



The Role of Company Members

Why they really matter to Whitehaven Trust Limited.

It is clear that Mary Baker Eddy saw Christian Science nursing as an integral part of the Christian Science healing ministry. It was not a last resort but a compassionate and effective response to the fears and challenges that people sometimes face. This role complements that of the Christian Science practitioner.

Mrs Eddy even went as far as drafting a by-law establishing Christian Science care facilities, although this was never adopted, its very existence showed her support for effective care for those in need.

Background

Whitehaven Trust was established in the late 1940s and its first Christian Science House was opened in the early 1950s. The Trust took over the running of the Visiting Christian Science Nursing Service for the South West in subsequent years and this service continues to the present. This original house continued for over fifty years, closing in 2007.

In 2013 the Trust purchased Springfield House, near Chepstow, and this opened to patients and guests in 2016.

It is vital that Christian Scientists understand and support the role of Christian Science nursing and the services provided by bodies like Whitehaven Trust.

Company Members have a role in the governance of the Trust and are an important link with the UK Christian Science field.

Articles of Association

The role of Company Members is established in the Articles of Association of Whitehaven Trust (see Article 6).

Although this is a legal provision and Company Members have some legal obligations to fulfil, their role is primarily to provide a bedrock of prayerful support for the Trust and its Christian Science nursing activities.

The Trustees carry the main responsibility for the direction and operation of the Trust and while Trustees when chosen are required to be or to become Company Members, being a member does not imply an obligation to be a trustee.

The Company Members have two main areas of responsibility:

- 1. Support of the Trust, through prayerful participation and, where appropriate practical involvement in activities.**
- 2. Representing the Trust to their branch churches and the UK Christian Science field.**

Supporting the Trust

Trustees and staff greatly value the support and backing that is provided by loyal Company Members.

Members have the opportunity of attending the Annual General Meeting of the Trust, usually held in the Spring, where they hear reports from the trustees and senior staff. They are also asked to vote on a number of matters, including the election or re-election of trustees (as permitted by the Articles of Association); they approve the Report and Accounts, approve the appointment of Independent Examiner/Auditor. Company Members may also put forward propositions to the meeting.

The trustees may call, or members may request, additional meetings in the year – Extraordinary General Meetings – if needed.

Apart from the AGM or any other event to which members are invited there is communication by email, notably informing them of areas where prayerful support is needed and occasional conference calls in which they can participate.

As far as the business of the Trust is concerned and the operation of its services, absolute confidentiality is required.

What is expected of Company Members

- A real interest in the work of Whitehaven Trust.
- Understand the mission of the Trust.
- Respect the confidentiality of Trust business.
- Consistent prayerful support of the activities of the Trust especially when needs are made known by trustees or staff.
- Take regular opportunities to speak to fellow branch church members individually and in business meetings (subject to church rules)
- Encourage financial support of the Trust
- Be alert to misconceptions and gossip about the activities of the Trust, keeping trustees and management informed, and correcting misinformation.

Qualification and Election of Company Members

The Articles of Association describe the role and requirement of Company Members (Section 6). Each must be a member of The Mother Church and have received primary class instruction from an authorised teacher of Christian Science.

Individuals willing to serve must complete an application form and submit this to the Administrator/Company Secretary. The Trustees and Administrator/Company Secretary review and decide on an applicant's suitability and elect them as a Company Member.

At the Annual General Meeting of the company, members receive the accounts for the previous year, elect or re-elect trustees, appoint independent examiners or auditors and discuss other issues of policy or business put before them.

There is no limit to the number of Company Members, although it has tended to be around 20 in recent years, or to the period that individuals may serve. Trustees can currently only serve for a maximum of nine years (re-elected every three years) from first election according to the Articles of Association.

Further information including a simple application form is available from the Company Secretary, Whitehaven Trust Limited, Springfield House, Well Lane, Llanvair Discoed, Chepstow, Monmouthshire NP16 6LP.

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