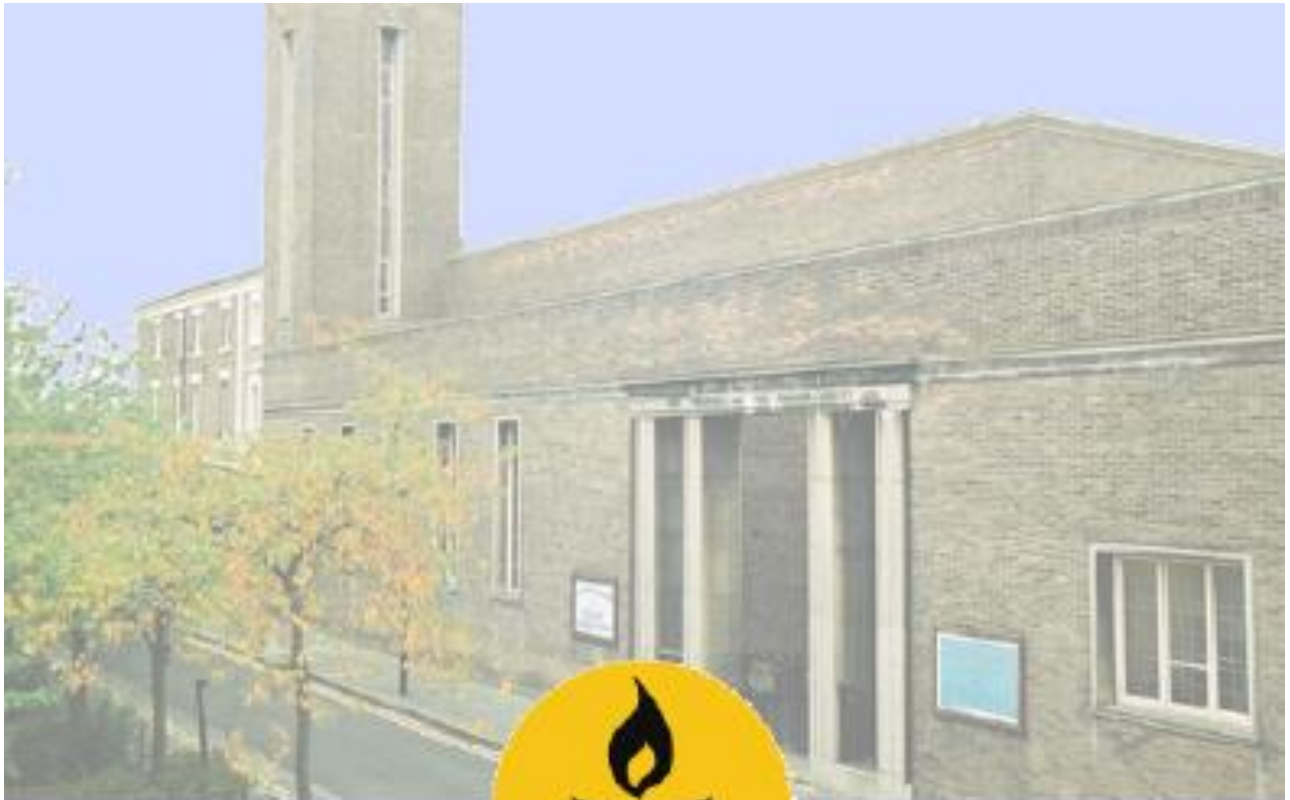




THE

CHURCH OF THE DIVINE UNITY

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

1. Name

The Charity is called “The Church of the Divine Unity”. Save for official and legal purposes, it shall be permissible for the Charity to be referred to as “Newcastle Unitarian Church”, or “Newcastle Unitarians”, or such other name as in the opinion of the Management Committee may be appropriate.

2. Aim

The aim of the Charity is to maintain a Unitarian witness within and around the area of Newcastle upon Tyne.

3. Objectives

- a. To serve the existing members and satisfy their needs, pastoral and spiritual.
- b. To serve the community.
- c. To maintain a distinctive Unitarian approach to worship.
- d. To be known as a caring community for both members and others.
- e. To maintain a Unitarian voice within the area and to make sure we are heard.
- f. To keep a close working link with other churches in social responsibility.
- g. To continue to play an active part in District and national Unitarian affairs.
- h. To encourage people to expand their own personal beliefs.
- i. To grow.
- j. To promote Unitarianism in accordance with the principles of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

4. Membership

Rule 1. A Member is anyone over 18 years of age who has confirmed that they wish to become a member of the Church by first speaking to the Minister or to the Church Secretary, or to the Church Treasurer, and having been accepted as a member by the Management Committee enters into fellowship with other members of the Church, and subscribes to Church Funds by pledging in advance, to the Church Treasurer, a regular (weekly, monthly or annual) financial contribution. Any such prescribed amounts may be paid by bank standing order or by cash donation, given to the Treasurer. This shall be recorded by the completion of a Membership Form, which will be recorded by the Secretary and Treasurer.

Acceptance of Rule 1 in full constitutes full membership with voting rights.

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on

27 April 2025

Rule 2. Termination of membership.

- a. Membership of the church comes to an end if:
 - 1) the member dies, or, in the case of an organisation (or the representative of an organisation) that organisation ceases to exist; or
 - 2) the member sends a notice of resignation to the charity trustees; or
 - 3) any sum of money owed by the member to the church is not paid in full within six months of its falling due; or
 - 4) the charity trustees decide that it is in the best interests of the church that the member in question should be removed from membership, and pass a resolution to that effect.
- b. Before the Management Committee takes any decision to remove someone from church membership, they must:
 - 1) inform the member of the reasons why it is proposed to remove them from membership;
 - 2) give the member at least 21 clear days' notice in which to make representations to the Management Committee as to why they should not be removed from membership;
 - 3) at a duly constituted meeting of the Management Committee, consider whether or not the member should be removed from membership;
 - 4) consider at that meeting any representations which the member makes as to why the member should not be removed; and
 - 5) allow the member, or the member's representative, to make those representations in person at that meeting, if the member so chooses.

Notes to this Rule

1. Only members of the Church shall act as Officers of any of the Church Activities, but exceptions to this ruling may be made with the consent of the Church Management Committee.
2. Junior Members are welcome between the ages of 15 and 18. They have no voting rights.
3. Two months prior to the church Annual Meeting in April each year, the Treasurer shall check if each member has made a financial contribution to church funds during the preceding 11 months, and contact them to request it if not. At the same time, the Church Secretary shall confirm with all members that they wish to maintain their membership for the next 12 months.

5. Management Committee and Trustees

Rule 3. The general management of the affairs of the Church shall be under the direction of the committee, to be elected as hereinafter provided. The committee shall be the executive of the congregation and shall be termed the "Management Committee."

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

Rule 4. The Management Committee shall consist of not less than 3 nor more than 7 elected members, including a Treasurer and Secretary, and a majority of its members must always be members of the Church (see Rule 5). The elected members of the Management Committee shall be the Trustees of the Charity. A trustee may not appoint anyone to act on his or her behalf at a meeting of the trustees. No one may be appointed a trustee if he or she would be disqualified from acting as a trustee under the provisions of Rule 6. Application to be a member of the Management Committee constitutes a statement on behalf of the applicant that they are not disqualified under these provisions. To be eligible for membership of the Management Committee, a candidate must be:

- a. A Member of the Church, as set out in Rule 1.
- b. If there are not sufficient candidates who are members of Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians for the management committee to be quorate (not less than 3 trustees) a current or retired member of another Unitarian congregation or fellowship, or a current or retired Unitarian Minister or Lay Worship Leader, shall be eligible to become a Management Committee Member.

If a circumstance arises in which it is not possible for the majority of the Management Committee members to be members of the Church, the Management Committee shall consider if it is appropriate to dissolve the charity under the arrangements set out in rule 32.

If the congregation employs a Minister, they may be a member of sub-committees and may, at their discretion, and in an advisory capacity, attend any meetings of the Management Committee unless it be otherwise resolved.

Rule 5. In order to carry out the charitable purposes, the trustees have the power to:

- (1) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- (2) apply funds to carry out the work of the charity
- (3) co-operate with and support other charities with similar charitable purposes
- (4) employ and remunerate such staff as are necessary for carrying out the work of the church
- (5) deposit or invest funds, employ a professional fund-manager, and arrange for the investments or other property of the church to be held in the name of a nominee, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as the trustees of a trust are permitted to do by the Trustee Act 2000
- (6) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the charity's purposes.

Rule 6: Disqualification and removal of trustees: A trustee must cease to hold office if:

- (1) They are disqualified from acting as a trustee by virtue of the Charities Act 2011 and / or the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of this legislation);

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

- (2) they cease to be a member of the charity;
- (3) in the written opinion, given to the trustees, of a registered medical practitioner treating that person, they have become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a charity trustee and may remain so for more than three months;
- (4) they resign as a trustee by notice to the charity (but only if at least two trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect);
or
- (5) they are absent without the permission of the trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six consecutive months and the trustees resolve that their office be vacated.
- (6) a vote of no-confidence in their role as trustee is passed at a quorate meeting of the management committee. The intention to call such a vote must come from a member of the management committee, who shall notify the Secretary of this at least seven working days prior to the committee meeting at which it shall be held (notification must be by post or email). All members of the committee, including the member in question, must be notified of this, and the member upon whom the vote is called must be allowed the opportunity to speak in defence of their membership at the committee meeting where the vote is called. The vote must be carried by at least two-thirds of the membership of the Committee to be valid.

6. Election of the Management Committee and Officers

Rule 7. One month before the day of the Annual Meeting any member may enter upon a nomination sheet the name or names of any member whom they may propose as Treasurer, Secretary or Management Committee member – the prior consent of the nominee having been obtained. The nomination sheet shall be made available to members at weekly services. The Secretary shall also contact all members five weeks before the day of the Annual Meeting, by post or electronic means, to invite them to make nominations to the Management Committee.

The nomination list having been open for three consecutive Sundays, the Secretary shall then send by post or email to every member at least seven days before the date of the Annual Meeting, with a notice of the Annual Meeting, a list of all who have been nominated for the several offices. This shall also be made available at weekly services. If the number of nominees exceeds the maximum number of members required by these Rules, the printed list shall be in the form of a voting paper. *(Note that these provisions mean that so long as the AGM is held on a Sunday the nomination paper must first be opened five weeks before the Annual Meeting.)*

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on

27 April 2025

Rule 8. At the Annual Meeting, should a vote be required, members shall hand (or send by post or email) their voting papers to the Secretary, the voter having first indicated on the voting paper, by means of a X, the names of those for whom they wish to vote. On this, and on other important occasions, such as the appointment of a Minister, the Management Committee may authorise a ballot where votes may be sent by either post or email.

Rule 9. The Meeting shall, should a vote be required, appoint at least two persons independent of the church to serve as scrutineers to supervise the conduct of the postal/email ballot and the counting of votes. They shall without delay check all votes received by the Secretary, reject any spoiled papers, count the number of votes cast for each nominee and report the number of votes cast for each nominee and the number of spoiled papers to the meeting. A copy of the same shall also be entered in the official minutes of the Meeting.

7. Meetings

A. Management Committee Meetings

Rule 10. The Management Committee shall meet once a month (excepting August). At the first meeting to be convened for general business after the Annual Meeting the Management Committee shall:

- a. Elect a Chairperson for the ensuing year. No member, after the adoption of these Rules, shall be eligible to serve as Chairperson for more than five years in succession.
- b. Appoint an Auditor or Auditors.
- c. Appoint subcommittees if required. Such subcommittees may include non-members of the Management Committee.

Rule 11. The Management Committee shall have power to co-opt additional members (who shall be members of the Church) whose knowledge or expertise in the opinion of the Management Committee would be beneficial to the exercise of its functions. Such co-opted members shall have full voting rights on any matter before the Management Committee but shall not by virtue of membership of the Management Committee become Trustees of the Charity.

Rule 12. A notice of the ordinary meetings of the Management Committee shall be given to Committee members not less than two days before the meeting, by post, email or in person from the Secretary. At such meetings not less than half of the number elected to serve on the Management Committee shall be a quorum without whose presence no resolution shall be valid.

Rule 13. Special meetings of the Management Committee may be convened at the discretion of the Secretary, or upon the written request of any two Committee members, or by resolution of an ordinary Management Committee

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

meeting. At such meetings only the business for which the meeting was called shall be considered. Special meetings shall not be held without at least two clear days' notice between the giving of the notice of the meeting and the holding of the meeting. Notice may be given by post, email, or in person by the Secretary.

Rule 14. All meetings, including the taking of votes, of the Management Committee may be held by telephone conference or other electronic means.

Rule 15. Decision-making:

- a. The Committee may make decisions by consensus among the members, or, where consensus cannot be reached, by a formal vote of the Committee during meetings. All such decisions shall be recorded in the minutes. On any resolution on which a vote is taken and the votes cast for each side result in a tie the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.
- b. If committee member has any interest, direct or indirect, in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the charity, they must declare the nature and extent of this, and absent themselves from any discussions of the charity trustees in which it is possible that a conflict of interest will arise between their duty to act solely in the interests of the CHURCH and any personal interest (including but not limited to any financial interest).

Rule 16. At all meetings of the Management Committee the Secretary shall present the minutes of the previous meeting and of any congregational meeting which may have taken place in the interval, and such minutes being found correct shall be signed by the Chairperson of the meeting. The Treasurer shall also present the financial statement up to date.

Rule 17. In case of a vacancy occurring in the Management Committee either by death, resignation or any other cause, the committee shall have power to make up the complement at their discretion subject to the provisions of Rule 3. In case of either the Secretary or Treasurer being unable, either permanently or temporarily, to carry out their duties, the committee shall have power to appoint a Deputy Secretary or Deputy Treasurer.

Rule 18. Written and Electronic Resolutions:

- (1) A resolution in writing signed by all the trustees on a matter will be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the trustees duly convened and held, and may consist of several documents in like form each signed by one or more trustees. The date of a written resolution will be the date on which the last trustee entitled to vote signs.
- (2) A resolution which is approved by email in accordance with this clause will be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a trustee meeting duly convened and held, provided the following conditions are complied with:

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

- a. such a resolution must be approved by email by all the trustees entitled to vote on the matter;
 - b. approval must be received by Church Secretary, and
- (3) approval from a trustee must be sent from an email address previously notified in writing or in person (not using electronic means) by that trustee to the Committee as intended for use by that trustee for the purpose.
- (4) Following receipt of all responses on any resolution, the Secretary shall circulate a further email to all of the trustees confirming whether the resolution has been formally approved by the trustees in accordance with this clause.
- (5) The date of a resolution shall be the date of the email from the Secretary confirming formal approval.

B. Annual Congregational Meeting

Rule 19. The Annual Meeting shall be held as soon after 31 December as may be convenient and not later than 30 April in each year. Notice of such meeting with an agenda of the business to be transacted shall be sent to all members by email or post, to arrive not later than seven days before the meeting date. Such agenda shall include:

- a. Report of the Management Committee for the past official year;
- b. Treasurer's financial statement;
- c. Election of Officers and Management Committee members for the ensuing year;
- d. Any other business of which due notice has been given. "Due notice" means notice given to the Secretary in sufficient time for the business to be discussed by the Management Committee at the committee meeting held before the Annual Meeting.

Rule 20. An annual statement of receipts and expenditure, duly examined and signed by an auditor appointed by the Management Committee, shall be laid before a meeting of the Management Committee previous to the annual meeting of the congregation, and a copy of such annual statement shall be sent to each member with the notice convening the meeting. No accounts other than those which have been passed by the Management Committee and no monies received or disbursed after 31 December shall be included in the balance sheet.

Rule 21. At congregational meetings, members only shall be entitled to vote. The quorum for decision-making shall be the greater of 10% of total membership, or three members present.

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

- a. The Chairperson of the Management Committee shall chair all Congregational Meetings, and they shall have power to regulate the proceedings in compliance with this code of Rules, their decision on all matters of form being final.
- b. No proposition to rescind the resolution of any previous meeting shall be entertained unless a notice of such proposition shall have been sent to the Secretary twenty-eight days beforehand by post or email, and printed with the notice calling the meeting.
- c. Decision-making shall be conducted in accordance with Rule 25.

C. Special Congregational Meetings

Rule 22. Special congregational meetings, convened by notice either in person during weekly services, by post or by email, shall be called by the Secretary at their discretion; or upon written request of three members of the Church. A copy of the notice of the meeting shall also be made available to members at weekly services one quarter of an hour before service.

Rule 23. At special congregational meetings convened by notice either in person during weekly services, by post or by email, it shall be competent for one-third of those present to demand that the meeting be adjourned, and that notices announcing the business to be transacted shall be sent to each member.

Rule 24. At special congregational meetings, no other business shall be transacted other than that for which the meeting has been called.

D. Decision-Making at Congregational Meetings

Rule 25. The voting at any congregational meeting (either ordinary or special) on resolutions before the meeting shall be by a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting.

- a. This shall be by a show of hands, unless a postal or electronic ballot has been agreed and arranged by the Management Committee, and members duly notified in the Notice of Meeting.
- b. Should members wish to vote by email, they must confirm in writing or in person to the Secretary the email address they wish to use for this purpose.
- c. Should members wish to vote by post, they must return their vote to the Secretary no later than one working day prior to the Meeting.
- d. If a majority cannot be reached, the Chairperson shall have a second (or casting) vote.

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

Rule 26. If the congregation employs a minister, the Minister may at any time call conferences. Such conferences shall not entertain any matter pertaining to the general management of the Church. They may nevertheless make recommendations for the consideration of the Management Committee.

8. Officers

Rule 27. The Secretary shall be the keeper of all books and papers having reference to the business of the Management Committee and congregation. They shall record the minutes, and carry out the resolutions of the Management Committee and congregational meetings, conduct correspondence, act on behalf of the Management Committee at congregational meetings, and make known its resolutions and recommendations.

Rule 28. The Treasurer shall have the custody of all securities and shall receive all subscriptions, collections and other monies on the Church account and pay all salaries and accounts due from the Church, and keep full accounts thereof in proper and sufficient books, either paper or electronic. At a meeting of the Management Committee preceding the Annual Meeting the Treasurer shall produce a Statement of Accounts for approval and signature by the Chairperson.

9. Property and Investments

Rule 29. The Management Committee is authorised to administer all property, cash, bequests and legacies, and investments belonging to the Church and the income arising therefrom, in accordance with the terms of such trusts or legacies, subject always to the provisions of Rules 26 and 27.

Rule 30. No sale of Church property or the realisation of such invested funds as shall represent trusts or legacies (except for the purpose of reinvestment) shall take place until a special resolution has been agreed to by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Management Committee present at a meeting duly convened and held, of which due notice has been given to all members of the Management Committee; such notice to state the terms of the proposed special resolution: provided always that no lease, mortgage or sale of the freehold of the Church, or the fabric thereof, shall take place without a two-thirds majority of all Church members whether voting by postal or electronic ballot or in person, at a general meeting of the members of the Church duly convened and held, and of which not less than 28 days' notice shall be given. Should members wish to vote by email, they must confirm in writing or in person to the Secretary the email address they wish to use for this purpose.

This procedure shall not apply in the case of surplus funds from ordinary Church revenues which may have been invested. The use of such invested funds for proper Church purposes shall be decided by a simple majority of members present at a meeting of the Management Committee.

Rules of the Church of the Divine Unity

commonly known as Newcastle upon Tyne Unitarians

Last voted upon by the Congregation at the Annual General Meeting held on
27 April 2025

Rule 31. All property or investments belonging to the Church or monies paid or bequeathed in its favour, or in favour of any of the institutions of the Church, shall form a general fund and shall be invested in the name of or under the control of the Trustees. In making decisions as to investment or sale of any such property the Trustees shall take proper and appropriate advice and shall incur no personal liability in respect of such decisions.

Rule 32. The charity's money and property must only be used for the charity's purposes. Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the charity, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses, unless permitted by law. Money must be held in the charity's bank or investment accounts. All cheques must be signed by two trustees.

10. Winding Up Provisions

Rule 32 If the Management Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Charity, it shall call a Meeting of all Members of the Congregation, of which not less than 21 days' notice stating the terms of the Resolution to be proposed shall be given. If the proposal is approved by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, the Management Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Congregation.

Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to the Northern Unitarian Association, to be used to further the said Association's charitable objectives, or, if the Northern Unitarian Association no longer exists, to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association of Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY to be used to further that Association's charitable objectives, or if that Association no longer exists, to such other charitable association or associations having objects similar to that of the Charity as the Members of the Congregation may determine, or failing that, may be applied for such other charitable purpose as may be agreed by the Management Committee and approved by the Members of the Congregation.

11. Alteration of Rules

Rule 33. Rules may be made or amended at the Annual Meeting of the congregation; or at any meeting of the congregation duly convened for that purpose. The notice convening the meeting shall be sent by post or email to all members not later than seven days before the meeting date, setting out the rule or rules amendment or amendments to be proposed. Any rule or amendment intended to be proposed at the Annual Meeting shall be placed in the hands of the Secretary at least 28 days prior to the day of the Annual Meeting and included in the notice calling the meeting.

