

ROYAL NAVAL WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

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Section 1 - Name of the Association

1. The Association shall be known as the “Royal Naval Writers’ Association” abbreviated and commonly referred to as the “RNWA”.

Section 2 - Headquarters

2. Portsmouth area is to be the Headquarters of the Association. A Branch or Corresponding Representative shall be instituted should the need arise.

Section 3 - Definition of the Term “Writer”

3. The term “Writer” in these rules shall refer to all active and retired members of the Royal Navy or Royal Naval Reserve and includes:

- a. Serving members of the Logistics (Writer) Branch, regardless of rank held.
- b. Retired members of the Logistics (Writer) Branch or the former Writer Branch of the Supply and Secretariat Specialisation (including those sub-categorised as “Pay”, “General”, “Shorthand” or “Personnel”).
- c. Commissioned Officers, active or retired who served in a. or b. above.
- d. Those that re-categorised into or out of the Writer branch at any time.

Section 4 - Objectives of the Association

4. The key objectives of the RNWA are:

- a. **Primarily** to provide a medium to promote and **underpin the comradeship** and social interaction of its members, through an annual reunion dinner and various other events.
- b. Advance the currency and good standing of the Writer Branch and its exponents, regardless of previous, current or future nomenclature.
- d. Work to develop and foster the legacy of our Branch in perpetuity.

Section 5 - Membership

5. Writers entering the Association will be known as “Members” of the Association, commencing from date the joining fee is received.

6. Every member will be bound by this Constitution.

7. After 50 years paid up membership (not necessarily continuous) a member shall be eligible for election to Life Membership at a subsequent meeting of the Association.

8. Where a member contributes outstanding individual service for the benefit of the Association, they may be awarded honorary Life Membership, subject to a majority vote by the Committee. This will not normally be considered if the total time in membership is less than 25 years.

9. Where the Committee considers that an individual warrants membership but is not a "Writer" as defined in paragraph 3, they may elect that individual to honorary membership. In this case, the decision to elect is to be unanimous.

10. A member whose membership is discontinued shall be eligible for re-entry without payment of a joining fee within 3 years of the cessation of membership. After this date, they will be regarded as a new member and required to follow the application process accordingly. In either case, seniority will be adjusted to reflect the period of non-membership.

Section 6 - Subscriptions and Joining Fees

11. Subscriptions and fees are set and reviewed **when deemed necessary by the Committee** and are payable as follows:

a. Joining Fee. Applicants are to pay the Joining Fee prior to a membership being accepted.

b. Subscriptions.

(1) Annual Subscription. **Members pay an annual subscription by bank Standing Order arrangement**, normally effective on the first day of the month following acceptance into membership as communicated by the Membership Secretary, and annually on the anniversary of joining thereafter.

(2) Life Members and Honorary Life Members. Subscriptions are not payable.

(3) Subscriptions in Arrears. Where payment of the annual subscription is not forthcoming at the date of renewal, a reminder will be issued by the Membership Secretary, and the member afforded a period of 3 months to bring the subscription up to date.

Section 7 - Cessation of Membership

12. The circumstances where membership of the RNWA will cease are outlined as follows:

a. Non-Payment of Subscriptions. Should a member decide to cancel their annual Standing Order without first informing the Membership Secretary, or payment is not forthcoming within the 3 months grace period (unless

exceptional circumstances prevail), they are deemed to have voluntarily resigned from the Association, whereupon the Membership Secretary will instigate the appropriate administrative action.

b. Conduct. The name of a member who is believed to have acted in a manner that could bring the Association into disrepute or undermine the objectives of the RNWA, may be presented to the Committee for consideration as follows:

- (1) Any matter may only proceed to further investigation with the full and unanimous agreement of the Committee; no action is to be taken until such agreement is achieved and formally recorded.
- (2) In the event that the Committee, following due diligence and deliberation, decide, by a simple majority, that the issue is unfounded or has insufficient merit, the matter will be concluded and clearly recorded as such in the minutes of the meeting, anonymised as necessary to protect the identity of the individual.
- (3) Should the Committee, following due diligence and deliberation, decide unanimously that the issue is proven then the member may, at the discretion of the Committee, be sanctioned up to and including the immediate revocation of their RNWA membership.
- (4) In either case, the Committee's decision is to be formally conveyed to the member in writing and include all pertinent details of the issue that caused the decision to be made, along with an opportunity and time frame in which to make an appeal against the decision. The decision reached following any appeal will be deemed to be final.

Section 8 - Management

13. Management of the RNWA shall be vested in a Committee consisting of:

6 Officer roles: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Webmaster

4 elected Full Members

1 Active Service co-opted member (non-voting)

14. In the absence of the President, the Vice President will deputise. Should a state of emergency arise that makes it impossible for the affairs of the Association to be conducted in the normal manner, the administration of the Association shall be entrusted to any available Officer(s).

15. The Committee shall have control of the finances of the RNWA and such administrative powers as are necessary for performing the functions of the Association.

Section 9 - Election of Officials

16. Committee members will be elected annually (or, exceptionally, at an Extraordinary meeting); all officers and members of the Committee will therefore stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Due notice will be issued to potential candidates wishing to stand for election in the August Newsletter.

17. Where no nominations are forthcoming, each official and committee member shall remain in post. However, should more than one candidate emerge for any vacancy, a ballot will be conducted at the AGM and decided by simple majority. The names of all candidates put forward and the procedure for registering the votes of members who wish to do so, will be included in the calling notice for the AGM.

18. In the event of a candidate being elected who is not a current member of the Committee on the day of the AGM, then the outgoing Committee member will continue in that role until the end of the day, unless otherwise agreed prior to the election taking place.

19. If there are no nominees and therefore no post holder for a defined Officer role, the responsibilities of that role will, where possible, be performed by members of the Committee, according to which role is vacant.

Section 10 - Co-opted Members

20. The Committee may co-opt 1 serving Writer specialist to act in a professional advisory and promotional capacity. Furthermore, the Committee reserve the right to utilise the services of any person who could contribute specific skills or knowledge in the pursuit of the objectives and activities of the Association. Membership of the RNWA is not required.

21. Should a member of the Association be co-opted to the Committee, they will not be subject to the normal conditions of annual re-election but may stand for formal election should a vacancy on the Committee occur.

22. Voting rights will not be bestowed on any co-opted member of the Committee.

Section 11 - General Meetings

23. Committee meetings shall take place online at a time, periodicity and place as decided by the Committee and published in advance. This will usually be in alternate months, from January each year commencing at 18:30, followed by an invitation for members to join and observe the meeting at 18:45.

24. 3 Officers plus one 1 Committee member constitute a quorum. Only Officers and Committee members may vote at Committee meetings.

25. The order of conducting business at meetings shall be as follows:

Item 1 - Apologies for absence

Item 2 - Crossed the Bar (followed by a 1-minute silence)

Item 3 - Minutes of the previous meeting

Item 4 - Actions from previous minutes

Item 5 - President's Report

Item 6 - Treasurer's Report

Item 7 - Membership Secretary's Report

Item 8 - Matters for discussion

Item 9 - Any other business

Item 10 - Date of next meeting

26. Minutes will be circulated in draft form to all active participants at the relevant meeting, prior to being passed for ultimate agreement to the President. This may include non-Committee members who have raised issues or comments during the meeting, if applicable.

27. Approved minutes will be circulated to all Committee members, and any other members in attendance at the meeting, prior to being placed on the RNWA website and advertised as such to the wider membership.

Section 12 - Annual General Meeting

28. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held prior to the Annual Reunion Dinner each year.

29. Any motions are to be submitted to the Secretary for Committee consideration no later than 14 days before the meeting. The agenda will be published prior to the AGM, circulated electronically to all members of the Association. There will be no 'Any Other Business'.

30. Should an Agenda item require a ballot, all members will be invited to exercise their voting rights, either in person or by proxy at the AGM, or by post/email.

31. In the exceptional event that an Annual Reunion Dinner does not take place, the Committee reserve the right to hold the AGM by whatever means they deem

appropriate to ensure that due process is completed and minutes produced accordingly.

Section 13 - Extraordinary Meeting

32. Should circumstances or issues merit more immediate attention, the Committee may call an Extraordinary Meeting at any time; members will be informed accordingly.

Section 14 - Finance

33. The RNWA will maintain relevant and appropriate financial accounts and records, to be subject to annual audit.

a. Bank Accounts

(1) The Bankers of the Association shall be decided by the Committee.

(2) All cheques and bank withdrawal orders drawn on the Royal Naval Writers' Association bank account shall be prepared and signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by another official, as required by banking protocol. 2 Officers, in addition to the Treasurer, will be appointed for this function. Specimen signatures shall be lodged with the bank.

(3) Online payments/transfers are to be processed using the bank's online accounting functions. The Treasurer is to inform one of the nominated officials when payments/transfers require authorisation. That officer should then log into the online account and check the payment/transfer and authorise (or reject) as necessary.

(4) In all cases, the Officer countersigning cheques or authorising online payments must not be the recipient of the cheque or payment/transfer.

(5) On supersession of any of the named officials, the consequent changes in signatories/online authorisers shall be notified in accordance with the requirements of the bank concerned.

b. Honorariums. Modest sums in respect of Honorariums may be paid in appropriate circumstances at the discretion of the President.

c. Payment of Expenses. Reasonable expenses incurred by Officials and members conducting the official business of the Association will be paid from Association funds.

- d. Donation on Death of a Member. Where the Committee are informed of the death of a member, a donation of a sum to be decided by the Committee may be paid as specified by the family of the deceased.

Section 15 - Newsletter

34. Members of the RNWA will be kept acquainted with the regular proceedings of the Association (such as the financial statement, breakdown of membership numbers etc) along with broader items of interest via a Newsletter. Information will be provided periodically, to a member's registered email address.

Section 16 - Annual Draw

35. The RNWA is a very small organisation with limited scope to raise income sufficient to meet the objectives and long-term sustainability of the Association. Consequently, an Annual Draw will be conducted, to comply with current Small Lotteries legislation. The aim of the draw is to raise moderate funds in tandem with providing participating members with a potential attractive return. It shall be conducted by an approved and auditable electronic method and must be registered with the local authority,

36. The prize allocation will be agreed after the closing date by the Committee, guided by current legislation and with due deference to the level of income received.

37. Tickets may be sold to non-members. The names of the prize winners along with the sum raised for the Association will be published in the following Newsletter.

Section 17 - Annual Reunion Dinner

38. The Committee are committed to holding a Reunion dinner each year, usually at the home of the RNWA in Portsmouth, on the second Friday in October. Nonetheless, due consideration will be given to the importance of a particular anniversary, the availability of a particular Guest of Honour, feedback from members and any other relevant information, whereupon the Committee shall have the discretion to opt for a different venue.

39. This significant undertaking will be carried out primarily by the Secretary or a sub-committee delegated to organise all facets of the dinner and aim to obtain the best possible deal for members.

40. The Guest(s) of Honour and the Writer Branch Trainee of the Year accompanied by 1 companion will be invited to attend and subsequently hosted by the Association.

Section 18 - Royal Naval Writers' Association Trophy

41. It was agreed in 1987 to commission a trophy to be awarded annually to the "Writer Branch Trainee of the Year", with the purpose of embracing a spirit of friendly rivalry alongside a sense of comradeship within the Writer Branch itself.

42. The Trophy was presented to the Royal Naval Supply School at HMS RALEIGH in May 1988. It is now held on permanent display at the Defence School of Logistics and Administration (DSLA), located at Worthy Down in Hampshire.

43. Every class member of OR2 Writer courses engaged in all aspects of new entry Phase 2 writer training will be eligible for consideration; there is no requirement to be a member of the Association. The recipient of the award will be selected solely by the instructing staff of the Writer Training Squadron (WTS), who will notify the Association accordingly.

44. In addition to the Royal Naval Writers' Association Trophy, the winner will receive:

- a gift voucher (value to be set and reviewed by the Committee);
- an invitation to attend the Annual Reunion Dinner with a companion as guests of the Association; and,
- 2 years free membership of the Association.

45. As agreed by the WTS, a representative of the Association may be invited to present the prize at the Annual Awards Ceremony, held in DSLA. Should the recipient of the award be unable to attend the awards ceremony in DSLA but is able to attend the Annual Reunion Dinner, the Guest of Honour will be asked to present the Gift voucher at the dinner. Where the recipient is unable to attend either the DSLA Award Ceremony or the Reunion Dinner, then alternative arrangements will be made for the presentation.

Section 19 - Cenotaph – Remembrance Parade

46. The Association will apply annually for a place in the veterans' march past at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Should a place be awarded to a contingent of the RNWA, tickets will be allocated and prioritised as follows:

- a. President and Vice President (tickets will be re-allocated should neither of these officials be able to attend)
- b. Allocated on a first come basis, where there are fewer volunteers to take part than tickets available.
- c. By an open and transparent draw process, where there are more volunteers than tickets available.

Section 20 - Alterations to the Constitution

47. The method of effecting alterations to the Constitution shall be by proposal from a committee or individual member.

48. The member should make the proposal in writing and forward it to the Secretary for presentation in the agenda at the next committee meeting, for subsequent discussion and a vote. The majority shall be the decision of the Committee; a summary of the debate and indication of voting are to be recorded in the relevant meeting minutes.

49. **Where the proposal is supported**, it is to be included in the agenda and presented at the next AGM. Should the amendment be ratified at the AGM, it shall be deemed to be effective from the date of the AGM and minuted accordingly.

Section 21 - Dissolution of the Association

50. The Association may be dissolved by a resolution passed by two thirds majority of members voting (in person or by proxy) at an Extraordinary general meeting convened for the purpose. 14 days' notice will be given to all members.

51. The resolution shall give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by the Association after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities. Monies and property shall not be paid to or distributed among the members but will be given or transferred to such other organisation or charities having similar objectives to the Association as the Committee (or sub-Committee formed for that specific purpose) may determine, on behalf of members.

Annex:

A. Duties of RNWA Officials and Committee Members

DUTIES OF RNWA OFFICIALS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. The duties associated with each Officer role and those elected Committee members are broadly defined as follows.

a. **Duties of President**

- (1) To be acquainted with and to lead on the business of the Association, circumscribed by the RNWA Constitution.
- (2) To act as head of the RNWA Committee, chair meetings and ensure that the best interests of the Association are met. In the event of equal voting, the President shall have the casting vote.
- (3) To facilitate relevant and timely communication with Members and individuals, firms, associations, public bodies etc with business pertinent to the RNWA, **including representational requirements**.

b. **Duties of Vice President**. To be familiar with the modus operandi of the Association and, in the absence of the President, assume the duties and responsibilities (and remain in the role ad interim until the next AGM, should the President be unable to return to the role).

c. **Duties of Secretary**

- (1) To organise and attend all electronic media or in-person RNWA meetings, producing agendas and draft minutes and arranging advance invitations for members, as necessary.
- (2) To conduct the general correspondence of the Association (other than that dealt with by the President, Treasurer or Membership Secretary within the terms of their specific roles), and to keep accurate and accessible records.
- (3) To initiate and prepare Newsletters for ratification and subsequent distribution to members of the Association.
- (4) To organise the Annual Reunion Dinner and any extraneous events agreed by the Committee and keep the Committee apprised of progress and developments.
- (5) To organise the annual Draw in conjunction with officials and Committee members, on completion providing an itemised final income

and expenditure statement for the Treasurer and make returns to the local authority, as required.

(6) To apply annually for a place in the march past at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday and to coordinate the Association's input and attendance with the Royal British Legion.

(7) To canvas the membership for potential candidates for election to Committee Officer and Member posts, no later than the August Newsletter and, where necessary, organise and conduct a ballot at the AGM.

(8) To pay the Treasurer all monies received.

(9) To give a minimum of one month's notice of intention to resign the office of Secretary.

d. Duties of Membership Secretary

(1) To maintain a database of all active members of the Association, and retain records of those that have resigned, died or otherwise left the Association.

(2) To formally welcome new members to the Association.

(3) To provide an overview of the total membership at General Meetings and apprise the Committee of new members along with those who have lapsed and are therefore deemed to have resigned from the Association

(4) To ensure that bank payments in respect of membership joining fees and annual subscriptions have been received.

(5) To publish the anonymised details and dates that membership renewals that **fall due in the next quarter**, utilising the RNWA website and subsequently remind members of their subscription liability where payment is not forthcoming.

(6) To provide a conduit for members and/or non-members who may, from time to time, request to contact former colleagues, through the offices of the Association whilst ensuring that the personal details of either individual(s) are not released without prior approval.

e. Duties of Treasurer

(1) To keep the accounts of the Association using a recognised manual methodology or software package, maintaining a record of all income and expenditure during the **financial year 1 January - 31 December**.

- (2) To hold primacy of control of the RNWA bank account and:
 - (a) conduct the day-to-day banking business for the Association;
 - (b) ensure that at least 2 named countersigning officers are authorised and available at any time; and,
 - (c) provide 'view only' bank account access to the Membership Secretary.
- (3) To take receipts and make payments for the RNWA, making sure all transactions are completed without undue delay and monies received are paid to the authorised bank account.
- (4) To prepare and provide a financial statement within the Treasurer's Report at each General Meeting and at the AGM.
- (5) To make-up the annual account at the end of the financial year (or as required by the Committee), in readiness for examination and presentation to the members.

f. Duties of Webmaster.

- (1) To manage and optimise the content and functionality of the official website of the RNWA as required by the Committee, arranging cost-effective domain and hosting provision.
- (2) To take all reasonable steps to protect the RNWA website, maintain resilience and monitor for vulnerabilities, ensuring that appropriate software is regularly updated, and alerting the Committee when issues arise.
- (3) To take regular back-up action and maintain the recovery procedure.

g. Duties of Committee Members. To work in the interests of the membership and to assist (such as appointment to a sub-committee) and monitor the ongoing work of the Committee.