



THE COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION

1. Name

- 1.1. The Commonwealth Association, hereinafter referred to as "the Association", is hereby established.

2. Nature, aims and purposes

- 2.1. The Association is established in London, in the United Kingdom.
- 2.2. The aims and purposes of the Association are:

- (a) to support and promote the values and objectives of the Commonwealth as enunciated in the Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles (1971), the Harare Commonwealth Declaration (1991), and by subsequent Commonwealth Heads of Government Declarations and Statements, including those codified in the Commonwealth Charter of 2012;
- (b) to support the Commonwealth Secretariat as the principal mechanism of inter-governmental co-operation and consultation in the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Foundation and other Commonwealth organisations;
- (c) to promote the debate of subjects of Commonwealth interest and to advance a positive image of the Commonwealth in all member countries through active involvement with the media, non-governmental organisations, educational institutions and civil society groups whenever the opportunities arise and, where appropriate, through independent activities which complement and do not duplicate the activities of other Commonwealth organisations;
- (d) to provide a social and cultural forum for the pursuit of the common interests of members of the Association;
- (e) to provide a resource base of Commonwealth expertise whether for research, policy development or technical assistance as required;
- (f) to undertake any activities that would be conducive to the promotion and achievement of the aims and purposes set out above and to collaborate with other organisations to that end.

3. Membership

- 3.1. The Association's membership shall be open to all former staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat, whether locally or nationally recruited, and field experts employed under the auspices of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, wherever located. Applicants need to submit a membership form to the Secretary and pay an annual membership fee as determined by the Executive Committee from time to time, and agree to be bound by the provisions of this Constitution.
- 3.2. Membership of the Association shall also be open to former staff of the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning, and to former salaried staff of all other accredited Commonwealth organisations and associations.
- 3.3. The granting or withdrawal of membership shall be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

4. Executive Committee

- 4.1. The Association shall have an Executive Committee which shall comprise the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer, Returning Officer and up to three other elected members, together with up to three members co-opted by the Executive Committee at its discretion, on an annual basis. Each member of the Executive Committee will be expected to play his or her part in furthering the Association's objectives. Specific responsibilities of the officers and members of the Committee are set out separately.
- 4.2. The Association may appoint Patrons who shall be nominated by the Executive Committee and approved by the membership in a General Meeting, supported by two-thirds of those present and voting.
- 4.3. The Executive Committee shall from time to time establish sub-committees for specific purposes, and shall review their appointment and operations annually including receiving accounts for any funds received or expended under delegated powers.
- 4.4. The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the membership in a General Meeting for a one-year term. The election procedures will be as separately prescribed by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the membership in a General Meeting.
- 4.5. The affairs of the Association shall be managed by the Executive Committee. Subject to the overall direction of the General Meeting, the Executive Committee may take any action on behalf of the Association which, in its opinion, will further the aims and purposes of the Association.
- 4.6. All questions shall be decided by consensus or by a show of hands, unless a formal vote is requested. In the case of equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second, or casting, vote.
- 4.7. The Executive Committee shall meet not fewer than three times in the calendar year, other than the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and the quorum for the conduct of its business shall be three. Meetings can be held virtually or in person.

- 4.8. Any casual vacancy in the Executive Committee may be filled by the Executive Committee and any person appointed to fill such a vacancy shall hold office until the end of the unexpired term of office being filled and shall be eligible for re-election.

5. General Meetings

- 5.1. An AGM of the members of the Association shall ordinarily be held not later than six months after the end of the financial year, and at such a place **or in a virtual format** as the Executive Committee shall determine. At least four weeks' notice of the time and place of the AGM shall be given to all members in writing by the Secretary.
- 5.2. At an AGM, the business to be discussed shall include the election of all members of the Executive Committee, the appointment of an auditor, the consideration of the Chair's report, the audited accounts and other matters as may be necessary.
- 5.3. At a General Meeting any matter requiring a decision shall be resolved, so far as is practicable, by consensus or, failing that, by a majority of those present and voting, including those casting proxy votes.
- 5.4. Any member unable to attend a General Meeting in person, **and where virtual attendance is not possible**, may apply to the Secretary for a proxy vote, to be exercised by a nominated member on his or her behalf only on special resolutions and constitutional amendments for which due notice has been given.
- 5.5. The quorum for the conduct of business at a General Meeting shall be fifteen.

6. Financial Arrangements

- 6.1. Funds collected or raised by subscription for the purposes of the Association shall be deposited in the name of the Association in an account at a bank approved by the Executive Committee.
- 6.2. The Treasurer and the Secretary (or, in his/her absence the Chair) shall jointly operate the account of the Association according to the directions of the Executive Committee.
- 6.3. The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts and report to the Executive Committee at each meeting, and submit an annual financial report and accounts to the AGM.
- 6.4. The financial year shall be from 1 January to 31 December.

7. Amendment of the Constitution

- 7.1. A General Meeting may amend this Constitution by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Notice of any amendment must be given at least 21 days in advance.
- 7.2. Special resolutions including constitutional amendments may be proposed by the Executive Committee or by any member, provided that the resolution is duly proposed, seconded and supported by three additional members.

8. Association Headquarters

- 8.1. The Association shall be based in London, under arrangements determined by the Executive Committee.

9. Dissolution

- 9.1. If the Executive Committee by a two-thirds majority of its elected membership decides at any time 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 shall be given, stating the terms of the Motion to be proposed thereat. If the motion is carried unanimously or by no less than a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, the Association shall stand dissolved forthwith and any assets, including funds, held in the name of the Association shall be given or transferred to such other association or institution having aims and purposes similar to those of the Association as the Association may decide at the Meeting by a simple majority of the members present and voting.

Adopted in June 2003 and subsequently amended in July 2008, July 2009 and in July 2021 (proposed)