National Association of Writers' Groups Constitution

Amended 2011

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the Association is **The National Association of Writers' Groups.**

2. ADMINISTRATION

(a) The Association shall be administered from its Head Office c/o Elaine Wilkinson, Librarian, Vivacity, Central Library, Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 1RX. This address may be altered at any time, by informing the Charity Commission and distributing amended copies of the Constitution showing the new address.
(b) Subject to the matters set out below the Association and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the Executive Committee, constituted by clause 7 of this constitution ("the Executive Committee").

3. OBJECTS

To advance the education of the general public throughout the United Kingdom including the Channel Islands (hereinafter called "the area of benefit"), by promoting the study and art of writing in all its aspects.

4. POWERS

In furtherance of the objectives but not otherwise the Executive Committee may exercise the following powers:
(a) to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Executive Committee shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of United Kingdom law.
(b) to buy, take on lease, license or any other legal disposition of any property necessary for the achievement of the objects and to maintain, insure and equip it to use.
(c) to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property belonging to the Association.
(d) to borrow money and to charge all or any part of any property belonging to the Association as security to any sums borrowed hereinafter.
(e) to employ staff, who shall not be members of the Executive Committee, as are necessary to achieve the objects of the Association.
(f) to co-operate with other bodies in furtherance of the objects.
(e} to appoint and constitute such other committees as the Executive Committee may think fit.
(h) to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

5. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Membership of the Association shall be open to any other like-minded writers' group recognised by the Association, who have paid the annual subscription laid down by the Executive Committee.
(b) Every member group of the Association shall have two votes.
(c) Each member group shall appoint two individuals to represent it and vote on its behalf at meetings of the Association; and may appoint an alternate to replace its appointed representative at any meeting of the Association if the appointed representative of the group is unable to attend.
(d) Each group shall notify the names of their representatives and of any alternate to the secretary of the Association. If the representatives cease to be members of their group, they will forthwith cease to be the representatives of that group in any meeting of the Association.
(e) Associate members of the association, shall have the right to vote at meetings of the association.
(f) The Executive Committee may by a majority vote of two-thirds of those attending and entitled to vote terminate the membership of any group on giving written notice; provided that the group has the right to be heard by the Executive Committee before any such notice is given.
(g) The United Kingdom shall be divided into 13 regions (see attached plan), and each region shall appoint a member, who shall be the regional editor.

6. HONORARY OFFICES

At the annual general meeting of the Association the members shall elect from amongst themselves a

chairman, a secretary and a treasurer, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting for a period of two years.

7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five members nor more than 15 members being:

(a) the honorary officers specified in the preceding clause, who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting for a period of two years, after which they may stand for re-election.

(b) not less than two and not more than 12 members elected at the annual general meeting who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting, for a period of two years.

(c) Half the members of the Executive Committee, except as stated in clause 7(a) above, shall retire from office together at the end of the annual general meeting next after the date on which they came to office but may be re-elected if they agree to stand.

(d) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.

(e) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee until he has signed a declaration of acceptance to act in the trusts of the Association and this acceptance has been received by the secretary of the Association.

(f) A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

(i) is disqualified from acting as a member by virtue of Section 45 of the Charities Act 1992 or any statutory re-enactment or amendment of that provision.

(ii) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs.

(iii) is absent without permission from all meetings held within a period of six months and it is resolved that his or her office shall be vacated.

(iv) notifies a wish to resign.

8. PERSONAL INTERESTS

No member of the Executive Committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Association or be personally interested in any contract entered into by the Executive Committee or be entitled to receive any remuneration out of his duties hereinafter.

9. MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(a) The Executive Committee shall hold at least two ordinary meetings each year. A special meeting may be called at any time by the chairman or by any two members of the Executive Committee giving not less than seven days written notice being given to the other members of that Committee together with full details of any matters to be discussed.

(b) The chairman shall act as chairman of the meetings unless absent when the Committee shall choose one of their members to act as chairman for that meeting.

(c) There shall be a quorum of four members before any business can be undertaken.

(d) Every matter shall be decided by a simple majority with each member, except the chairman, having one vote. In the event of a tied vote the chairman shall have a casting vote.

(e) The Secretary shall keep full and accurate minutes of any Executive Committee meeting in books specially reserved for that purpose.

(f) The Executive Committee may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning of meetings and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this constitution.

(g) The Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees consisting of at least three members when it appears that such action is appropriate. Such sub-committees must report back to the Executive Committee promptly on any recommendations they wish to propose.

10. RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE

The funds of the Association, including all donations, contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Executive Committee in the name of the Association at such bank as that Committee shall from time to time decide. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two of the Honorary Officers set out in clause 6. The funds belonging to the Association shall be applied only in furthering the objects.

11. ACCOUNTS
The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1992 with regard to:
(a) the keeping of accounting records for the Association.
(b) the preparation of annual statements of account for the Association.
(c) the auditing or independent examination of these statements.

12. ANNUAL REPORT
The Executive Committee shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1992 with regard to the preparation of an annual report.

13. ANNUAL RETURN
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14. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
(a) The financial year of the Association shall end on 30th June in each year and the Annual General Meeting shall be held within three calendar months after that date. No more than fifteen months shall elapse between the date of one Annual General Meeting and that of the next.
(b) Every annual general meeting shall be called by the Executive Committee. The secretary shall give at least 21 days' notice of the annual general meeting to all the members of the Association. All members of the Association shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.
(c) Before any other business is transacted at the first annual general meeting the persons present shall appoint a chairman. The chairman shall be the chairman of the subsequent annual general meetings, but if he or she is not present, before any other business is transacted, the persons present shall appoint a chairman of the meeting.
(d) The Executive Committee shall present to each annual general meeting the report and accounts of the Association for the preceding year.
(e) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by members of the Association in writing and must be in the hands of the secretary at least 14 days before the annual general meeting. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election must be by ballot.

15. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS
The Executive Committee may call a special general meeting of the Association at any time. If at least ten members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered the secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

16. PROCEDURE AT GENERAL MEETINGS
(a) The secretary or any other person specially appointed by the Executive Committee shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of the Association.
(b) There shall be a quorum when at least one tenth of the number of members of the Association for the time being or ten members whichever is the greater are present at the meeting.

17. NOTICES
Any notice required to be served on any member of the Association shall be in writing and shall be served by the secretary of the Executive Committee on any member either personally or by sending it through the post in a prepaid letter addressed to such member at his or her last known address in the United Kingdom, and any letter so sent shall be deemed to have been received within four days of posting.

18. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION
(a) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
(b) No amendment may be made to clause 1 (the name of the charity clause), clause 3 (the objects clause), clause 8 (Executive Committee members not to be personally interested clause), clause 19 (the dissolution clause), or this clause without the prior consent in writing of the Commissioners.
(c) No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at

law.
(d) The Executive Committee should promptly send to the Commissioners a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

19. DISSOLUTION

If the Executive Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association it shall call a meeting of all members of the Association, of which not less than 21 days' notice, stating the terms of the resolution to be proposed, shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by two-thirds majority of those present and voting the Executive Committee shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Association.

Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any debts and liabilities shall be given to or transferred to such other Associations having objects similar to the objects of the Association as its members may determine. Failing that it shall be returned to the members in equal amounts.

REGIONS

Northern: Cumbria, Cleveland, Northumberland, Durham, Tyne & Wear
Wales: All areas
Scotland: All areas
East Midlands: Derbyshire (except High Peak District), Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire
Eastern: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk
London: All boroughs
North West: Greater Manchester, High Peak District of Derbyshire, Lancashire, Cheshire
South East: Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex
South West: Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset
Southern: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, S.E. Dorset
West Midland: Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire. Staffordshire, Warwickshire
Yorkshire and Humberside: North, South and West Yorkshire, Humberside
Northern Ireland: All areas

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Declaration of Intent

N.A.W.G. supports the principles of Equal Opportunities, and aims to oppose discrimination in any form, whether on grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, religious belief, political persuasion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, economic status or class. N.A.W.G. aims to:

* be an equal opportunities employer;
* apply the same equal opportunities principles to volunteers as to staff;
* offer services to disabled people fairly and without discrimination;
* combat discrimination against disabled people and promote the provision of accessible buildings and facilities.

2. Code of Practice and Conduct

* **Recruitment:** Advertising for staff and volunteers will be undertaken as widely as possible, appropriate to the location and nature of the work. Applicants for paid and voluntary posts will be treated fairly. Decisions on recruitment and selection will be based solely on objective and job related criteria.
* **Training and Support** will be offered to all staff and volunteers. Every effort will be made to fit training opportunities round the other commitments of volunteers and part-time staff.
* **Events and Services** will be accessible to people with disabilities; if accessible premises are not available, alternative arrangements will be made when needed.
* **Harassment or Victimisation** of an employee, volunteer, service user, or member of the public will be viewed as unacceptable conduct.

3. Implementation

The Management Committee are responsible for implementing, monitoring, and review of this policy. Any incidence of discrimination should be reported to the Officers of the Committee.