

General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

Executive Committee

Code of Conduct

1. INTRODUCTION

I will respect and uphold the ethos and values statement agreed by the Executive Committee of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches (GAUFCC) in their capacity as trustees:

“We Unitarians and Free Christians are united by our ethos and values. We aspire to create a loving, caring religious community within which we:

- Value people in their diversity and uniqueness.
- Encourage freedom of thought and speech.
- Support spiritual exploration.
- Create celebratory worship.
- Advocate justice, liberty, honesty, integrity, peace and love.

Hence we strive to:

- Make the best of the life we have.
- Be democratic in our practice.
- Celebrate life in its many forms.
- Respect people whose beliefs and attitudes are different from our own.”

2. GENERAL

■ I will act within the governing document of the GAUFCC and the law, and abide by the policies and procedures of the GAUFCC. This includes having a knowledge of the contents of the Constitution and relevant policies and procedures.

■ I will support the objects and mission of the GAUFCC, championing it, using any skills or knowledge I have to further that mission and seeking expert advice where appropriate.

■ I will be an active trustee, making my skills, experience and knowledge available to the GAUFCC and seeking to do what additional work I can outside trustee meetings, including sitting on sub-committees or other bodies if required.

■ I will respect organisational, Executive Committee and individual confidentiality, while never using confidentiality as an excuse not to disclose matters that should be transparent and open.

■ I will develop and maintain a sound and up-to-date knowledge of GAUFCC and its environment. This will include an understanding of how GAUFCC operates, the social, political and economic environment in which it operates and the nature and extent of its work.

■ I will use GAUFCC's resources responsibly, and when claiming expenses will do so in line with GAUFCC procedures.

- I will seek to be accountable for my actions as a trustee of GAUFCC, and will submit myself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- I accept my responsibility to ensure that GAUFCC is well run and will raise issues and questions in an appropriate and sensitive way to ensure that this is the case.

3. MANAGING INTERESTS

- I will not gain materially or financially from my involvement with GAUFCC unless specifically authorised to do so.
- I will act in the best interests of GAUFCC as a whole, and not as a representative of any group – considering what is best for GAUFCC and its present and future beneficiaries and avoiding bringing GAUFCC into disrepute.
- Unless authorised, I will not put myself in a position where my personal interests conflict with my duty to act in the interests of the organisation. Where there is a conflict of interest I will ensure that this is managed effectively in line with GAUFCC policy. I understand that a failure to declare a conflict of interest may be considered to be a breach of this code.

4. MEETINGS

- I will attend all appropriate meetings and other appointments at GAUFCC or give apologies. If I cannot regularly attend meetings I will consider whether there are other ways I can engage with GAUFCC.
- I will prepare fully for all meetings and work for the organisation. This will include reading papers, querying anything I do not understand, thinking through issues before meetings and completing any tasks assigned to me in the agreed time.
- I will actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings; contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
- I will participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision of the Executive Committee and will not act individually unless specifically authorised to do so, recognising that individual members have no authority to act independently.

5. GOVERNANCE

- I will actively contribute towards improving the governance of the Executive Committee, participating in induction and training and sharing ideas for improvement.
- I recognize that I have responsibility for the overall direction and strategic development of the GAUFCC and not operational management which is the responsibility of the Chief Officer.

6. RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

- I will endeavour to work considerately and respectfully with all those I come into contact with at GAUFCC. I will respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoid giving offence.

- I recognise that the roles of trustees, volunteers and staff of GAUFCC are different, and I will seek to understand and respect the difference between these roles. Members of the Executive Committee should not give instruction to staff and as trustees should always respect the working environment and time of staff. Where I also volunteer with the organisation I will maintain the separation of my role as a trustee and as a volunteer.
- I will seek to support and encourage all those I come into contact with at GAUFCC. In particular I recognise my responsibility to support the Convenor and the Chief Officer, the senior staff member.
- I will not make public comments about the organisation unless authorised to do so. Any public comments I make about GAUFCC will be considered and in line with organisational policy, whether I make them as an individual or as a trustee.

7. LEAVING THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- I understand that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in procedures being put in motion that may result in my being asked to resign from the Executive Committee.
- Should this happen I will be given the opportunity to be heard. In the event that I am asked to resign from the Executive Committee I will accept the majority decision of the Executive Committee in this matter and resign at the earliest opportunity.
- If I wish to cease being a trustee of GAUFCC at any time, I will inform the Convenor in advance in writing, stating my reasons for leaving.
- When my term of office comes to an end I will continue to respect the requirements of this Code of Conduct.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 15 November 2014