



## Candidate Information

# **Company Secretary of the Free Church of England Central Trust (FCECT) and General Secretary of the Free Church of England (FCE).**

### Welcome

Thank you for considering an application for the post of Company Secretary of the Free Church of England Central Trust (FCECT) and General Secretary of the Free Church of England (FCE). This role is key to the management of the denomination and offers an opportunity to make a real difference to a long-established worshipping community.

The purpose of this letter is to address some of the issues surrounding the Free Church of England that you are likely to have seen on social media or in the press.

The Free Church of England, as its name suggests, is a Church of Anglican heritage and practice. It was formally registered as a Christian denomination in the High Court in 1863 and since then has maintained its work and witness openly and with total probity. Its institutional life is governed by a constitution and canons; its financial and property transactions are supported by accountants, lawyers and investment managers, all of them working to professional standards.

The FCE has been through a challenging time over the last year or so; a concentration of management activities imposed an exceptionally heavy workload on the two diocesan Bishops, exacerbated by the behaviour of various ministers who are no longer part of the denomination.

It is in the nature of the FCE to give a home to ministers and congregations who have decided that they are no longer able to remain in the Church of England, or another denomination, yet feel that they need a spiritual home. This approach has led to some leaders and congregations happily assimilating into the FCE, but there have been others who have joined and then by their actions have disrupted the trusted relationships that have existed between Bishops and congregations over many years.

Unfortunately, false allegations of financial irregularity have been made against our Bishops and unwanted press and social media coverage has been very difficult to manage within the current FCE structures. This has been one of the factors that has motivated us to review our structures and assess our staffing requirements to meet our future needs. A more important motivation is the desire to become better equipped to fulfil our calling to proclaim the Gospel in the challenging circumstances of the post-pandemic world. Convocation (the FCE's governing body) has defined evangelism, church planting and training as priorities.

Contrary to the impression you may have gained from online material, the FCE functions as a happy family of congregations, whose members care about each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. We have received two new congregations in the past two years and there are a number of men exploring their vocation to ordination with us.

The role of General Secretary has been held by the Bishop of the Southern Diocese for several years and previously by various clergy, in addition to their pastoral roles, for which a small stipend was paid. A review of responsibilities has led to a belief that the role should be a separate paid role to function as the most senior advisory and administrative role in the denomination working alongside the Bishops and other leaders. For a number of years, like many denominations in the UK, the FCE has been in transition from maintenance to mission mode. The re-envisioned General Secretary role is one element in the achieving of this.

I hope that my transparency about our current situation shows you that the opportunity is available to make a significant difference to the FCE.

To arrange an informal conversation prior to application please contact me on [jrkfenwick@gmail.com](mailto:jrkfenwick@gmail.com), or Bishop Paul Hunt on [bishoppaul@btinternet.com](mailto:bishoppaul@btinternet.com)

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to [david@bedrockhr.co.uk](mailto:david@bedrockhr.co.uk)

We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you and ourselves as we seek to discern God's will in this appointment.

With Christian greetings,

*+ John Fenwick*



## Role Description

<b>Role Title:</b>	Company Secretary of the Free Church of England Central Trust (FCECT) and General Secretary of the Free Church of England (FCE).
<b>Employer:</b>	The Central Trust of the Free Church of England.
<b>Hours:</b>	TBC, minimum 24 per week in a pattern to be agreed.
<b>Location:</b>	A combination of working from FCE premises and from home to be agreed. There is a requirement to travel throughout the United Kingdom as necessary for which a travel allowance will be available.
<b>Reports to:</b>	Bishop Primus of the FCE. Additionally is responsible to the Executive Council of FCECT and General Council of FCE.
<b>Responsible for:</b>	Future administrative staff as required, no roles at present.
<b>Salary:</b>	In the range of £30-50,000 per annum depending on the hours agreed and will be paid on a pro-rata basis.

### Overall purpose of the role

With the Bishops, to provide guidance and support to the Churches, Convocation and committees that make up the Free Church of England so as to facilitate the FCE in achieving its purpose.

To enact decisions made by the Bishops, Convocation and its committees and the Central Trust of the FCE.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that advice on proper governance within the Canons of the FCE and relevant Charity and Company law is provided to the Bishops and the wider leadership.
- Ensuring that professional advice is available concerning all aspects of Governance and administration to the Bishops and leadership Committees and acting as the interface with professional advisers.
- Ensuring that communication channels are effective within and outside of the FCE.
- Providing a high standard of administrative support and management.



## Governance

- a) Ensure that decisions of Convocation and its committees and of the Central Trust are made within the Canons of the FCE and execute them appropriately.
- b) Ensure that Committees, including the General Council, are constituted according to the Articles of Association of the FCECT and the Canons of the FCE, and that appropriate records are made and appropriate elections are held.
- c) Ensure that the Central Trust of the FCE and its Executive Council are constituted in accordance with its rules, that appropriate records are made and that appropriate elections are held.
- d) Ensure that elected individuals meet the requirements to hold office.
- e) Serve as Secretary to Convocation and the General Council.
- f) Serve as an ex officio member of all Committees of Convocation.
- g) Call Special Meetings of Convocation if requested by the Bishop Primus or a majority of members of Convocation.
- h) Manage the process for Episcopal elections, providing four weeks' notice and providing a Certificate of Election, prior to the consecration of the elected candidate(s).
- i) Sign off, with the Bishop Primus, approved Forms of Worship.
- j) Certify when individual's membership of the FCE has ended and ensure their removal as Trustees.
- k) With the approval of the Bishop Primus appoint the Accountants.
- l) Send out the Annual Returns prior to the Annual Congregational Meetings and receive and process the completed Returns
- m) Receive decisions and appeals from Courts of Ecclesiastical Discipline.
- n) Notify Congregations, Overseas Dioceses, and the Treasurer of abatements to the quota agreed by the General Council.



## Professional guidance

- a) Provide professional support and guidance to the Bishops, General Treasurer, and leadership Committees on professional matters including: financial, legal, data protection, HR, buildings, insurance, and regulatory matters, and act as the interface with professional advisers.

## General Administration

- a) Set up and manage events as required, using volunteers to assist.
- b) Ensure that any events held are in accordance with Health and Safety regulations.
- c) In connection with Convocation:
  - Send out notices of meetings
  - Prepare agenda, draft Year Book, etc. and mail to attendees
  - Take minutes and present for approval at the start of each day's session
  - Complete full minutes for signing before departure from Convocation
  - Ensure all administration is completed
- d) In connection with the Central Trust:
  - Supervise FCE pension scheme
  - Supervise FCE stipend scheme
  - Liaise with Land Registry
  - Liaise with Denominational Solicitors re trusteeships, property sales, etc.
- e) In connection with the Denominational Office:
  - Keep records and archives
  - Arrange for the deposition of denominational archives
  - Keep stocks of and send out publicity material or bookshop material as required
  - Organise the printing of such material as required



## Communication

- a) Ensure that the FCE website is maintained and updated regularly with fresh content, liaising with the volunteer Webmaster to ensure the regular posting of appropriate and accurate material and updates.
- b) Gather content for sharing within the FCE family, utilising appropriate communications channels.
- c) Act as first point of contact for the press, the general public, Churches Together in England, insurance companies, Church Statistics, and for other matters.
- d) Develop new resources for presenting the FCE to external audiences.
- e) Ensure that new congregations and individuals joining the FCE have access to effective communication systems.
- f) Prepare a draft Year Book prior to Convocation, update reports if necessary following Convocation, draft a summary of Convocation proceedings, add directory material, etc. and ensure printing and circulation by September.
- g) Liaise with Charity Commission as required.
- h) Liaise with Denominational Solicitors and other external professionals.
- i) Liaise with those individuals or bodies (within the FCE) responsible for training, evangelism, church planting, etc.
- j) Liaise with appropriate members of REC in North America, etc.
- k) In collaboration with General Treasurer ensure prompt payment of bills and collection of moneys due.

## Succession and Growth

- a) Support the Bishops and other leaders with succession planning, recruitment and ministerial training.
- b) Maintain a knowledge of skills, gifting, and availability of volunteers across all areas of the FCE family.
- c) Ensure that current and future members of denominational committees have access to appropriate training and development.
- d) Manage fundraising activities including grant applications, events, and other opportunities that arise.



## Person Specification (E = Essential, D = Desirable)

### Experience

1. Degree or equivalent professional qualification in a relevant area (E)
2. Has managed or advised on compliance within organisational rules and regulations covering Health and Safety and Safeguarding (E)
3. Has managed or advised on compliance within a structure that is bound by canons or statutes that need interpretation (D)
4. Has experience of building organisational infrastructure and resilience (E)
5. Has operated as a specialist in one or more of: Building management, Finance, Legal Services, HR and has a working understanding of the other professional areas (E)
6. Has a network of professionals that can be accessed (D)
7. Has experience of supporting volunteer leaders (D)
8. Has experience of providing strategic level support to senior leadership (E)

### Skills and aptitudes

1. Has excellent written and verbal communication skills (E)
2. Is comfortable with and able to relate to others from all backgrounds and outlooks (E)
3. Is able to build and use networks to promote the FCE (E)
4. Has the ability to develop capacity and resources (E)
5. Has the ability to inspire volunteers (E)

### Character

1. Will have an understanding of and be in full sympathy with the purpose and mission of the FCE (E)
2. Will be able to demonstrate wisdom in decision making and be held in high regard by others (E)
3. Will be energetic and passionate about the purpose of the FCE (E)
4. Will be a self-starter, not needing regular supervision (E)
5. Will be both inquisitive and pro-active (E)



# Background Information

## Our Vision

Our vision is to bring the saving Gospel to the people of the British Isles and beyond by planting Churches of Anglican identity, founded on these principles, and nurturing those who come to faith by ministries of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. To this end:

- We are an Evangelical Church, in that we passionately believe that to us has been entrusted the Evangel – the Good News – of salvation only through the atoning work of Christ, apprehended by faith alone, and that we are commanded to take that Good News to others.
- We are a Catholic Church in that we believe the apostolic faith revealed in the Scriptures in all its fullness and hold fast to what is common in the historic Christian tradition.
- We are an Episcopal Church because we cherish Episcopacy as an ancient and desirable form of Church polity, whose origins lie in the apostolic provision for ministries within the Church.
- We are a Liturgical Church, blessed with the rich legacy of Anglican worship, with liberty to adapt the same according to the changing needs of the societies in which we minister and witness, provided that the substance of the faith be kept entire.

## About the FCE

The origins of the FCE lie in movements in Britain and North America in the 19th century intended to safeguard the integrity of biblical Anglicanism. Secessions from the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA led to the formation of independent Anglican jurisdictions in 1863 and 1873 respectively. The UK representatives of the two bodies merged in 1927 to form the present denomination.

The Constitution of the FCE requires that the Church, in areas where no other provision has been made, 'conforms to the ancient laws and customs of the Church of England'. This has ensured a consistent Anglican identity with liturgical worship led by robed clergy. The FCE tradition has generally been 'Low Church' though a wider range of churchmanship can now be found. The 'gold standard' for worship is a Book of Common Prayer very similar to that of 1662. However, acts of worship in modern English, family services and 'Messy Church' can now be found.

Like other Anglicans, the FCE maintains the threefold historic Orders of bishop, presbyter and deacon. The succession of episcopal consecrations has been responsibly maintained, leading to the Church of England's recognition of FCE Orders in 2013.





Guided by the New Testament and by the Tradition of the Church, the Free Church of England admits only baptized males to the ministries of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, and the office of Reader.

The Free Church of England teaches that Holy Matrimony is the exclusive commitment of a man and a woman to each other in conjugal love. In 2012 Convocation stated that it does not consent to any premises of the Free Church of England being used for the registration or blessing of same-sex unions, nor are the clergy of this Church permitted to take part in such ceremonies.

Within the UK the congregations are organised into two Dioceses, each with its own Synod.

## Our Structures

### A. General

The Free Church of England was registered in the High Court of Chancery in 1863. Following the merger of the original FCE with the UK branch of the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1927, the new legal basis was duly enrolled in the Chancery Division of the High Court on 10th December that year. The constitution of the denomination is also registered with the Charity Commission as it is referred to in the charitable purposes of several bodies.

The fact that the denomination operates via a public Constitution and set of Canons has given it stability and continuity over the years.

### B. Legal Framework

Like many Anglican provinces, the legal framework of the FCE consists of three sections – a Constitution, a set of Canons and a set of Byelaws.

#### (1) Constitution

The Constitution consists of sixteen Articles (number I to XVI). These are available online ([https://fcofe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/fce\\_constitution.pdf](https://fcofe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/fce_constitution.pdf)). The Articles set out the basic framework of the denomination – its self-definition, sources of authority, structures of government, and ministry, etc. Article XVI gives authority for the creation of Canons which deal with all these matters and others in greater detail (see below).

Alterations to the Constitution have to be passed by a 75% majority in two consecutive Convocations.



## **(2) Canons**

The Canons are also online (<https://fcofe.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Canons-Full-1.pdf>). They are divided into a number of sections dealing with the Organisation and Duties of Convocation, Diocesan Synods, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, Readers, Ministerial Appointments and Duties, Congregations, Church Meetings and Officers, Worship, Discipline, Miscellaneous.

Many relate to regular aspects of church life (e.g. the need to fill in the service register after every act of worship); others come into operation only rarely (e.g. the process for electing a bishop). It is important for Ministers and church officers to be familiar with the Canons so that they operate according to their requirements and therefore minimise any potential causes of friction.

New Canons or alterations to existing ones have to be passed by a 75% majority in two consecutive Convocations.

## **(3) Byelaws**

Byelaws generally cover matters which may be temporary or require regular updating. To come into force a Byelaw requires a 75% majority but does not have to be confirmed at the next Convocation.

## **C. Doctrinal authorities**

At the revision of the Constitution in 2013, provision was made for a category of ‘Doctrinal Authorities’ where documents accepted as of particular significance could be recorded. To date the only such document is the Declaration of Principles (the first form of which was composed in 1873 – see the comment on this below). Another potential candidate for addition in the future could be, e.g., the Jerusalem Declaration.

Article II of the Constitution sets out the documents and sources from which the FCE derives her doctrine:

*The doctrine of the Free Church of England is founded in the Holy Scriptures and, following the example of the Reformers, in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures.*

*In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Declaration of Principles, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and the authorised liturgies of this Church.*

Each of these is important, and they need to be viewed as a whole as each has a part to play. Clearly the supremacy of Scripture is paramount as is affirmed in some of the other authorities (e.g. the 39 Articles and the Declaration of Principles). As part of the historic Church we take seriously the ways in which God has dealt with and spoken through his servants over the centuries as they have sought to be faithful to the apostolic faith.



The Creeds and writings of the Church Fathers have emerged from this. We take seriously, too, the renewal of the Church in England and elsewhere in the 16th century which we call the Reformation. From this period of renewal come the Thirty-Nine Articles of religion, approved in their final form in 1563. These have a continuing authority in Churches of the Anglican family. Within our own tradition the Declaration of Principles is intended to re-state Christian fundamentals as expressed in the Anglican tradition. It is not intended to go beyond or say anything different from the classic Anglican formularies and must be understood in their light. (An international statement on the understanding of the Declaration of Principles today is on the FCE website.)

## **D. Governmental Structures**

### **(1) Convocation**

Convocation, consisting of the Bishop Primus, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, together with representatives of the Laity, has 'chief legislative power and jurisdiction' in relation to the organisation of the denomination. Each parish has direct representation on Convocation – their Clergy, two Churchwardens and two Delegates.

Convocation meets annually over a 48 hour period. It receives reports from the bishops, officers and committees, approves the annual accounts, sets the quota, and votes on legislation if required. As occasion permits there may also be teaching sessions (recent examples include Safeguarding and Church Revitalisation).

The costs of Convocation are heavily subsidised from central funds but each parish is required to pay an annual contribution, whether or not its representatives actually attend.

Convocation is an occasion not merely for the transaction of business but for fellowship and spiritual encouragement. There are regular acts of worship and a Charge is delivered by the Bishop Primus.

### **(a) Officers of Convocation**

The following are the principal officers elected annually by Convocation:

- (a) The Bishop Primus, who chairs all committees, presides at episcopal ordinations and often represents the denomination.
- (b) The General Secretary, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the structures of the denomination.
- (c) The General Treasurer, who must be a layman or woman, manages the finances and presents accounts to Convocation.
- (d) The Registrar, who, unlike in the Church of England, is not a legal officer, but has responsibility for the registers and documents of the Church. This position is currently under review.

Other appointments (such as the Safeguarding Officer and Webmaster) are also made.



## **(b) Committees of Convocation**

There are four committees which are required by the Constitution and whose composition is defined by Canon. In addition to these Convocation may set up others. The statutory committees are:

### **(i) General Council**

This is composed of five presbyters and five laity, together with the Bishops, Convocation Secretary, Registrar, Treasurer, Diocesan Secretaries, and Diocesan Treasurers who are ex-officio members. The Council usually meets twice a year and is responsible for the general running of the denomination. It has ad interim power and jurisdiction between meetings of Convocation.

By convention the two UK dioceses nominate the laity and clergy to serve on General Council who are then formally elected at Convocation. The Northern Synod nominates two laity and three clergy; the Southern Diocese nominates three laity and two clergy. This is done at the first Synod meeting of the year.

### **(ii) Other Committees**

Currently the range of committees (Finance, Publications, Constitution & Canons, Doctrine & Worship, Stipends, etc.) is under review to improve efficiency and transparency.

## **Key relationships**

The Free Church of England is committed by its Declaration of Principles to ‘maintain communion with all Christian Churches, and will set forward, so far as in it lieth, quietness, peace and love, among all Christian people.’ Today that commitment is principally expressed through a number of ecumenical relationships.

- **Other Reformed Episcopal Churches (in North America and elsewhere)**

As our legal name clearly shows, the FCE is the Reformed Episcopal Church in the United Kingdom. That means that we are automatically a member of a worldwide family of Churches which trace at least some of their roots to the formation of the Reformed Episcopal Church in North America in November 1873.

As our Reformed Episcopal family spreads into different countries and cultures (the USA, Canada, Cuba, France, Russia, and the British Isles) there are ongoing discussions about how we maintain a common identity and sense of purpose.

FCE members in the UK are most likely to encounter members of other Reformed Episcopal jurisdictions as guests at Convocation or Synod.



- **The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**

The ACNA was formed in 2009 as the culmination of the Common Cause Partnership process in which the REC in North America was a participant. The inauguration of its first Archbishop was presided over by the Most Revd Leonard Riches, Presiding Bishop of the REC, as the senior bishop by consecration. The REC/NA is a sub-jurisdiction of the ACNA, which has a federal structure.

In 2016 the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) declared that it is in full communion with the Free Church of England (and other Reformed Episcopal Churches outside North America) and that it recognises our clergy, congregations and sacraments, and pledges to work together with us for the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the making of his disciples throughout the world. This declaration was made in a formal instrument signed by Archbishop Foley Beach on 1st February 2016 and ratified by the Provincial Council of the ACNA in June of that year.

- **GAFCON and other Anglican Churches**

The Free Church of England's vision – the defence and spread of biblical, Anglican-heritage Christianity – has recently been given a new expression by the GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference) movement. The Free Church of England has therefore identified with the realignment that is taking place among Anglican Churches worldwide. The denomination was represented at the GAFCON gatherings in Nairobi (2013) and Jerusalem (2018).

Under the GAFCON umbrella we maintain contact with bishops of other orthodox Anglican jurisdictions in the UK (and also with the bishops of the REC Dioceses in Germany and Croatia).

- **The Church of England**

As an Established Church, the Church of England's relationships with other Churches in the British Isles and beyond is governed by various Parliamentary statutes – called 'Measures'. Several of these apply to the FCE. The Free Church of England is a scheduled Church under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1967. This means that it is perfectly possible in law for a Free Church of England congregation to share a building with a Church of England congregation or any other denomination listed in the Schedule to the Act – Roman Catholic, Methodist, etc.

As a Designated Church under the Ecumenical Relations Measure, a Minister or lay member of the Free Church of England can be invited to perform, in a Church of England act of worship, the functions that he or she could perform in the FCE (Canon B43). An FCE congregation may also share in a Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) with shared facilities and worship (including eucharistic presidency, since our Orders are recognised – see below) (Canon B44). Yet further 'overlap' (including episcopal ministrations) is permitted by the fact that the Orders of the Free Church of England are 'recognised and accepted' by the Church of England under the Overseas and Other Clergy (Ministry and Ordination) Measure 1967. All of this, of course, depends on the quality of local relationships and the goodwill of Church of England authorities.



Following the recognition of FCE Orders, there have been a few cases where presbyters ordained in the FCE have been given Permission to Officiate (PTO) by bishops of the Church of England.

FCE bishops have also given Permission to Officiate to Church of England presbyters, to minister in FCE contexts while still remaining Ministers in good standing in the Established Church.

- **The Free Churches Group and Churches Together in England**

The FCE has been a member of the Free Churches Group for many years. This provides a forum for the traditional 'Free' Churches (Baptists, Methodists, URC, etc.) to meet. A potential practical benefit of membership of the group is that the FCE can nominate people to Free Church chaplaincies in, for example, the Armed Forces or Hospitals.

More recently the FCE has joined Churches Together in England where much of the inter-church work in England takes place. The denomination has a permanent place on the Enabling Group (the executive committee) and sends representatives to the three-yearly Forum. One of the criteria for places or teaching posts in Church schools is frequently membership of a church which is a member of CTE; our membership therefore provides an immediate benefit to members of the denomination.

The congregations of the Diocese are encouraged to play a full part in local Churches Together groups or the equivalent.

- **Other dialogues**

From time to time the FCE has engaged in conversations with other denominations with a view to some form of partnership or closer relationship.

Historically there have been conversations with the Moravians and Wesleyan Reform Union. More recently we have been in dialogue with the Union of Scranton: Old Catholic Churches which broke away from the Union of Utrecht following the decision of the majority of member churches to accept the ordination of women. Contact with the FCE involved visits to Norway and Scranton (Pennsylvania) and reciprocal visits to FCE parishes in the UK.

Despite some positive signs the Union of Scranton decided to terminate the dialogue, partly because of unclarity on the part of the Union's churches as to whether the goal was an inter-communion relationship or the FCE's full membership of the Union of Scranton.

