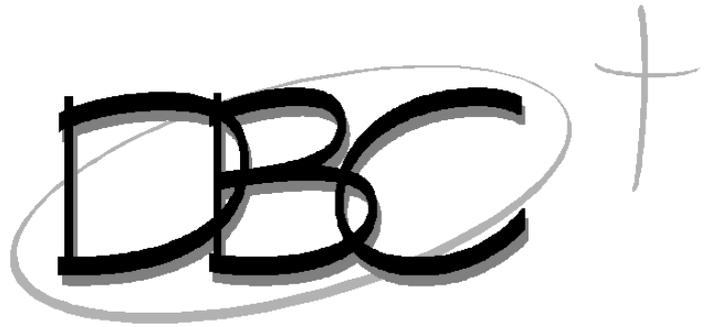


Dingwall Baptist Church

Guidelines for the admission of members and election of elders and deacons.



Introduction:

These guidelines have been produced to facilitate entry into membership and the election of elders and deacons.

Admission of church members:

There are a number of ways in which prospective members might fulfill the constitutional requirement that they satisfy the church as to their faith and repentance:

- Upon receipt of Believer's Baptism as expression of their faith and repentance.
- Whereas it would be normal for members to be baptised, as believers, there may arise situations where candidates for membership are not baptised in this manner. In such circumstances the candidate will satisfy the church of their faith and repentance. This can be done through interview by the pastor and/or members of the leadership team. A letter of transfer from another church may also help satisfy this requirement. Where appropriate, the leadership may convene baptismal/membership classes.
- In all cases the church meeting will be consulted and will make the final decision.

Requirements for elders and deacons:

The Church makes no distinction between male or female as qualification for any form of leadership or ministry.

The constitution does not prescribe a number of elders or deacons to be appointed, as the requirements will depend on the circumstances at any time. When the leadership of the church (pastor, along with serving elder and/or deacons) so determines, the procedure for election of further elders or deacons shall be instigated by announcement at a Sunday service or at the Church meeting. All candidate elders or deacons shall be members of the church in good standing, must be able to uphold the declaration of principle of the Baptist Union of Scotland and should **preferably** have been baptised as believers.

Term of office:

Elders and deacons shall be elected for a term of four years after which they should stand for re-election, if willing to and re-nominated.

Nomination process – elders

Following a period for prayer and reflection, it shall be open to members to propose names for eldership to the current elders or the pastor. The consent of candidates is not sought at this stage. The candidates are considered by the pastor and elders and, if necessary, interviewed. The names are then put to the church in a ballot.

Nomination process – deacons

Following a period for prayer and reflection, nomination papers for deacons shall be made available to members. Each candidate shall be nominated by two members, and the consent of the candidate to nomination shall be recorded on the nomination form. The forms shall be returned as directed. The candidates shall then normally be interviewed by the pastor and/or elders, and the responsibilities and duties of deacons shall be outlined. All candidates still willing to serve shall then have their names put to the church in a ballot.

Election procedure

A ballot paper shall be issued to every member. It will list the candidates in alphabetical order, with a box beside each to record the vote. The paper will state the number of votes which each member may make. This may be any number from one up to the total number of candidates, as determined by the church leadership. Ballot papers should then be returned in accordance with the instructions, which will include a date and time for their return. Papers may be returned by hand or by post to the church, or other person appointed for the purpose.

Counting of ballot papers

Following the date and time for return of ballot papers, they shall be collected and counted by two members of the leadership or others appointed by them for the purpose (the scrutineers). The total number of valid papers shall be recorded, along with the number of votes required for election. This shall be two thirds of the number of votes cast. The total number of votes cast for each candidate shall then be counted and recorded. Abstentions are not accepted: when both options for a particular candidate are blank, this shall be treated as a “no” vote. Following checking of the number of votes and agreement by the two scrutineers, a record shall be noted of whether each candidate has or has not achieved the required number of votes for election.

Announcing of results

The results of the ballot shall be announced at a church meeting. Depending on the timing of the election, candidates may be informed in advance whether or not each has been successful. Only their own result will be communicated at this time. The new deacons or elders will be accepted into post normally during the morning service on the Sunday following the announcement.

Timescale for elections

The normal programme for an election shall be as follows:

- Sunday 1 Announcement at the church (normally during morning service) of the intention to hold elections for deacons or elders.
- A period of two weeks then follow for prayer and reflection.
- Sunday 3 Nomination papers made available (for deacons); nominations open for elders
- Sunday 5 Closure of nomination period, followed by consideration of candidates and interviews if required.

- Sunday 7 Ballot papers issued.
- Sunday 9 Ballot papers returned and votes counted.

As an alternative to returning ballot papers on Sunday, it may be decided to return on the day of the church meeting.

The timing of the above will be scheduled to suit announcement at a church meeting following Sunday 9 and is subject to adjustment as necessary for holiday periods.

Amended and adopted at a Church Meeting on May 24th 2017