

*Gospel values are central to good Church Governance, and must also be applied through and in addition to these principles in the governance of His church so that God's love inspires with his Holy Spirit and infuses all we do for the glory of His Kingdom. These principles are phrased in universal manner to apply equally to all well-run organisations which serve society, whether church or secular; however, the origins of the principles are deeply rooted in Judaeo-Christian teaching which brought ancient wisdom and influence through the spread of the Gospel.*

## Principles of Good Governance

*A synthesis of the best advice on Good Governance.<sup>1</sup>*

### Good governance is participatory

Anyone affected by or interested in a decision is encouraged to participate in the decision process. Full, objective information is sought, researched and published to inform everyone for decision-making. A community's well-being results from all its members, particularly minorities and the vulnerable, feeling empowered and their interests fully represented and considered.

### Good governance is consensual

Differing interests are brought together to seek broad consensus on the best interests of the community. All voices, including minorities, the least privileged and most vulnerable, are considered in an honest attempt to mediate decisions that respect everyone, both those present at a decision, and those who can only be heard through representatives. We act as representatives of the community, including those with whom we may not agree.

### Good governance is open and transparent

People understand the decision-making process. They see clearly how and why a decision was made: what research, information, advice and consultation was considered, and which legislative requirements were followed.

### Good governance is responsive and reflective

We serve the needs of the entire community, balancing competing interests in a timely, appropriate, reflective and responsive manner. Feedback is sought, and effects of decisions researched to inform further decisions. Complaints are a vital part of feedback; clear leadership resolves them, ensuring lessons are learnt and improvements made.

### Good governance is equitable and inclusive

Cultural diversity is an asset. Continuous effort ensures that all share in the community, identify with it, and feel included. Discrimination on any ground is combated. Social cohesion, inclusion and integration are promoted. Human rights are respected.

### Good governance recruits from the largest possible pool

Clear, open processes encourage a diverse range of people to apply for appointed positions or to stand for election. Including diversity develops a greater range of skills, experience and knowledge. We avoid over-dependence on a few individuals, ensuring enough people have critical skills. A balance is maintained between continuity of knowledge and experience, and renewal of thinking.

### Good governance is ethical

The public good is placed selflessly before individual interests. Effective measures prevent and combat all forms of corruption. Conflicts of interest are declared in a timely manner and those involved must abstain completely from taking part in relevant decisions or influence them directly or indirectly. The needs of the disadvantaged are prioritised. We require honesty and integrity. Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. We actively promote and live by our principles and challenge poor behaviour. We are responsible,

considerate employers and we care for our volunteers. Elections and voting are fair and avoid undue influence.

### Good governance is sustainable and long-term

There is an understanding of historical, cultural and social complexities. Future generations are considered in current policies. We avoid transferring environmental, structural, financial, economic or social problems to future generations.

### Good governance is effective and efficient

We implement decisions and follow processes to make the best use of the available people, resources and time to ensure optimal results for the community. The competence, motivation and skills of all personnel from governors to employees and volunteers are continuously fostered with careful induction and continuing training. Prudence is observed; finances and risks soundly managed. We are clear about functions of the governing body.

### Good governance is focussed, with defined roles and responsibilities

We are focussed on our purpose(s). Charity trustees have an overriding duty to act in interest of the charity and its beneficiaries. Governing bodies direct and control in the public interest with collective responsibility; establish strategic direction and aims in conjunction with the executive; ensure accountability, probity and integrity; allocate resources; oversee senior appointments and contractual arrangements; delegate to management and ensure effective management; challenge and scrutinise the executive; ensure the public voice is heard; and forge partnerships with other organisations. The roles of chair and chief executive should be separate and provide a check and balance for each other's authority. Non-executives clarify which decisions are reserved for the governing body and which delegated.

### Good governance promotes innovation and openness for change

We seek and welcome improvement. We use and value others' experience. We research, experiment, develop and pilot new initiatives. We also learn from history.

### Good governance follows the rule of law

Decisions are consistent with law and rules, and are within the powers available. Policies to protect and support whistle blowers are in place.

### Good governance is accountable

We report, explain and are answerable for decisions made on behalf of the community. Accountability is essential.

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<sup>1</sup> Although there is much held in common on the Principles of Good Governance, there has been no single, universally accepted, comprehensive set of principles, hence this document pulls together all the principles from the best sources. The [Council of Europe](#) has twelve succinct principles of good governance, and runs an accreditation scheme; it was probably the closest thing to such an ideal complete set of principles. [The Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services](#) has detailed advice on principles and practice in implementing good governance. Both these are well researched and considered documents with advice which is well worth reading and following. The [Good Governance Guide](#) has seven clearly stated Characteristics of Good Governance that helped shape the simple format of this guide. [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#) are the "Nolan Principles" from the UK Government's Committee on Standards in Public Life; they are widely accepted in Britain.

A significant part of the development of the concepts of Good Governance comes from International Development, and the United Nations has multiple documents espousing governance principles, including [UNESCAP What is Good Governance](#), [UNDP Measuring Local Governance](#), [Programme for Strengthening Food Governance 2007-2011](#) although none is as clear and succinct as the Council of Europe's.

**Acknowledgements.** The first five of these sources provided some phrases included in the text for this guide and all are thanked for this and any copyright is acknowledged. Not all the documents are dated nor give their sources and many share some phrases which are clearly copied from common sources as ideas of good governance are spread (as is clearly the intention of all these documents), so finding original authors is not easy. If any original authors are not acknowledged, please contact the author, Mark Cheverton, via Leatherhead deanery (at gmail.com) so this can be rectified.

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