

PACIFIC ISLANDS SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

THERE is a need to make the Pacific Islands better known and understood in the United Kingdom and Ireland. In other countries, notably France, Germany and Holland, this need has been recognised by the establishment of societies specialising in Pacific Island affairs. In order, therefore, to build closer and deeper relationships between the Pacific Islands, and the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and to have an organisation which will take a special interest in Pacific Islanders visiting or staying in the United Kingdom or the Irish Republic and which will encourage Pacific studies in these countries, the Pacific Islands Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland has been formed.

Article 1 - Name of the Society

The name of the Society shall be 'The Pacific Islands Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland', commonly known as 'The Pacific Islands Society'.

Article 2 - Objects of the Society

The objects of the Society are -

- a) to bring people with Pacific Islands interests into contact with each other through social gatherings and networks;
- b) to offer assistance and hospitality to visiting and resident Pacific Islanders;
- c) to co-operate with similar bodies in other countries, with governments, churches and other organisations in the Pacific Islands and with institutions anywhere concerned with the welfare of Pacific Islanders or with Pacific studies;
- d) to promote knowledge and understanding of the Pacific Islands, its peoples, cultures and current affairs, through public meetings and discussions, conferences and artistic displays;
- e) to provide a welcome and a platform for prominent visitors from the Pacific Islands to report on current affairs and issues from the region;
- f) to advocate Pacific Islands interests on issues involving government and other institutions and bodies in the UK and Ireland;
- g) to co-operate with and link societies and organisations which represent particular Pacific Islands countries or interests in the UK and Ireland and in Europe;
- h) to provide a network of expertise to supply accurate information on Pacific Islands topics and issues.

Article 3 - Membership

1. Members of the Pacific Islands Society shall be –
 - a) such Pacific Islanders and friends of the Pacific who, being willing to co-operate in furthering and carrying out the aims of the Society, have been admitted to the Society by its Council in such manner as the Council may from time to time determine;
 - b) members of the Council nominated in accordance with Article 6.1(d); and
 - c) Corporate Members and Kindred Organisations admitted under Article 3.2.
2. Bodies in agreement with the objects of the Society may be admitted to the Society by its Council as Corporate Members or Kindred Organisations as appropriate.
3. The Council may elect to honorary life membership of the Society a person whose services to the Society or to the Pacific Islands deserves recognition.
4. Members of the Society in their various categories shall pay such annual subscription as the Council may from time to time determine.
5. Any member of the Society may be removed from the roll of members by the votes of two-thirds of those members present at a meeting of Council if at least one month's notice of the intention to propose such a removal has been given in writing to the member concerned and to the members of the Council.
6. Should one year have elapsed since the payment of the annual subscription was due and notice have been given without effect, then the member will normally be deemed to have withdrawn from the Society.

Article 4 - Patrons

The Society may invite without limit to number, persons of appropriate status resident in or concerned with the Pacific Islands to become Patrons of the Society, and such Patrons shall be entitled to be kept informed of the affairs of the Society, to be consulted on matters affecting its work or the ordering of its affairs and to offer advice.

Article 5 - Administration

1. The administration of the Society and its affairs shall be vested in its officers and the Council.
2. Heads of permanent diplomatic missions representing Pacific Island States resident in London shall be joint presidents of the Society, if willing to serve.
3. Officers of the Council shall be: the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, the Membership Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Publicity Officer, hereinafter referred to as the 'Officers'.

4. The Officers shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting for a 3-year term and shall be eligible for re-election except that the Chairman shall only serve 2 consecutive terms.
5. An accidental vacancy in the Chairmanship shall be provisionally filled by the majority vote of those present at a meeting of the Council.
6. The Chairman of the Council shall preside at all General Meetings. The Chairman shall also preside at all meetings of the Council and shall be a member of all committees appointed by the Council. In his absence, or at his request, the Vice-Chairman shall preside or represent him.

Article 6 - The Council

1. The Council shall consist of –

- a) the officers of the Society;
- b) 6 members elected as prescribed in Article 6.2 at least one of whom shall be a Pacific Islander;
- c) co-opted members, without limit of number, to serve special interests or needs for a period of up to one year, subject to renewal; and
- d) members nominated by bodies designated by the Society who shall serve for as long as is desired by their nominating bodies or until a replacement is requested by a majority of the Council.

2. The following shall be requested to nominate a Council member in accordance with Article 6.1(d) –

- a) --
- b) --

3. The elected members of the Council shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting of the Society, one-third of them retiring each year by seniority of election and being eligible for re-election.

4. The Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Council at any time when instructed by the Chairman so to do, and on such date and at such place as the Chairman shall determine.

5. The Council shall meet not less than once in each calendar year.

6. One-third of the members of the Council shall form a quorum.

7. If the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be absent from a meeting of the Council, the meeting shall elect a chairman for the occasion. The decision of the Chairman, or acting Chairman, on any point of order or on the interpretation of the Constitution shall be final. All other questions shall be determined by a majority of the votes of those present, the Chairman, or acting chairman having a casting vote in addition to his own vote.

8. The Council may appoint standing committees for any purpose within the objects of the Society and may dissolve any such committee.

9. The Council may organise or recognise groups of members of the Society meeting together as branches of the Society which shall make their own branch rules subject to approval of the Council.

10. Any 5 members of the Council may request in writing that a special meeting of the Council be held. Such a meeting shall be convened within 6 weeks of the receipt of the letter by the Chairman of the Society.

11. There will be a vacancy on the Council if any elected member fails to attend meetings of the Council during a calendar year, but such person will be eligible for re-election.

Article 7 - General meetings

1. A general meeting of the Society, to be known as the Annual General Meeting, shall be held each year on a date and at a place to be decided by the Council

2. The Annual Report of the Council with a balance sheet and independently examined statement of accounts shall be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

3. Other general meetings may be called on the authority of the Council.

4. The Chairman shall summon a general meeting if 20 members of the Society sign a request to him to do so provided that in the view of the Chairman the object of the request lies within the objects of the Society.

5. Notice shall be given to all members not less than 3 weeks before any general meeting and the agenda shall be distributed before the meeting. If officers or Council members are due for election the Secretary shall call for nominations with the notice of the meeting.

6. If all the Presidents, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be absent from a General Meeting, the meeting shall elect a chairman for the occasion. The decision of the chairman on any point of order or on the interpretation of the Constitution shall be final. All other questions shall be determined by a majority of the votes of those present, the chairman having a casting vote in addition to his own vote. Corporate members and Kindred Organisations shall each have one vote only.

Article 8 - Finance

1. The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the Society and be responsible for the preparation of the annual balance sheet and statement of accounts.

2. The accounts shall be independently examined at the end of each calendar year by a suitably qualified independent examiner appointed by the Council.

3. The funds of the Society are at the disposal of the Council for all expenses connected with the administration of the Society and may be invested as the Council may determine.

4. The Council may appoint trustees to care for any property or other assets of the Society.

Article 9 - Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitution may be amended only at the Annual General Meeting or at a general meeting convened for the purpose. Notification of any proposed amendment shall be sent out with the agenda of the meeting, and shall be given to the Secretary not less than one month before the date of the meeting.

Article 10 - Dissolution of the Society

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1. If the Council decides that it is necessary to dissolve the Society, it shall call a Special General Meeting of which not less than 21 days' notice (stating the resolution to be proposed) shall be given. If the proposal is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of members present who have paid the necessary subscription and are entitled to vote, the Council shall have power to realise any assets held by, or on behalf of, the Society.

2. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to a charity concerned with the Pacific Islands, or a Society with similar aims to those of the Society, or to more than one of these. A copy of the Statement of Accounts, or Account and Statement for the final accounting period of the Society must be presented to the Council for approval before any dissolution is completed.

Historical Note

At an inaugural meeting of the Society held on December 12th, 1981, at London in the United Kingdom, the constitution was formally adopted. It was subsequently revised on

23 March 1985, 14 May 1988, 8 May 1993, 29 April 1995, 15 May 2004, 14 May 2005, 20 May 2006, 12 May 2007.

[JFW 17/07/08]

(As amended at AGM 2011)