

THE PAGAN FEDERATION
CONSTITUTION

November 2007

The Pagan Federation Constitution

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1 Name

The name of the Association is 'The Pagan Federation'. The Pagan Federation may include any constitutionally federated or affiliated bodies within it operating under their own constitution.

“Federal Bodies” or “Federated Bodies” means complete Federated Districts or national bodies with Federated Districts.

1.1 The Three Principles of The Pagan Federation

Although no longer included as a requirement for membership of The Pagan Federation (except possibly in those areas with Affiliated/federated status whose elected Councils set their own criteria), the Three Principles set out below have historically provided a basis for its work in education and the Pagan community and are supported and aspired to by many Pagans.

- i Love for and Kinship with Nature. Reverence for the life force and its ever-renewing cycles of life and death.
- ii A Positive Morality in which the individual is responsible for the discovery and development of their true nature in harmony with the outer world and community. This is often expressed as “Do what you will, as long as it harms none”.
- iii Recognition of the Divine, which transcends gender, acknowledging both the female and male aspect of the Deity.

2 Aims and Objectives

The Aims and Objectives of The Pagan Federation are:

2.1

To seek to support all Pagans in their personal and public life, to help ensure that they have the same rights as the followers of other beliefs and members of other religions.

2.2

To promote a positive profile for Pagans and Paganism and to provide information on Pagan paths and beliefs to the media, official bodies and the greater community.

2.3

To facilitate effective communication, education and dialogue within and between Pagan communities and with non Pagans, through publications and events.

3 Membership

3.1 Conditions for Membership

There are three membership categories of The Pagan Federation. There is also a class of Subscribers. All members must be sixteen years of age or over. They must consider themselves to be Pagans and must agree to support the aims and objectives of The Pagan Federation. Federated Districts of The Pagan Federation may, with the permission of their District Council, set additional conditions of membership. It is expected of members that they positively support the aims and objectives of The Pagan Federation. The Pagan Federation welcomes all Pagans regardless of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability.

3.2 Categories of Membership

3.2.1

Full members are those who consider themselves to be Pagans, who support the aims and objectives of The Pagan Federation and who have paid the Full member's subscription. They may or may not take the magazine. After one year Full members have voting rights and are eligible to stand for the Committee.

3.2.2

Honorary members are those who consider themselves to be Pagans, who support the aims and objectives of The Pagan Federation and who have given outstanding service to The Pagan Federation or the Pagan community. They pay no annual membership or magazine subscription and have the voting rights and other rights of Full members. Honorary members are proposed by the Committee or by the Council and agreed by the Council on the basis of a two-thirds majority of votes cast. Proposals for Honorary membership shall be circulated to Council at least 28 days prior to the Council meeting.

3.2.3

Life members are those who consider themselves to be Pagans, who support the aims and objectives of The Pagan Federation and have been granted life membership for services to The Pagan Federation or the Pagan community. They have all the benefits of Full members but pay no annual membership or magazine subscription. Life members are proposed by Committee or by the Council and agreed by the Council on the basis of a two thirds majority vote cast. Proposals for life membership shall be circulated to Council at least 28 day's prior to the Council meeting.

3.3 Subscribers

Subscribers are those who do not wish to become full members but who wish to subscribe to the magazine. They must be sixteen years of age or over. They have no voting rights and receive none of the other benefits of full membership of The Pagan Federation.

3.4 Subscriptions

Subscribers and members shall pay fees determined by the Council.

3.5 Withdrawal of Membership

3.5.1

Members may withdraw by notifying the General Secretary of The Pagan Federation in writing. No refund of subscription will be paid to any resigning member.

3.5.2

A member whose subscription is overdue by more than six months will cease to receive any of the privileges of membership until the subscription is renewed. Provided that a renewal subscription is received within three years, he or she may be readmitted at the same level as before.

3.5.3

A member whose subscription remains unpaid for three years or more will be deemed to have lapsed and will be required to reapply for membership.

3.5.4

Membership of The Pagan Federation may be withdrawn from any person who no longer considers themselves to be a Pagan or for breaches of the Code of Conduct. Withdrawal of membership (or any other application of penalties for breaching the Code) will be carried out in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure of The Pagan Federation (available on request).

3.6 Refusal of Subscription of Membership

The Pagan Federation reserves the right to refuse the subscription or membership of any individual.

3.7 Overseas Subscribers and Members

Pagans with areas with an existing Pagan Federation affiliate organisation applying to join The Pagan Federation are referred to the Affiliated Organisation in that area.

4 Meetings

4.1

The Pagan Federation may hold public or private meetings, courses, workshops, conferences, rites and ceremonies and other gatherings.

4.2

Admission to such gatherings shall be at the discretion of the organisers, and in compliance with any terms or conditions imposed by the venue.

5 The Council

5.1 The Rôle of the Council

5.1.1

To ensure the Committee and membership have access to a continuity of knowledge about The Pagan Federation business, history and aims.

5.1.2

To advise the Committee on policy whereby the Aims and Objectives of The Pagan Federation may be furthered. The Council may suggest proposals to the Committee for the advancement of Paganism and of The Pagan Federation. The Committee shall have the final decision as to whether any policy proposals put forward by the Council should be implemented. The Committee is required to provide reasons to the Council should it decide not to implement any proposal. In the event of disagreement, a full vote of the Council shall be taken, with a two-thirds majority required to carry the decision.

5.1.3

To ensure the Committee does not depart from the Constitution of The Pagan Federation, that members' money and confidentiality are safeguarded, and that the legal and statutory requirements of The Pagan Federation are met including the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

5.1.4

To provide such information and advice to the Committee as is necessary to ensure the integrity and good management of The Pagan Federation's finances and to meet its legal and statutory obligations. The Council shall also approve the annual subscription rates and the appointment of the Treasurer.

5.1.5

The Council may decide on cash limits on the Committee's spending and such constraints as it sees fit on the authority of the Committee to sign cheques or engage in financial transactions on The Pagan Federation's behalf.

5.1.6

The Council shall act as final arbiters in any decision to revoke the membership of a member of The Pagan Federation for misconduct, or to dismiss a Committee member from the Committee.

5.1.7

To undertake such tasks as may be deemed necessary by a majority of the Council in order to further the Aims and Objectives of The Pagan Federation.

5.2 Officers and Members of the Council

5.2.1 The President

The Committee shall select a President from the Committee and Council, subject to the approval of the Council. The President must be a Full member of The Pagan Federation. The President will serve for three years initially. Thereafter, the appointment must be approved annually by the Council. In the event of the resignation of a President, or the Council not wishing to ratify the appointment, the Committee will arrange for the election or selection of a new President. In the event of the appointment not being filled, an acting President may be selected by the Committee for a period of no more than six months.

5.2.2 General Secretary

The Committee shall select the General Secretary, whose selection must be ratified by the Council. The General Secretary must be a Full member of The Pagan Federation. The General Secretary will serve for three years initially. Thereafter, the appointment to be approved annually by the Council. In the event of the resignation of the General Secretary or the Council not wishing to ratify the appointment, the Committee will select a new General Secretary.

5.2.3 Treasurer

The Committee shall select the Treasurer, who will serve for three years initially and whose selection must be approved by the Council. Thereafter, the appointment to be approved annually by the Council. In the event of the resignation of the Treasurer or the Council not wishing to ratify the appointment, the Committee will select a new Treasurer.

5.2.4 Publications Officer

The Committee shall select the Publications Officer, whose selection must be approved by the Council. The Publications Officer must be a Full member of The Pagan Federation. The Publications Officer will serve for three years initially. Thereafter, the appointment to be approved annually by the Council. In the event of the resignation of the Publications Officer or the Council not wishing to ratify the appointment, the Committee will select a new Publications Officer.

5.2.5 District Liaison Officer

The Committee shall select the District Liaison Officer, whose selection must be approved by the Council. The District Liaison Officer must be a Full member of The Pagan Federation. The District Liaison Officer will serve for three years initially. Thereafter, the appointment to be approved annually by the Council. In the event of the resignation of the District Liaison Officer or the Council not wishing to ratify the appointment, the Committee will select a new District Liaison Officer.

5.2.6 Members

The following are eligible for membership of the Council. Their method of entry to the Council is given below. The maximum number of each category is given in brackets.

- A. The President: (1) Elected by or selected by the Committee to serve initially for three years.
- B. The Committee Officers (General Secretary, Treasurer, Publications Officer, and District Liaison Officer): (Maximum places 4). Proposed by the Committee and ratified by the Council, initially for a period of three years and thereafter by annual invitation of the Council.
- C. The Elected Committee members (maximum places 6). Elected by postal ballot of Full members.
- D. Co-opted Committee members or retired Officers: (maximum places 2) Co-opted onto the Committee and ratified by the Council for an annual term, renewable annually.
- E. District Managers and Regional Co-ordinators or their unmandated representatives (maximum places 30 - 2 per district outside London, 4 from London). The Council may decide the number of regional representatives who may sit on the Council and how any choice amongst them is to be made. For the purposes of Council meetings, the International Manager and National Co-ordinators shall have the same rights as UK District Managers and Regional Co-ordinators. For the purposes of postal ballots all District Managers and Regional Co-ordinators (even when this exceeds the number of Council places) will be deemed eligible.
- F. Honorary members: (maximum places 13) A maximum of thirteen Honorary Members have automatic right to sit on the Council. They will be asked if they wish to take up this option. In the event of there being more than thirteen Honorary Members who wish to sit on the Council, the Council shall decide to which Honorary Members the places will be offered.
- G. Past Presidents: (maximum places 5). The Council may invite past Presidents to serve on the Council for a period of three years. In the event of there being more than five eligible past Presidents, the Council shall vote on who shall continue to serve. In the event of there being vacancies, the Council may invite past Presidents to serve for an additional period to be decided by the Council.
- H. Pagan Federation Managers (Maximum 5). In the event of there being more than 5 Managers wishing to attend, the Council shall decide which Managers shall be entitled to vote.

5.2.7 Observers

The Council through the General Secretary may invite members, representatives of other Pagan groups, and other persons, as observers to Council meetings. Their presence must be announced at the beginning of the meeting, or at their arrival if later, and approved by a majority of those Council members present. Observers have no voting rights.

5.3 Meetings of the Council

5.3.1 Annual Meeting

An Annual Council Meeting shall be held each calendar year. Written notice of at least 28 clear days must be given of the day, time and place of the Annual Council Meeting to all Council. Notice is deemed to have been served 48 hours after posting.

5.3.2 Business of Annual Meeting

In addition to any business that the Committee or Council put before the Annual Council Meeting, the following business shall be transacted:

- a. Consideration of the report of the activities of The Pagan Federation during the previous year. This report shall include a record of attendances at Committee meetings held since the last Annual Council meeting, together with a report on the major decisions made by the Committee.
- b. Consideration of the financial and membership reports of the previous year.
- c. Ratification of the appointment of Committee Officers and co-opted Committee members.
- d. Filling vacancies on the Council.

5.3.3 Other Meetings

The Committee must call at least one further Council meeting in addition to the Annual Council Meeting. In addition a quorum of the Council can also call a Council Meeting. Written notice of at least 14 clear days must be given of the day, time and place of such meetings to all Council members. Notice is deemed to have been served 48 hours after posting.

5.3.4 Quorum

Fifteen Council members constitute a quorum. If the number of members of the Council present at a Council meeting falls below fifteen, the continuing members may act for the purpose of filling vacancies to the Council but for no other purpose.

5.3.5 Voting

Voting on resolutions to be put to the Annual Council Meeting or any other Council meeting may be made in person or by an unmandated representative. In the event of a tie, the President shall make a casting vote if present at the meeting. Otherwise a decision will be made by lot. Council members may be balloted by post on urgent matters. All votes involving named individuals must be by secret ballot.

6 The Committee

6.1 The Rôle of the Committee

6.1.1

The Committee is responsible for the day to day running of The Pagan Federation, and in particular, providing information to Pagans and members of the public about Paganism, working to promote a positive and accurate image of Pagans and Paganism to the general public, official bodies and the media, organising anti-defamation work, producing the Quarterly Magazine, running the membership department, organising the Annual Conference and keeping up to date The Pagan Federation's administrative systems.

6.1.2

- a. The Committee through the District Liaison Officer shall appoint District Managers to handle membership correspondence and to develop and administer the districts, in those districts which are not also federated bodies of The Pagan Federation. Regional Co-ordinators are appointed District Officers within the countries of the United Kingdom and Ireland whose rôle and duties are defined by their job description. District Managers must have been full members of The Pagan Federation for at least one year, Regional Co-Ordinators must be full members of The Pagan Federation.
- b. The Committee through the District Liaison Officer shall appoint an International Manager to develop and administer overseas membership. The International Manager must have been a full member of The Pagan Federation for at least one year. National Co-ordinators are appointed officers of Pagan Federation International whose role and duties are defined by their job description. They must be Full Members of The Pagan Federation.
- c. The Committee through the District Liaison Officer shall organise at least one meeting a year for District Managers and Regional Co-ordinators to discuss administrative matters.

6.1.3

The Committee shall be responsible for drawing up and applying

- (a) A Code of Conduct for all members and officers.
- (b) A Complaints Procedure.
- (c) A Disciplinary Procedure (Which may be combined with either (a) or (b))

And appointing the necessary managers to manage these.

6.1.4

The Committee shall perform such other administrative tasks as are necessary to achieve the Aims and Objectives of The Pagan Federation.

6.2 Officers and Members of the Committee

6.2.1

The Committee shall consist of the President, General Secretary, Treasurer, Publications Officer, District Liaison Officer, and up to six elected members and two members from The Pagan Federation Council selected by The Pagan Federation Council (with the emphasis being on District Managers and Regional Co-ordinators) Additionally two heads of sub-committees, or Officers resigned from the Committee may be co-opted for an annual term (in addition to any co-opted places left by resigning elected members) by agreement of the Council, renewable by agreement of the Council.

6.2.2

The Committee may give the title of Vice President to up to two elected members. This decision must be ratified by the Council.

6.2.3 Terms of service of elected Committee members.

- a. Elected Committee members shall serve for a term of three years or for that portion of a three year term left by a resignation or dismissal.
- b. Elected Committee members may continue to serve the Committee by offering themselves for re-election at the end of their term or being appointed General Secretary, Treasurer, District Liaison Officer, Publications Officer, or President.
- c. In the event of one of the elected members of the Committee resigning, being dismissed, or being appointed to the post of one of the Officers of The Pagan Federation, their place is held open for co-option in addition to the two co-opted places until the next election.

6.2.4

Dismissal of Committee members from the Committee for irregular attendance or other reasons may be made by a recommendation of a two thirds majority vote of the Committee and ratified at a Council meeting or by a postal ballot by a two thirds majority of Council votes cast. Committee members shall be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

6.2.5

Committee places left vacant by a resigning or dismissed elected Committee member may be filled in accordance with the procedures for Committee elections or in the interim by co-option. In the case of an Officer, a replacement may be co-opted and must be endorsed at the next Council meeting or by postal ballot of the Council.

6.2.6

The President's and Committee Officers' duties will be as set out in their written job descriptions which may be amended at the discretion of the Committee or Council.

6.2.7

Any member seeking appointment or election to the Committee must declare in advance any interest, financial or otherwise, of themselves or their partner in any part of The Pagan Federation or in any individual, organisation or company providing services to The Pagan Federation. Such declaration would not necessarily bar them from the post.

6.3 Committee Elections

The Committee shall arrange at such time agreed by the Council for an annual postal ballot of all Full members, for the purpose of filling vacant elected places on the Committee. The two candidates with the most votes shall serve for three years. Any other vacant places, due to resignation or dismissal, shall be filled by other candidates, in order of votes cast, to serve the outstanding balance of the terms of those resigning or dismissed.

6.3.1

The rules governing the conduct of the election are:

- a. Candidates must be paid up Full members of The Pagan Federation for one year at the time of their nomination, and must be proposed and seconded by paid up Full members of The Pagan Federation who are eligible to vote.
- b. Details of the name and membership numbers of the Candidate, Proposer, and Secunder shall appear on the ballot papers, together with brief biographical details and district of residence of the candidate, and a short statement by their proposers and seconders.
- c. Full members who are eligible to vote must receive 28 days notice of calls for nominations for Committee elections. Notice is deemed to have been served with the nomination papers which are to be sent to all Full members who are eligible to vote at least two calendar months before the date of the ballot.
- d. Ballot forms shall be sent to all Full members at least twenty-eight days before the closing date for the return of ballot papers. Each Full member shall be entitled to as many votes as there are vacancies.
- e. Both nomination and ballot forms are deemed to have been served 48 hours after posting.
- f. A Returning Officer shall be appointed by the Committee to receive the nominations and the ballot forms and shall oversee the counting of votes. Ballot papers must be returned to an address nominated by the Returning Officer and arrive by the due date, in sealed envelopes clearly marked ballot. The closing date for the ballot shall be determined by the Committee.
- g. In addition to the officers nominated by the Council to oversee and count the votes, the candidates are entitled to be represented by either their Proposer or Secunder at the count. Notice should be given in writing 7 days before the count of the intention to attend.
- h. Ballot papers shall be stored unopened by the Returning Officer until the date of the count. Only when all of the appointed Officers and representatives who have given notice of attendance are present should the process of opening and counting the votes begin.
- i. In the event of a major disruption to the postal service in the month leading up to the closing date for ballot forms, the closing date for the ballot will be postponed for one calendar month.
- j. Ballot papers received after the closing date or with more than the permitted number of votes will be deemed void.

- k. In the event of large numbers of papers being spoiled, or if there is reasonable suspicion that the ballot papers have been tampered with, the ballot papers will be placed in sealed containers for later examination by the Council at an extraordinary meeting. The Council may invite observers to such a meeting to act as independent witnesses at the reopening of the containers. Should sufficient papers have been interfered with to alter the result of the election, the Council may declare the ballot void and make immediate arrangements to hold another ballot, on the existing list of candidates. The new ballot papers shall be sent out not more than six weeks after the date of the original count.
- l. Members shall be informed of the result of the ballot by announcement in the next scheduled issue of Pagan Dawn, or by other method deemed appropriate by the Council.

6.4 Election of two Committee members from The Pagan Federation Council

- a. That the internal vote of Council be conducted by mail (electronic/land as appropriate)
- b. That the ballot be conducted by the District Liaison Officer assisted by The Pagan Federation General Secretary with one person chosen by Council to act as an independent overseer.
- c. That any officer choosing to stand having been a Full member of The Pagan Federation for twelve months immediately prior to the time of nomination.
- d. That the Committee term of office for the two members selected from the Council be twelve months and that the internal vote of Council be held annually to the timescale of the main Committee election so that ratifications will take place at the November Council meeting.
- e. That any Officer choosing to stand is not currently standing as a candidate in any main Committee election.

6.5 Meetings of the Committee

6.5.1

These shall take place on such days, times and in such places as the majority of the Committee members see fit. A Committee member may complain to the Council if s/he deems the arrangements for meetings to be unreasonable. The majority decision of the Committee is final.

6.5.2

Committee decisions will be taken wherever possible by consensus or if not by vote. In the event of a tie, the President has a casting vote. In the absence of the President, a decision will be made by lot.

6.5.3

Six Committee members constitute a quorum.

6.5.4

Written notice of at least 28 clear days must be given of the day, time and place of the Committee meeting to all Committee members. Notice is deemed to have been served 48 hours after posting.

6.6 Minutes and reporting

A digest of Committee minutes shall be made available to Council members upon request. The work of the Council shall be reported to the Full members by means of a newsletter or any other means deemed appropriate by the Council. Additionally the work of the Council and Committee will also be published as an annual report.

7 Sub-Committees

The Council or the Committee may appoint sub-committees and working parties with special terms of reference to assist them in their work. These shall report to their parent body as required by the parent body. Chairs of sub-committees may be co-opted onto the Committee (maximum 2 places) by agreement of the Council. If so co-opted they will also be entitled to attend and vote at Council meetings.

8. Federated Bodies & Affiliated Organisations

8.1 Federated bodies within The Pagan Federation shall operate under their own constitutions and procedures, sharing common purpose with The Pagan Federation.

8.2 Organisations can be affiliated to The Pagan Federation by vote of Council if they meet the following criteria:

- i.) Have in their constitution Aims and Objectives compatible with the Aims and Objectives of other Pagan Federation and Pagan Federation Affiliate Organisations.
- ii.) Their membership criteria are in harmony with those of other Pagan Federation and Pagan Federation affiliate organisations.

8.3 Members of The Pagan Federation moving to areas where there is an affiliated organisation may either transfer their membership fully to that organisation or opt to remain members of The Pagan Federation. In the later case, membership benefits they may receive from the affiliate organisation shall be determined by that organisation.

9 Winding Up of The Pagan Federation

9.1 The Pagan Federation may be wound up by the calling of a meeting by the Council for that purpose and a vote in support of winding up by two thirds of the members present.

9.2 In the event of the winding up of The Pagan Federation, federated bodies within The Pagan federation may choose to continue in being as independent organisations using the existing corporate identity of The Pagan federation.

10 Alterations to the Constitution

The Constitution can be amended only by Council by a two thirds majority of votes cast. The Council may choose by a two-thirds majority of votes cast to ballot Full members on changes to the Constitution.

11. Availability of the Constitution.

One copy of the Constitution shall be provided free of charge to all Full members.