

**The**  
**Unaffiliated Congregational**  
**Churches Charity**  
CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 273854

**2017/2018 Handbook**

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**EXECUTIVE OFFICER:**  
REV. F. WROE  
E-MAIL:UNCONCHURCHAR@GMAIL.COM



# Introduction

The 1972 URC Act made provision for continuing Congregational churches to receive a fair share of the accumulated assets of the Congregational Church of England and Wales (CCEW) (formerly the Congregational Union of England and Wales) and of the thirty-two County Union incorporated Bodies. After considerable discussion between representatives of the United Reformed Church and the continuing Congregational churches, general agreement was reached on what was a fair allocation of the assets whereupon the Charity Commission prepared a Scheme for operating and administering the shared assets of CCEW. This Scheme was sealed on the 4 January 1977 and some of the main provisions for Unaffiliated Congregational Churches are listed in the next section. An Unaffiliated Congregational church is the term used by the Charity Commission to define a continuing Congregational church, which has not joined the Congregational Federation or an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational churches. By 1994 the accumulated assets of the last of the thirty-two former County Unions were apportioned thus bringing to an end a process that lasted for over twenty years. It also included the assets of other funds which were formerly administered by the CCEW and the United Reformed Church. It can be said that the interests of all the continuing Congregational churches have been well provided for as a result of this process: but it is a particular cause for gratitude that those of the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches have been catered for. Alone of the three Congregational groupings they had no formal structure to enable them to be actively involved in the negotiations in their own right. Tribute is paid in particular to two former Trustees who represented the Congregational Federation and EFCC in these negotiations with the URC but who always sought to ensure that Unaffiliated Churches received what was their right. The present strength of these Charities owes almost everything to them.

## **Congregational Principles**

Membership of Congregational churches is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 15:7). There are no baptismal requirements. Congregational churches are not democracies. Rather, believers gather together in the church

meeting to discern the mind of their master, Jesus Christ. All members are able to contribute to the making of decisions, on the principle of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9). Unanimity is what should be aimed for. (eg Matthew 18:18–20; Acts 6:2–3; 1 Corinthians 6).

Elders and deacons are chosen by the members to teach and serve (1 Timothy 3; Acts 6), but are subject to the final authority, under Christ, of the church meeting.

Most Trust Deeds of Congregational property require the minister to practice infant baptism. This may not always be the case, but if the Trust Deeds require it, then the church must at least allow infant baptism.

Fuller details of Congregational principles can be found in R.W. Dale's *Manual of Congregational Principles*, or in a shorter form in John Angell James *Christian Fellowship or the Church Member's Guide*.

# Provisions set out in the Charity Commission scheme

**SEALED 4th JANUARY 1977**

## **I. DEFINITION OF UNAFFILIATED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES**

In the Charity Commission Scheme the expression “Unaffiliated Congregational Churches” means:

- a. Congregational Churches which were in membership with the former Congregational Church in England and Wales or were members of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in the year 1966 and which on the 31st December 1975 were not member churches of the Congregational Federation or of an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches and
- b. Congregational Churches in England and Wales formed after 5th October 1972 which are not members of the Congregational Federation or of an Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

# Information for Church Secretaries

Application for grants: All listed churches are eligible to apply for grants from one or more of the Trust Funds listed above. The Trustees meet three times per year, usually in March, June and November to consider all grant applications. In the case of an emergency it may be possible for an interim decision to be made, until the next trustee meeting. All grant applications should be addressed to the Executive Officer: Revd F. Wroe, e-mail: unconchurchar@gmail.com

## INSURANCE OF CHURCH PREMISES

Many churches are insured through *The Congregational & General Insurance Co.* who often draw attention to the danger of churches who may be under-insured and being under-insured could result in an insurance claim not being fully met. It is therefore vital that churches should regularly review their insurance valuations to make sure that they are adequately covered, at present-day values, against all likely eventualities.

If any listed Unaffiliated Church has difficulty meeting the premiums for an adequate level of insurance cover on its own policies they should contact the Executive Officer to discuss the grant options that could be available through the charities.

## TRUSTESHIP OF CHURCHES

From time to time churches experience difficulty when they have individual trustees, especially when a trustee dies or moves away and as a result the number of trustees falls below that laid down by the Trust Deed.

Prior to 1972 it was usual for trustees of Congregational Churches to be appointed in one of three ways:

1. **Private Trustees.** Many churches still have such arrangements and occasionally find themselves in the position referred to in the paragraph above. New appointments have to be made to keep the Trustee Body up to strength and very often it is difficult to find the right number of people

sufficiently committed to the work of the church and of the right calibre to serve in this way. It is for this reason that many churches decided to have other arrangements by appointing an incorporated body, as in the next two paragraphs, to serve them as Trustee because once the appointment is made there is generally no need for further change.

2. **County Unions.** Many of these were incorporated bodies and were appointed Trustees instead of private Trustees.
3. **Congregational Union of England and Wales (Inc.).** When the local County Union was not an incorporated body, the national body was often appointed as Trustee.

There are at least four bodies that are empowered to act as trustees for Independent Congregational Churches that may wish to consider appointing them, these are:

**Congregational Federation Ltd**, 6 Castle Gate, NOTTINGHAM NG1 7AS. Tel: 0115 911 1450

**Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches**, PO Box 34, BEVERLEY, HU17 8YX. Tel: 01482 860324

**Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Incorporated**, 39 The Point, MARKET HARBOROUGH, LE16 7QU. Tel: 020 8681 7422

Primarily, but not exclusively, for Welsh Congregational churches:

**The Congregational Partnership Ltd**, 12 High Street, Kingswood, WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, GL12 8RS. Tel: 07917 632468, e-mail: cplsecretary@yahoo.co.uk

#### **WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING AN INDEPENDENT COMPANY AS TRUSTEE?**

1. As an incorporated body, once the Company is appointed as Trustee, there is never any need to appoint new Trustees. It is important, however, to note that if at any time a Church *were to be dissatisfied with the Company, it would always have the right to appoint new Trustees.*
2. First-class professional advice is available on investments and the Company accountant will assist in the recovery from the Inland Revenue of tax on investments. Some churches have invested in undated stocks or

shares yielding poor dividends. The Company's adviser has been able to suggest changes, which will increase income and provide larger sums on redemption.

3. Some of the advice and services provided by the above may incur a small cost however all this can be information will be supplied on application. There will be some costs involved when the transfer of trusteeship is made, *if any Church is unable to afford these transfer costs the UCCC Trustees are able to award a grant to cover all the shortfalls.*
4. In the unfortunate event of a church having to close, the appointed Trustee Company will be able to deal with the matter on behalf of the remaining church members and deacons which will relieve them of a heavy burden.
5. One important point raised by many churches who have made the move to appoint a company as trustee is whether there will be any interference in the day-to-day management of their affairs if they change trusteeship. The answer is definitely no! The appointed Company can only act within the terms of the Original Trust Deeds, and has no greater powers than the former Trustees it replaces. It can, of course, *give advice* but as is the case with all Congregational Churches, the final decision is with the Church Meeting.

*The Executive Officer, Revd F Wroe (e-mail: unconchurchar@gmail.com) will be pleased to supply any information regarding the transfer procedure.*

### **Note for Church Treasurers**

The Executive Officer, may be able to advise on national insurance, tax and recommended stipend matters for Ministers.



# A brief history of the UCCC

In 1831, the Congregational Churches in England and Wales came together to form the Congregational Union of England and Wales. This new venture was intended to bring the churches together for greater fellowship, for mutual support and to assist them in their mission to bring people to faith. The Union had no control over the churches as by their very nature, each Congregational church is independent, looking only to Christ for leadership and guidance through the local church meeting. This venture met with great success and with the other Congregational Unions, in Ireland, Scotland and the Welsh speaking union, there were about one million people present at Sunday worship a century ago in a Congregational church in the United Kingdom.

As the twentieth century progressed, the Congregational Union of England and Wales began to experience a great decline in its membership. Some believed that church unity was the way to bring new life to the church in Britain and many gave themselves to the work of bringing the different denominations together into a united church. The Congregational Union played a central role in this ecumenical movement. Some in the Congregational Union felt that a union of independent churches was an inadequate body to realise church union, and that the Union should be replaced by a national Congregational church, which itself would reflect the oneness of the Congregational churches.

Those working for church union within Congregationalism, believed that a national Congregational church would be better placed to further their ecumenical aim. So in 1966, the churches of the Congregational Union were asked to covenant together to form the Congregational Church in England and Wales. Many churches felt unable to sign such a covenant, as a national Congregational church challenged their Congregational understanding of the local church. Some twenty four churches felt so strongly about this that they left the new national church and formed An Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches in 1967. Other churches were noted as non-covenanting churches in the annual Year Book.

The movement for church union continued and in 1972, the assemblies of the

Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England voted to unite and this led to the creation of the United Reformed Church.

Each Congregational church had been invited to decide if they wanted to be a part of this united church. Over six hundred churches initially declined to become a part of the United Reformed Church. Over the next few years, about a hundred of these non uniting churches decided to join the United Reformed Church while about twenty churches that had initially joined the United Reformed Church were allowed to secede and become Congregational churches once more. This left some 550 churches that were formally in membership with the Congregational Union of England and Wales that had chosen to maintain their Congregational churchmanship.

This creation of the United Reformed Church had divided the Congregational denomination. Some who had fought for the Congregational way wanted to reconstitute the Congregational Union, and they eventually formed the Congregational Federation, and invited continuing Congregational churches to become a part of this new association. Other churches decided to become part of the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

Some 140 Congregational churches initially chose not to affiliate to any association of continuing Congregational churches, and these became known as unaffiliated Congregational churches. It seemed only right that the funds of the old Congregational Union and the local Congregational Unions should be divided so that churches could still benefit from these funds irrespective of if they had joined the United Reformed Church or remained Congregational. Funds were to be divided between the United Reformed Church, the Congregational Federation and the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. John Wilcox, the General Secretary of the Congregational Federation felt that Congregational churches who had not affiliated to any association should also benefit from the division of Congregational Union Funds. Eventually, various schemes of apportionment were drawn up to share out the assets of the old Congregational Union and now these funds would be available to support all churches, irrespective of their affiliation or otherwise. Apportionment was eventually worked out as follows:

URC	81.81%	CF	10.52%
EFCC	3.67%	UCCC	3.99%

The Charity Commission defined an unaffiliated Congregational Church as a Congregational church which was in membership of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1966 and which by 31 December 1975 were not in membership of the Congregational Federation or EFCC. New Congregational churches formed after 5 October 1972 and not affiliated to the EFCC or the CF were also eligible to be classed as unaffiliated churches.

A new charity was created to administer these apportioned funds on behalf of the unaffiliated churches. The Unaffiliated Congregational Churches Charities were to be administered by nine trustees, three to be nominated by the Congregational Federation and three by the EFCC, whilst an additional three other trustees would be co-opted from the unaffiliated churches. The first Trustees meeting of the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches Charities took place in Nottingham on 19 February 1977.

As assets of the old Congregational Union were apportioned the resources available to the UCCC grew. Today the Trustees of the UCCC hold in excess of £2,000,000 (2016 accounts) to assist the unaffiliated Congregational churches in their work and ministry. It eventually became apparent that a part time Clerk was necessary to assist the Trustees in the administration of the Charity. The Rev. John Franks was appointed to this position in March 1979 and in 1984, he was also appointed as Peripatetic Minister. This latter role involved visiting the churches to give encouragement, practical support, and some pastoral care. John Frank's visits to the churches were useful in that he was able to give first hand knowledge of the churches to the Trustees when they were considering applications for financial help from the churches.

The role of a Peripatetic Minister and later, church support workers, has exercised the Trustees over the years. The Unaffiliated Congregational Churches Charities are not an association of churches but they merely hold Trust Funds for the benefit of the churches. If churches desire support and fellowship that an Association of churches can give, the Congregational Federation and EFCC are both able to provide this and unaffiliated churches are free to join either or both of these associations. The Trustees have decided than rather employing church support workers, charitable funds are best given direct to the churches for them to use in the furthering of Christ's kingdom through their own mission and ministry.

Churches are encouraged to seek financial help from the Trustees to support their work and ministry. The Trustees hold a substantial training fund, and any member of an unaffiliated church who is considering training for ministry is encouraged to seek help from the Trust. The Trustees are also able to help retired minister and their widows.

Over the forty years since the UCCC was established, the number of unaffiliated Congregational churches has diminished. Many churches have decided to affiliate to the Congregational Federation or the EFCC. Other churches have affiliated to other denominational groupings. A number of churches have ceased to adhere to Congregational principles and practice and have therefore can no longer be described as Congregational churches, and of course, a number of churches have closed. Today there are fifty unaffiliated Congregational churches

During the forty years of the UCCC a large archive of papers and correspondence has been amassed. Over the last three years this archive has been professionally sorted and deposited at the Congregational Library in London. The Trustees felt that the work carried out by the UCCC and the churches it supports should be preserved, alongside the wider story of our Congregational denomination.

We rejoice in the work of the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches over the last forty years. The church continually changes and adapts as it seeks to fulfill Christ's great commission. So we continue to look to Christ as we go into the future and we trust that he still has much he desires to achieve through the unaffiliated churches. The Trustees of the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches Charities seek to give practical help to enable the unaffiliated churches to respond to Christ's call to go and make disciples of all people.

The longest serving Trustee, Dewi Rowlands of Ruabon Congregational Church, died in 2015. The Trustees agreed to establish the Dewi Rowlands Memorial Bursary for someone researching an aspect of Congregationalism. It was awarded for the first time in 2017 to Peter Humphreys for research on a detailed history of the growth/decline of Congregationalism/Independency in Liverpool.

A full history of the UCCC, *Stewards of God's Bounty*, can be had from the Clerk.

# List of Unaffiliated Congregational Churches

WITH ADDRESSES OF SECRETARIES AND MINISTERS

CHURCHES MARKED † ARE COUNTESSES OF HUNTINGDON

CONNEXION CHURCHES ([WWW.COFHCONNEXION.ORG.UK](http://WWW.COFHCONNEXION.ORG.UK))

MOST CHURCH BUILDINGS DO NOT HAVE POST CODES. THOSE LISTED ARE FOR  
THE PURPOSE OF GIVING APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS FOR USE WITH SATNAVS.

## **GORING-ON-THAMES†**



*Photo © Kurt C (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

High Street, Goring, Reading, RG8 9AT

[www.goringfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.goringfreechurch.org.uk)

## **MORTIMER WEST END†**



*Church website*

Mortimer West End Chapel, Chapel Lane,  
Padworth Common, Reading, RG7 4QE

[www.thechapel.org.uk](http://www.thechapel.org.uk)

## NORTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### WHADDON

Whaddon Chapel (The Selbie Memorial  
Congregational Church), Stock Lane,  
Whaddon, Milton Keynes, MK17 0LS



*Photo © Mr Biz (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### ELY†

The Countess Free Church, 10  
Chapel Street, Ely CB6 1AD  
[www.countessely.co.uk](http://www.countessely.co.uk)



*Abbzziieer, Wikimedia Commons*

## CHESHIRE COUNTY UNION

### BRADLEY

Bradley Lane/Chapel Lane, Bradley,  
Whitchurch, SY13 4QY



*Google Street View*

## DERBYSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL UNION

### CHESTERFIELD GOSPEL MISSION

Near Serpent Motors, Old Road,  
Brampton, Chesterfield, S40 2QZ



*Photo © Dave Bevis (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

### LITTLE LONGSTONE

Butts Road, Little Longstone, Bakewell  
[littlelongstonechapel.co.uk](http://littlelongstonechapel.co.uk)



*Church website*

## DEVON & CORNWALL CONGREGATIONAL UNION

### WEMBORTHY

Wembworthy Chapel,  
Chulmleigh EX18 7RU



*Google Street View*

## ESSEX COUNTY UNION

### COOKSMILL GREEN

Cooksmill Green, Writtle,  
Chelmsford, CMI 3SH  
[cooksmillgreenchurch.org](http://cooksmillgreenchurch.org)



*Church website*



## GLOUCESTERSHIRE & HEREFORDSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### CHARFIELD

72 Wotton Road, Charfield,  
Wotton-under-Edge, GL12 8SR



*Google Street View*

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE & HEREFORDSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### EBLEY†

Ebley Chapel, Chapel Lane,  
Ebley, Stroud, GL5 4TD  
[www.ebleychapel.co.uk](http://www.ebleychapel.co.uk)



*Google Street View*

## HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, ALEXANDRA ROAD



*Google Street View*

Alexandra Road, Hemel  
Hempstead, HP2 5BS  
[arcchemel.org.uk](http://arcchemel.org.uk)

### WORMLEY†



*Church website*

High Road, Broxbourne EN10 6AA  
[wormleyfreechurch.org.uk](http://wormleyfreechurch.org.uk)

## KENT COUNTY UNION

### **BELLS YEW GREEN†**

Bayham Road, Frant, Bells Yew  
Green, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9



*Google Street View*

### **CANTERBURY, BROAD OAK CHAPEL†**

Chapel Lane, Broad Oak,  
Canterbury, CT2 0



*Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion website*

# LANCASHIRE COUNTY UNION

## **BURY, FOUR LANE ENDS**

47 Harwood Road, Tottington, Bury BL8



*Photo © David Dixon (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

## **CADISHEAD**

Cadishhead Congregational Church,  
Liverpool Road, Cadishhead, M44 5AD



*Photo © Keith Williamson (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

## CHIPPING

Club Lane, Garstang Road,  
Chipping, Preston, PR3 2QH  
[chippingcongregationalchurch.org.uk](http://chippingcongregationalchurch.org.uk)



*Photo © David Dixon (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

## PICKUP BANK

Long Hey Lane, Pickup Bank,  
Darwen, BB3 3QD



*Photo © David Dixon (cc-by-sa/2.0)*

## LONDON COUNTY UNION

### HARRINGAY UNITED

Allison Road/Green Lanes,  
London, N8 0RG  
[www.hucb.org.uk](http://www.hucb.org.uk)



*Draw male, Wikimedia Commons*

## STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### ASHLEY

School Lane, Ashley, Market  
Drayton, TF9 4LF



*Google Street View*

## HANLEY, PARK

Park Church, Cauldron Road,  
Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2EB  
[park-church.uk](http://park-church.uk)



*Church website*

## SUSSEX COUNTY UNION

## SHOREHAM†

Buckingham Road/Gordon Road,  
Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 6WF  
[shorehamfreechurch.co.uk](http://shorehamfreechurch.co.uk)



*Church website*

**TURNERS HILL FREE CHURCH†**

North Street, Turners Hill,  
Crawley, RH10 4NS



*Church website*

**WIVELSFIELD, OTE HALL†**

Ditchling Road/Green Road, Wivelsfield  
Green, Haywards Heath, RH17 7QB



*Public domain*



## WILTSHIRE & EAST SOMERSET CONGREGATIONAL UNION

### EBBESBOURNE WAKE

Handley Street, Ebbesbourne  
Wake, Salisbury, SP5 5JG



*Google Street View*

## YORKSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL UNION

### BRADFORD, ALLERTON

Garforth Street, Allerton,  
Bradford, BD15 7BL  
[www.allertoncongregationalchurch.org.uk](http://www.allertoncongregationalchurch.org.uk)



*Church website*

## TOSSIDE

Mount Sion Chapel, Tosside,  
Skipton, BD23 4DF



*Google Street View*

## UNION CROFT

Halifax Road, Ambler Thorn,  
Queensbury, Bradford, BD13 2DP  
[unioncroftchapel.co.uk](http://unioncroftchapel.co.uk)



*Google Street View*

## WORRALL

10 Towngate Rd, Worrall,  
Sheffield S35 0AR



*Photo © Mick Knaption ((CC BY-SA 3.0))*

## **NORTHWALES COUNTY UNION**

### **PONTYBODKIN, CEDRON**

Corwen Road, Pontybodkin,  
Mold, CH7 4TH



*Digby James*

### **RUABON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Pont Adam, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6DT



*Digby James*

## SOUTH WALES & MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY UNION

### **BARGOED, CALFARIA/TRINITY**

Greenfield Street, Bargoed, CF81



*Google Street View*

### **BRYNMAWR, BETHESDA**

Alma Street, Brynmawr,  
Ebbw Vale, NP23 4DY



© Gerard Chamley

**CRICKADARN, HEBRON  
INDEPENDENT CHAPEL**

Crickadarn, Builth Wells, LD2 3PJ



*Google Street View*

**CROSS KEYS, TRINITY  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Trinity Hill (Gelli-Unig Place), Ponywaun,  
Cross Keys, Newport, NPI 1 7GG



*Google Street View*

**GARNDIFFAITH, SARDIS  
INDEPENDENT CHAPEL**

Varteg Road, Varteg, Pontypool, NP4 7SB



*Google Street View*

**GORSEINON, BETHEL  
EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

West Street, Gorseinon,  
Swansea, SA4 4AA  
[www.bethel-gorseinon.org.uk](http://www.bethel-gorseinon.org.uk)



*Google Street View*

**GRIFFITHSTOWN,  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Kemys Street, Griffithstown,  
Pontypool, NP4 5DJ  
[griffithstownchurch.wixsite.com/  
griff-church-website](http://griffithstownchurch.wixsite.com/griff-church-website)



*Church website*

**GROVESEND, MOUNT  
PLEASANT**

High Street, Grovesend,  
Swansea, SA4 4GU



*Google Street View*

**LAUGHARNE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

King Street, Laugharne, SA33 4RY



*Google Street View*

**LLANGATTOCK, BETHESDA**

Hillside Road, Llangattock,  
Crickhowell, NP8 1LJ  
[www.bethesda.btck.co.uk](http://www.bethesda.btck.co.uk)



*© Gerard Charmley*

**NELSON, PENUEL  
CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL**

High Street, Nelson, Treharris, CF46 6HA



*Google Street View*

**NEW INN CHAPEL**

Lancaster Road, Pontypool, NP4 0NX  
[www.newinnchapel.co.uk](http://www.newinnchapel.co.uk)



*Google Street View*

**SAUNDERSFOOT, SARDIS**

Pleasant Valley, Sardis,  
Saundersfoot, SA69 9AN



*Google Street View*

**TALYBONT-ON-USK, ABER  
INDEPENDENT CHAPEL**

Ty Newydd Ar Aber, Aber Clydach,  
Talybont-on-Usk, Brecon, LD3 7UX



*Google Street View*



**TALYBONT-ON-USK, BENAIAH**

Talybont-on-Usk, Brecon, LD3 7YS



*Google Street View*

**TREDEGAR, BETHANIA**

Southend, Tredegar, NP22 4JN



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