



# CONSTITUTION

## 1. NAME

- 1.1 The Association shall be called: "The Coroners Officers and Staff Association" (COASA) hereinafter referred to as the Association
- 1.2 Within this Constitution, coroner's officers and coroner's administrative staff are defined as persons responsible to a senior coroner who have a role in the procedures for dealing with reported deaths

## 2. AIM, OBJECTIVES and ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 2.1 The Aim shall be to:-  
promote and advance the professional standing and the excellence in the working practices of coroners' officers and coroner's staff in order to enhance the service provided to bereaved people, coroners and associated professionals
- 2.2 The Objectives and Activities shall be to:
  - 2.2.1 raise the profile and seek recognition for coroner's officers and coroner's administrative staff
  - 2.2.2 provide a national network for discussion and sharing of good practice for all those working within or in association with the coroner service
  - 2.2.3 promote access to national, accredited training and continuous professional development for coroner's officers and coroner's administrative staff
  - 2.2.4 promote excellence and national professional standards and a benchmarking framework for all coroner's officers and coroner's administrative staff
  - 2.2.5 support the pursuit of national standards of pay, terms and conditions for all coroner's officers and coroner's administrative staff
  - 2.2.6 participate with any relevant government department or other organisation or association on any matter concerning coroner's officers and coroner's administrative staff
  - 2.2.7 act as advocates and as a consulting and advisory body where required by the Rules of the Association

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Membership is available to individuals over the age of 18
- 3.2 All members are bound by the Constitution and Rules of the Association
- 3.3 The categories of membership of the Association shall be: Full, Associate, Retired, Overseas, Affiliate, Honorary, Life and Student as specified by the Rules of the Association
- 3.4 All members shall promote the Aim and Objectives of the Association
- 3.5 Membership shall not be transferable
- 3.6 The membership of any member whose subscription is not renewed within 28 days upon falling due will be suspended and may be terminated
- 3.7 In order to resign any membership, written notice must be made to the Treasurer
- 3.8 Full, Associate and Life members only shall be entitled to one vote on any matter balloted
- 3.9 Voting on matters of Association business at an annual general meeting (AGM) shall be in person. However, a signed statement appointing a proxy may be forwarded to the secretary 2 weeks in advance of the AGM to which it applies

#### **4. EXECUTIVE STEERING GROUP**

- 4.1 Shall be the Council
- 4.2 The Council shall consist of the Council Officers and not less than 2 and no more than 8 Council Fellows
- 4.3 The Council will be responsible for the conduct of the business of the Association as outlined in the Rules of the Association
- 4.4 The Council shall form a quorum with four Council Members present comprising at least one Council Officer  
Where a quorum is not available a fewer number of Council Members, comprising at least one Council Officer, may act to conduct immediate business always subject to ratification by the Council
- 4.5 Every decision of the council shall be determined by a simple majority of votes of the Council Members present and voting on the question. In the case of equality of votes the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote
- 4.6 Where any Council Member has a potential conflict of interest in any particular issue it should be declared to the meeting. The meeting should determine whether the conflict is such that the Council Member should not be able to vote on that issue. Failure to declare that conflict of interest could render that Council Member being removed from the Council
- 4.7 Where the Council enter into formal arrangements with other organisations, such an arrangement will be communicated to the membership as soon as reasonably practicable. The arrangement will be deemed to be ratified except where at least 10% of the voting membership express written objection within 10 days of the notice being given, in which case a ballot of all voting members will be held
- 4.8 Where the Council convene a sub-committee, it shall report to Council which will determine all decisions and output(s)
- POWERS of the COUNCIL**
- 4.9 Interpretations, matters and actions of the Council shall always be directed towards the benefit of the Association in furtherance of the Aim and Objectives of the Association
- 4.10 Subject to the above and the Rules of the Association, the Council may exercise any lawful action by means of the following powers to conduct the business of the Association, to:
- 4.10.1 ▪ make decisions in the matters of interpretation of the Constitution and Rules and decide all matters not covered explicitly by the Constitution and Rules of the Association
- 4.10.2 ▪ make, amend and implement or interpret the Rules of the Association for the management of the Association. No alteration may be in conflict with the constitution
- 4.10.3 ▪ co-opt any Full or Associate member to the Council in the event of a vacancy for a Council Fellow
- 4.10.4 ▪ convene and constitute any sub-committee
- 4.10.5 ▪ co-opt any person to a sub-committee for a particular reason
- 4.10.6 ▪ raise funds and receive monies
- 4.10.7 ▪ abandon any meeting
- 4.10.8 ▪ appoint a person to undertake independent examination of the accounts
- 4.10.9 ▪ disburse an individual (who is not a member of the Association) as necessary
- 4.10.10 ▪ decline an application for, or terminate a membership where it is considered that membership would be detrimental to the aim, objectives and activities of the Association
- 4.10.11 ▪ decline an application for Council membership or release a Council Member or co-opted sub-committee member, where it is considered that to appoint or continue as a Council Member or co-opted sub-committee member would be detrimental to the aim, objectives and activities of the Association
- 4.10.12 ▪ enter into formal or informal arrangements with other organisations or associations

## **MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL**

- 4.11 Full and Associate members shall be eligible to hold an elected position on the Council provided that the majority of Council Members are Full members
- 4.12 All members of the Council shall be elected by ballot of the voting members of the Association
- 4.13 All vacancies for Council positions will be announced to members via the website with minimum 4 weeks notice of closing date for application. Any application received after this time will be declared null and void
- 4.14 Vacancies for Council Members may be elected upon as they occur and shall be ratified at the following AGM. The term of office being two years from ratification
- 4.15 At the end of a term of office a Council Member may stand for re-election at the AGM
- 4.16 Council Members will be expected to undertake such tasks as outlined in the Rules of the Association
- 4.17 Council Members and Ordinary Members carrying out official and authorised duties on behalf of the Association may claim appropriate expenses as per the Expenses Policy in force at the time
- 4.18 Co-opted members shall not be eligible to vote on Council matters
- 4.19 Council members or members of a sub-committee may resign their position by written notice to the secretary

## **FELLOWS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- 4.20 Council Fellows being ordinary council members
- 4.21 Any person wishing to stand for election as a Council Fellow must submit a written application before the closing date

## **OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- 4.22 Shall consist of: Chair; Vice Chair; Secretary; Treasurer  
No one person can hold two of these positions at the same time other than in an acting capacity
- 4.23 Any person wishing to stand for election as a Council Officer must submit a written application supported by nomination before the closing date
- 4.24 To stand for position of Chair the candidate must have previously served as a Council member (elected or co-opted)
- 4.25 In the event of incapacity, absence or retirement of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall assume the role of Acting Chair until the office can be filled by election
- 4.26 In the event of incapacity or resignation of the Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer the Chair shall have power to appoint a suitable person to carry out those duties until the office can be filled by election

## **5. MEETINGS**

- 5.1 The Council should meet at least twice per year in addition to the AGM
- 5.2 The omission to communicate any notice of a meeting to any member shall not invalidate the holding of that meeting or the passing of any resolutions thereat

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

- 5.3 There shall be an AGM of the Association within 12 months of the previous AGM or the nearest date thereafter
- 5.4 The date, time and place of the AGM will be displayed to members at the earliest opportunity, at least 4 weeks in advance
- 5.5 The agenda shall be determined by the Chair, in consultation with the Secretary
- 5.6 The agenda shall be published to members with at least two weeks notice, excepting any additional urgent items
- 5.7 An AGM will be quorate where at least 3 Council Members and 5 ordinary voting members are present

5.8	At each AGM there will be a statement of accounts, report of the activity of the Association and ratification of appointment of Council Officers or Council Fellows, Honorary or Life members
5.9	Non-members may be permitted to be present during an AGM
5.10	A written report of the AGM will be made following the AGM as soon as reasonably practical
<b>EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS (EGM)</b>	
5.11	An EGM shall be called following a resolution received by the Council which is signed by at least 25% of the voting membership
5.12	Notice of the EGM shall indicate the nature of the business to be discussed. No other business will be considered
5.13	Not less than 21 days notice shall be given of an EGM
5.14	An EGM will be quorate where at least 3 Council Members and 25% of other voting members are present. Non members will not be permitted to attend an EGM
5.15	Voting at an EGM shall be in person and proxy votes shall not be accepted
5.16	At an EGM, an ad hoc chair shall be elected from the voting members present, for the duration of that EGM. The election shall be carried by a simple majority of those voting members present
5.17	Power to remove any Council Member or any member(s) from the Association, shall be invested in that meeting by the simple vote of a majority of voting members present, provided that all members of the Association have been duly informed of the EGM and the proposal and the person(s) concerned has been notified in writing
<b>6 FINANCE</b>	
6.1	The Association is a “not for profit” Association
6.2	The Association accounts will be independently examined by a person(s) appointed by the Council
6.3	Financial records shall be retained for minimum 6 years
<b>SUBSCRIPTIONS</b>	
6.4	All members of the Association shall pay an annual subscription, the amount to be agreed by the Council
6.5	Retired, Affiliate, Student and Overseas members may pay a reduced rate, which shall be proposed by the Council and agreed at the AGM
6.6	On appointment as a Life member or Honorary member such person shall pay no further subscriptions
6.7	Payment of the subscription is due on confirmation of acceptance of individual membership and at the appropriate interval as agreed with the Treasurer
6.8	Membership subscription must be received within 28 days of the due date or membership may be suspended or terminated
6.9	The individual member shall remain liable for their membership subscription until the membership is terminated by written notice. It is the members’ responsibility to cancel bank payments
6.10	There shall be no refund of subscriptions other than in exceptional circumstances, to be considered on an individual basis by the Council
6.11	In the event of the dissolution of the Association the funds and other assets after payment of all proper debts and liabilities, shall not be distributed among the members but shall be transferred to a charitable institution appointed by a majority vote of those present at the EGM convened for the purpose of the dissolution
6.12	Any debts shall be shared between any registered members, on a pro rata basis according to the level of subscription

## **7. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 7.1 The Constitution may be altered at an AGM, where four weeks prior notice of the alterations are given Approval shall be by a simple majority of those voting members present (including proxy votes). Alterations may also be made at an EGM convened for that purpose
- 7.2 A member may propose an amendment to the Constitution or Rules of the Association by notice to the Council in writing at least 12 weeks prior to the AGM
- 7.3 Members will be advised of any amendments to the Constitution or Rules agreed at an AGM or EGM

## **8. DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION**

- 8.1 The Association shall not be dissolved except at an EGM called for that purpose. The motion for dissolution must be agreed by at least 66% of the voting members present, that is at least 50% of the voting membership

This Constitution was adopted at an AGM held at Milton Keynes Coroners Court on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013