his or her office be vacated.

(3) Notifies the Executive Committee of a wish to resign

(4) The executive committee resolve for good reason that they shall be dismissed from the Executive Committee, provided that any disciplinary action is taken under the provisions laid out under clauses 7 (4) and 7 (5) of this Constitution. Any person dismissed from the Executive Committee, but not from membership shall not lose his or her good standing with the Group.

#### **11) The Financial Interests of the Executive Committee Members of the Group.**

The income and property of the Group shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the Group's Objectives and no part shall be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly, by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit, to members of the Group, and no member of the Executive Committee shall be appointed to any office in the Group paid by salary or fees or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth from the Group: provided that nothing in this document shall prevent any payment in good faith by the Group of the following

(1) The usual professional charges for business done by any member of the Executive Committee acting outside his or her role as a member of the Executive Committee (or by a partner of his or hers), when instructed by the Group to act in a professional capacity on its behalf: provided that at no time shall a majority of the members of the Executive Committee benefit under this provision and that a member of the Executive Committee shall withdraw from any meeting at which his or her appointment or remuneration (or that of his or her partner) is under discussion;

- (2) Reasonable and proper remuneration for any services rendered to the Group by any member, officer or servant of the Group who is not a member of the Executive Committee;
- (3) Interest on money lent by any member of the Group or member of the Executive Committee at a reasonable and proper rate per annum not exceeding 2 per cent more than the published base lending rate of a clearing bank to be selected by the members of the Executive Committee;
- (4) Reasonable and proper rent for premises demised or let by any member of the Group or a member of the Executive Committee;
- (5) Any payment made in relation to clauses 6(10) and 6(11) of this document;
- (6) Payment to any member of the Executive Committee of reasonable and properly incurred out-of-pocket expenses.

## **12) Meetings and Proceedings of the Executive Committee**

- (1) The Executive Committee shall hold ordinary meetings as required. A special meeting may be called at any time by any two members of the Executive Committee upon not less than 14 days' notice being given to other members of the Executive Committee of the matters to be discussed.
- (2) The chairperson elected at the Annual General Meeting shall act as chairperson at meetings of the Executive Committee. If the chairperson is absent from any meeting, members of the Executive Committee present shall choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting before any other business is transacted.
- (3) There shall be a quorum when 4 members of the Executive Committee are present at a meeting of which formal notice has been given.
- (4) Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the Executive Committee present and voting on the question, but in the case of equality of votes the chairperson of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- (5) The secretary of the Executive Committee shall keep minutes in an official register of the proceedings at meetings of the Executive Committee. (Or by a person who is delegated to do so by the Executive Committee). Such minutes shall be available for inspection by any member or affiliate organisation upon written request
- (6) The Executive Committee may from time to time may vary their procedures for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings, and the custody of documents.
- (7) The Executive Committee may appoint one or more sub-committees consisting of one or more members of the Executive Committee plus members co-opted from the general membership for the purpose of making any inquiry or supervising or performing any function or duty which, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a such a Group. Minutes of all sub-committee meetings are to be kept and submitted to the Executive Committee for inclusion in the official register and for the endorsement of their actions.

### **13) Receipts and Expenditure**

(1) The funds of the Group, including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Executive Committee at such bank as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide. All payments made from the account must be authorised by at least two members of the Executive Committee.

(2) The funds belonging to the Group shall be applied only in furthering the Objectives of the Group.

### **14) Accounts**

The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations to manage the Group in a trustworthy manner with regard to:

(1) The keeping of accounting records for the Group;

(2) The presentation of summary balance and current account statements at each ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee

(3) The preparation of annual statements of account for the Group to be presented at an Annual General Meeting; and circulated to members by publishing in the Group's Newsletter or by other means if this is not available.

(4) The auditing or independent examination of the statements of account of the Group.

### **15) Annual General Meeting**

(1) The Executive Committee shall arrange an Annual General Meeting to take place within the first eight months of each financial year (which is the calendar year) or as soon as practicable thereafter. The meeting may also be deferred to coincide with another Group event.

(2) Each Annual General Meeting shall be called by the Executive Committee. The secretary shall give at least 21 days' notice of the annual general meeting to all members of the Group and include the time, place and date of the Annual General Meeting.

(3) There shall be a quorum when at least eight members of the Group are present.

(4) Where an Annual General Meeting is not quorate, the members of the Executive Committee and the Honorary Officers of the Group who are due to seek re-election shall continue in office until a subsequent Special or Annual General Meeting is held.

(5) At the discretion of the chairperson, the quorum requirements for any subsequent meeting need not be applied.

(5) Before any other business is transacted at the inaugural annual general meeting of the Group, the persons present shall appoint a chairperson of the meeting from the existing temporary committee. The appointed current chairperson of the executive committee will be the chairperson of subsequent annual general meetings. But should it be the case that he or she is not present before any other business is transacted, the persons present shall appoint a chairperson for that meeting.



- (6) The Executive Committee shall present to each Annual General meeting the report and accounts of the Group for the preceding financial year.
- (7) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by members of the Group by email, or in writing, and must be in the hands of the secretary of the Executive Committee at least 7 days before the annual general meeting. Nominations may however be made during the annual general meeting if the numbers of nominees at the start of the meeting are fewer than the number of available places to be filled.
- (8) Nominations for the Executive Committee will only be accepted from those members who qualify by having been members of the Group for at least the previous six months, and who have previously attended at least 3 ordinary meetings (not necessarily as members) of the Group.
- (9) Where vacancies still need to be filled, nominations for all Honorary Officers and members of the Executive Committee may be accepted at the Annual or Special General Meeting. Where no nominations are received for any one or more Honorary Officers, the Annual General Meeting shall have the power to elect an extra Ordinary Member to the Committee, provided that the size of the committee shall not exceed eight members. Any proposal for any one or more Honorary Officers who is not elected to that specific post at the Annual General Meeting shall in its place be deemed to be a proposal for election to the Committee as an Ordinary member.
- (10) Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by secret ballot of the members held in good standing who are present at the annual general meeting. Proxy voting is also allowed from members in good standing who are unable to attend the Annual General Meeting.
- (11) Current members who have not paid their annual subscriptions, should the Group in future require them, before the time of any Annual or Special General Meeting, shall not be entitled to vote.
- (12) Notice of any business to be discussed or items for the Agenda at any Annual or Special General Meeting must be served to the secretary of the group by any member. Such notices must be received at least seven days before the meeting. This requirement may be waived during any Annual or Special General Meeting, but only at the chairperson's discretion.

## **16) Special General Meetings**

The Executive Committee may call a Special General Meeting of the Group at any time if at least six members of the Group or half of the Executive Committee members request such a meeting, in writing, stating the business to be considered. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed & the time, date and location of the meeting.

## **17) Procedure at Annual and Special General Meetings of the Group**

- (1) The secretary or other person specially appointed by the Executive Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of the Group.
- (2) The meeting shall be subject to the same quorum requirements as those specified in clauses 15 (3)3 and 15 (5).

(3) Annual and Special General Meetings shall be open to all, but only the current members of the Group who satisfy the requirements of paragraph 7 and clause 15(11) of this Constitution will be entitled to vote.

## **18) Notices**

Any notice required to be served on any member of the Group shall be served by the secretary or the Executive Committee on any member, personally, by post, or by email, in accordance with how the member has instructed communications to be sent, and any communication so sent shall be deemed to have been received within 4 days of despatch.

## **19) Alterations to the Constitution**

The Constitution may only be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a quorate Annual or a Special General Meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration(s) proposed. Clause 15 (5) will not be applied

## **20) Indemnity**

The members of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to an indemnity out of the assets of the Group against all losses and liabilities *properly* incurred by them (incurred in good faith) in the management of the affairs of the Group *so long as all losses and liabilities properly incurred can be met from the Group's funds.*

*The Executive Committee is authorised by this constitution to arrange, as it sees fit, any additional insurance to cover any further legal demands in accordance with clause 5 (12) of this constitution.*

## **21) Dissolution**

If a majority of the Executive Committee decides it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Group, it shall call a meeting of all members in good standing of the Group of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed) shall be given.

If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Executive Committee shall have power to realise any assets on behalf of the Group.

Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having similar objectives to the Group as the members of the Executive Committee may determine, or failing that, shall be applied for some other charitable purpose.

## **22) Arrangements until first Annual General Meeting**

Until the first annual general meeting takes place this constitution shall take effect as if references in it to the Executive Committee were references to the persons whose signatures appear at the bottom of this document.

**23) Adoption of the Constitution**

This constitution was adopted on the date mentioned at the start of this document at a general meeting of the Group held at

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The constitution shall be deemed to come into effect on the date of:

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Signed ..... CHAIRPERSON

..... SECRETARY

..... TREASURER