

## **Proud Catholics – Constitution**

### **1. Name**

The name of the group will be **Proud Catholics**.

### **2. Aims**

The aims of Proud Catholics will be:

- To support Catholics in the Hexham and Newcastle Diocese who identify as LGBT+ or who are questioning their sexual or gender identity.
- To provide a forum in which LGBT+ Catholics, those questioning their sexual or gender identity, and their friends, family and other allies, can encourage one another both in faith and in acceptance of each person's unique identity.
- To organise a varied programme of meetings with a range of activities, providing spiritual nourishment and opportunities for social connection.
- To provide confidential support, information and signposting to Catholic family members of individuals identifying as LGBT+ or questioning their sexual or gender identity.
- To share information about LGBT+ matters within the wider Catholic Church.
- To make connections with other groups supporting LGBT+ Catholics.

### **3. Membership**

Membership will be open to anyone who:

- is over the age of 18; and
- has attended at least one meeting of Proud Catholics; and
- supports the aims of Proud Catholics.

Membership will begin as soon as the membership form has been received.

There will be no membership fee.

A list of all members will be kept by the Secretary.

#### **Ceasing to be a Member**

Members may resign at any time in writing to the Secretary.

Anyone not attending at least one Proud Catholics meeting in the twelve months prior to an Annual General Meeting will be deemed to have resigned.

#### **Expectations of Members**

Members are expected to behave in a respectful manner. Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted. Anyone behaving in an offensive way or breaking the equal opportunities policy may be asked not to attend further meetings or to resign from the group if an apology is not given or the behaviour is repeated. The individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.

## **4. Equal Opportunities**

Proud Catholics will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, sexuality, gender reassignment, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.

## **5. Officers and Committee**

The business of the group will be carried out by a Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee will meet as necessary and not less than four times a year.

The Committee will consist of 4 to 6 members, and be composed of 4 Officers and up to 2 Committee Members. Up to 2 additional members may be co-opted onto the Committee at the discretion of the Committee.

The Officers' roles will be as follows:

- Chair, who chairs both General and Committee meetings and coordinates the programme of activities
- Secretary, who is responsible for the taking of minutes, the distribution of all papers, and keeping records of members
- Publicity Officer, who is responsible for maintaining and updating the Proud Catholics website and social media pages
- Treasurer, who is responsible for maintaining accounts

In the event of an Officer standing down during the year a replacement will be elected by the next General Meeting of members.

Any Committee Member not attending a meeting without apology for four months will be contacted by the Committee and asked if they wish to resign.

Committee meetings will be open to any member of Proud Catholics wishing to attend as a silent observer.

## **6. Meetings**

### **Annual General Meetings**

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within fifteen months of the previous AGM, wherever possible.

The AGM will be included on the calendar at least one month in advance. All members will be sent the details of the meeting (venue, date, time and agenda) at least 2 weeks before the date of the meeting.

Nominations for the committee must be made to the Secretary by email or post, or in person, using the form provided, at least seven days before the meeting. Each nomination must be proposed and seconded by a member.

Members will vote for each Officer and Committee Member by secret ballot during the AGM. A nominee will be elected by simple majority, whether or not there is more than one candidate for their role. In the case of a tie, the current Chair shall have an additional casting vote.

The quorum for the AGM will be 20% of the membership or 6 members, whichever is the greater number.

Non-members may attend and speak at the AGM, but may not vote.

At the AGM:

- The Committee will present a report of the work of Proud Catholics over the year.
- The Committee will present the accounts of Proud Catholics for the previous year.
- The Officers and Committee for the next year will be elected.
- Any proposals or matters given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

### **Extraordinary General Meetings**

The Secretary will call an Extraordinary General Meeting at the request of the majority of the Committee or at least four other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.

The meeting will take place within twenty-eight days of the request.

All members will be given two weeks' notice of such a meeting by email or text message, giving the venue, date, time and agenda.

The quorum for the Extraordinary General Meeting will be 20% of the membership or 8 members, whichever is the greater number.

### **Committee Meetings**

Committee meetings may be called by the Chair or Secretary. Committee members must receive notice of meetings at least 7 days before the meeting.

The quorum for Committee meetings is three Committee members.

## **7. Rules of Procedure for meetings**

All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.

If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the Chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.

## **8. Finances**

An account will be maintained on behalf of Proud Catholics at a bank agreed by the committee.

Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household. All payments will be signed by two of the signatories.

- For cheque payments, the signatories will sign the cheque.
- For other payments (such as BACS payments, cash withdrawals, debit card payments or cash payments), a requisition note will be signed by two signatories, and held by the treasurer.

Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at the Annual General Meeting.

All money raised by or on behalf of Proud Catholics is only to be used to further the aims of the group, as specified in item 2 of this constitution.

## **9. Amendments to the Constitution**

Amendments to the Constitution may only be made at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting.

Any proposal to amend the Constitution must be given to the Secretary in writing or by email. Brief information about the proposal must then be circulated with the notice of meeting.

Any proposal to amend the Constitution will require a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

## **10. Dissolution**

If the Committee decides that it is necessary to close down the group, it may call an Extraordinary General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group.

If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The organisation will be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

This constitution was agreed by a majority of members of Proud Catholics on:

Date 01/12/2020

Amended at AGM on 16/03/2021.

Amended at AGM on 16/05/2023.