

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM  
OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK**

**Purpose**

1. The Faith Communities Forum (FCF) is the category link meeting for national faith community representative bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN).
2. The FCF has been established within the framework of IFN by its Board of Trustees to help enable discussion between member national faith community representative bodies on issues of common concern to them as faith communities and thereby to promote the development of closer working relationships between the UK's faith communities.
3. In common with other IFN category link meetings, the FCF provides opportunities for member bodies to share good practice relating to their inter faith/ interreligious work.
4. The FCF may be consulted by the Board on matters relating particularly to this category or IFN more widely.

**Scope**

5. The scope of the Forum's engagement is UK-wide, although since the increased devolution of powers to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and because of the primary focus of inter faith instruments of these nations on devolved matters, a significant part of the Forum's public life agenda may have an England or England and Wales focus.

**Chairing**

6. The FCF is chaired by one or both of the Co-Moderators of the FCF, one of whom is also the Co-Chair of the Trustee Board.

**Frequency of meetings**

7. The FCF meets approximately three or four times a year.

**Membership and participation**

8. The organisations entitled to be represented at the FCF are national faith community representative bodies currently in membership of IFN.
9. Representatives are also invited to attend, if they wish to do so, from the national inter faith linking bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which also engage, separately, with matters relating to the policies and work of the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

10. Since the FCF has a potentially wide ranging agenda, member organisations may be represented, where they so wish, by those from within their community with specialist knowledge of the particular issues under discussion.
11. Up to two people from each member NFCRB, including any member of that body serving as a Moderator, may attend each meeting.

### **Resources**

12. The FCF may initiate, in its name, programmes of work relating to national faith community bodies and matters directly related to IFN's aims, subject to IFN resources and to the agreement of the Board of Trustees.
13. Along with other IFN meetings, those of the FCF are serviced by the IFN office as part of IFN's activities.

### **Relationship to other IFN machinery**

14. IFN's Board of Trustees keeps under review the operation of the FCF. The Board of Trustees continues, subject to decisions by the AGM, to be responsible for the formulation of IFN policy and to continue to carry overall responsibility for IFN's activities, for its programme of work and for the allocation of financial and staff resources to this.
15. Full FCF meeting minutes are available to the FCF. They are also available to Trustees for information upon request. They are not circulated more widely. The agreed minutes of sections of the FCF meeting minutes, other than the closed IFN Matters section and any other closed sections as agreed by the meeting, may be made available to the public through IFN's website.
16. These Terms of Reference originate with the Board of Trustees and are a matter for them. They may only be amended by the Board of Trustees.

### **Statements**

17. The Forum is authorised by the Board of Trustees to issue statements in accordance with any Policy on the Making of Statements set by the Board of Trustees.

### **Moderators of the FCF**

18. The FCF shall, where all Moderators have been appointed, have 10 Moderators, of which 2 shall be Co-Moderators and 8 shall be Vice-Moderators.
19. The Board of Trustees shall agree the list of the Moderators annually as part of its oversight of the FCF.

## **Make-up of the body of Moderators**

20. There shall be 10 Moderators: one drawn from each of the 6 largest faith communities in the UK at any given time and 4 from the totality of the smaller faith communities and NFCRBS not accepted (either by themselves or the existing members of the other Groups) as representing one of the six largest faith communities:
  - a) 2 Co-Moderators – one of whom will be the NFCRB linked Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees and the other of whom will be elected by the FCF from among the other Moderators; and
  - b) The remaining 8 shall be Vice-Moderators.
21. A Moderator will normally hold this role for a term of three years. A Moderator may be nominated for a second period of three years. The maximum number of terms for which a Moderator may serve is two.

## **Role and function of the Moderators**

22. The Co-Moderators will chair meetings of the FCF. If neither Co-Moderator is available, a Vice-Moderator may take his or her place as chair of the meeting, with the agreement of the meeting.
23. The Moderators reflect diversity of faith engagement within IFN, which is more broadly reflected within the FCF as a whole. Advice of the Moderators will normally be sought by the Trustees or Staff on issues relating to the work of IFN in relation to consultation with the community they have been appointed by, where applicable. Where a community does not have a Moderator, the Community's main FCF contact(s) will be consulted directly.
24. The Moderators will play a role in developing any non-urgent statement which may be developed by the FCF as a whole.
25. The non-NFCRB Co-Chair of IFN may also attend meetings of the FCF as an observer.

## **Choosing of the Co- and Vice-Moderators**

26. The Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees drawn from the NFCRB category is ex officio a Co-Moderator of the FCF. The faith community Nominating Group from which this Trustee Co-Moderator is drawn does not, therefore, appoint a Moderator through the process outlined below.
27. For the purposes of identifying Moderators, the same Nominating Groups and processes shall be used as are used for the nomination and appointment of Trustees drawn from the NFCRB category. If a ballot is required and the result of that is a tie, the Moderator for the relevant Nominating Group shall be decided by lot by such method as the Trustee Board may decide. A Nominating Group may also choose, when a moderatorship becomes vacant, not to nominate a Moderator if a majority of eligible member bodies in that group agree and their

designated IFN contacts notify the IFN office in writing.

28. Once all nominating faith community Nominating Groups have nominated their Moderator the eligible National Faith Community Representative Body members of the FCF as a whole shall elect one of these Moderators to be the second Co-Moderator of the FCF, and the remaining Moderators shall be Vice-Moderators. If a Nominating Group has chosen not to nominate a Moderator, eligible members of that Nominating Group shall still be able to participate in the process of election of a Co-Moderator.
29. Faith community Nominating Groups shall have the power to recall/ reappoint their Moderator at any time, except where that Moderator is also the Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees. The process for this shall be that eligible member bodies in the relevant Nominating Group shall notify the IFN office in writing of their wish to recall the Moderator. If a majority of the eligible bodies do so, the IFN office will notify bodies accordingly and issue nomination forms for a fresh nomination process. The current Moderator shall normally remain in role until the new appointment is made.
30. Moderator vacancies may be filled at any time during the year in accordance with the process prescribed. The Board's annual agreement of the list of Moderators (paragraph 19 above) does not affect this.
31. If an FCF-elected Co-Moderator is replaced as Moderator by their faith community Nominating Group, a new Co-Moderator shall be elected by the FCF as a whole. A new Moderator for that faith community Nominating Group will not automatically become the new Co-Moderator.
32. If an FCF-elected Co-Moderator reaches the end of their three-year term as a Moderator but is re-nominated for another term as a Moderator by their Nominating Group, they will not automatically continue in the role of Co-Moderator of the FCF. A fresh election will take place and any Moderator shall be eligible to be elected. Where the Co-Moderator who is also Co-Chair of IFN's Board of Trustees is new in post, the FCF is asked to have regard to the desirability of some continuity of Co-Moderatorship if it is electing the second Co-Moderator at the same time.
33. No member body whose membership fees are in arrears may nominate any person to stand as an FCF Moderator or vote in any Moderator appointment or recalling process.

#### **Review of these Terms of Reference**

34. These Terms of Reference shall be kept under review by the Board of Trustees.
35. The system of nomination of Moderators shall be subject to review on a five yearly basis.

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