

Verulam Writers' Circle Constitution

1. Name

- 1.1 The name of the Club shall be Verulam Writers' Circle, hereafter referred to as VWC.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of VWC shall be:
- 2.2 *To promote the interests of writers in St Albans and the surrounding area.*
- 2.3 *To offer support and encouragement to writers whatever their level of ability or training;*
- 2.4 *To provide a variety of events, competitions and services in furtherance of these aims, as determined by the Committee and Annual General Meeting (AGM).*

3. Membership

- 3.1 Membership of VWC shall be open to all.
- 3.2 VWC shall have at least *five* members. All members are required to pay a yearly membership fee which shall be set annually at the AGM and publicised on VWC's website.
- 3.3 Online Membership, a special class of membership giving access to the online services only, shall be available to individuals at the discretion of the committee, at a fee determined by the committee and provided that at least one full member of VWC vouches for that individual.
- 3.4 Meetings shall be open to non-members on payment of a visitor's fee to be set at the AGM.
- 3.5 Members must pay their membership fees in a timely manner. The membership of anyone who fails to pay their membership fee within a reasonable time of the beginning of the VWC programme year, a reminder having been given, shall be deemed to have lapsed.
- 3.6 Members must respect the intellectual property of other members as well as visitors to VWC meetings and users of VWC's website. By joining VWC, members undertake not to copy or in any way disseminate, the creative work or intellectual property of other members or visitors without their express consent, nor misuse or misappropriate it.
- 3.7 It is a condition of membership that members do not in any way infringe the copyright of other members or visitors. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in membership being cancelled.

4. Committee

- 4.1 A Committee shall be elected from among the members to manage the affairs of VWC.
- 4.2 All Committee members shall be elected at the AGM.
- 4.3 The Committee shall have not less than *five* members including the following officers:
- (a) Chairman – Co-ordinator
- (b) Secretary – Responsible for correspondence and note taking

(c) Treasurer – Responsible for financial control

(d) President – Responsible for representing VWC ceremonially and organising the President's Competition

- 4.4 The Honorary post of President shall normally be awarded to a member of substantial service and good standing who shall then continue to hold that office until retirement subject only to re-election at the AGM.
- 4.5 The entire Committee shall be elected annually, though all Committee members shall be eligible for re-election.
- 4.6 Additional officers may be elected as deemed appropriate at the AGM.
- 4.7 New Committee members may be co-opted from among the ordinary membership at any time subject to confirmation at the AGM.
- 4.8 The Committee may invite persons to attend any of its meetings as participants without the power to vote.
- 4.9 No member of the Committee, sub committee or any of the ordinary membership shall receive remuneration from or on behalf of VWC in money or monies worth with the exception of out of pocket expenses.
- 4.10 The Committee will meet at least three times per year.
- 4.11 The Committee shall act inclusively and in the best interests of the entire membership at all times.

5. Sub-committees

- 5.1 The Committee may appoint sub-committees for special purposes.
- 5.2 When setting up a sub committee the Committee shall determine its terms of reference, composition and powers.
- 5.3 Any sub-committee shall have a chairperson who shall report on that sub-committee's activities and decisions to the Committee..
- 5.4 Sub-committees shall have the power to co-opt additional persons from the membership as and when required.

6. Annual General Meetings (AGMs)

- 6.1 The Committee shall convene an AGM near the beginning of each year of the VWC programme.
- 6.2 The membership shall be given not less than 21 days' notice of the AGM by advertisement on VWC's website, email, or other appropriate means.
- 6.3 Proposals for election to the Committee shall be put forward by the Chairman, subject to being seconded by any member, and may also be put forward by any member subject to being seconded by another member.

7 Special Meetings

- 7.1 The Secretary shall have the power to call Special Meetings which shall be open to all members and can be held for the purposes of altering the Constitution or considering any matter that should be referred to the members in general. The Secretary shall call a Special Meeting within two months at the request of not less than *two* Committee members or not less than *four* ordinary members.
- 7.2 In the event of a Special Meeting being called, the membership shall be given not less than 21 days' notice of the meeting by advertisement on VWC's website, email or other means.
- 7.3 Such notice must include a clear statement of the object of the meeting and any

resolution to be proposed for approval at the meeting.

8. Rules of Procedure

8.1 QUORUM: a minimum of *three* Committee members shall form a quorum at Committee meetings, and a minimum of *three* Committee members and *two* ordinary members shall form a quorum at the AGM or SGM. *In the absence of the chairman, at any committee meeting, the members present will elect anyone present to be the chairman of that meeting.*

8.2 VOTING: every matter, except where this constitution provides otherwise, shall be determined by a majority of members present and voting. In the case of equal votes the chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote.

8.3 Voting shall be determined by a show of hands except where a request is made by any two or more members for a ballot, or where two or more proposals are made for election to the same office on the Committee, in which case voting shall be by secret ballot of all members present and voting.

8.4 MINUTES: a minute of all general and Committee meetings shall be kept and formally adopted.

9. Finance

9.1 The VWC's financial year shall run from 1st August to 31st July in the following year.

9.2 VWC is an unincorporated community organisation with no shareholders and will operate on a not-for-profit basis. The Committee will endeavour to ensure that sufficient surpluses are retained to provide for the orderly running of VWC and otherwise apply any and all surpluses in pursuit of the aims and objectives set out in Section 2 of this Constitution. Surpluses shall not be distributed otherwise than under the terms set out in Section 11 (Dissolution).

9.3 The Committee, or members appointed by the Committee, shall have the right to raise funds for the exclusive use of VWC, in furtherance of its objectives set out in Section 2, and to obtain and receive monies and funds by way of contributions, donations, fees, grants, legacies and payments by public bodies and others .

9.4 The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of VWC. All incoming funds shall be lodged without deduction to VWC's bank or building society account. All deeds, contracts, cheques, bills of exchange, or other formal documents relating to VWC's assets or obligations, or its bank or building society account, shall be signed by either the Treasurer or Chairman.

9.5 Annual accounts of VWC shall be prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the Committee. A copy of such accounts will be made available to all members at the AGM.

10. Alterations to Constitution

10.1 Any alterations to this constitution shall require a Special Resolution at an AGM or Special General Meeting approved by two thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting at which the resolution is proposed.

11. Dissolution

11.1 VWC may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a majority of members present and voting at a Special Meeting convened for the purpose.

11.2 Any assets remaining after the settling of any debts and liabilities of VWC shall be applied towards charitable bodies in or around St Albans, which have similar aims to those of VWC, such charitable bodies to be decided and approved by the aforesaid majority.

12 Online services:

12.1 All paid-up and Honorary members shall be permitted access to VWC's website member area, including the message board.

12.2 At the discretion of the Committee, former members of good standing shall be permitted access to the message board.

12.3 Further, all paid-up members shall be permitted to create posts on VWC's blog and non-members may comment on posts, subject to editorial control by VWC Webmasters.

12.4 All paid-up members, and **only** paid up members, shall be granted exclusive access to the online back-up area, subject to the terms set out on VWC's website.

12.5 A copy of this constitution shall be available for download from VWC's website.

13 Miscellaneous provisions

13.1 **Honorary Life Members:** The Chairman, acting on the advice of the Committee, may from time to time recommend that a member or former member who has made an exceptional contribution to VWC over a sustained period be nominated to be appointed an Honorary Life Member, with all of the benefits of full membership, including access to the member sections of the website. Such nominations may happen no more than once a year and will be subject to ratification at the AGM with approval by a two-thirds majority of those present.

13.2 **Standards of behaviour:** With robust debate essential to the aims of VWC, a necessary safeguard is the requirement for civil behaviour. To this end the Chairman shall have the power to eject from any meeting any individual who, after appropriate warning, displays unacceptable behaviour .

13.3 The Committee shall have the right to expel from VWC any member who displays persistently unacceptable behaviour or decide if any other action is needed.

13.4 **Equal Opportunities:** VWC will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age, subject only to the caveat that its business is carried out in the English language.

We certify that this is a current copy of the constitution of Verulam Writers' Circle, which was adopted at a Special General Meeting held at:

St Michael's Church Hall, on(date)

Signed: Chairman

Signed: Secretary