

HighlandLIT

Constitution

HighlandLIT is a membership group run by an elected committee for the purpose of promoting reading and writing for adults (16 years and over).

1. Aim

To bring together people in the Highland and Islands of Scotland who have an interest in the written word and the wider world of publishing, providing an opportunity to discuss books, projects and ideas.

2. Objectives

To achieve this aim, HighlandLIT will:

- 1) Hold regular events (e.g.: monthly)
- 2) Organise occasional events (e.g.: one-off or annual)
- 3) Work with other agencies to provide regular or occasional events

3. Powers

In pursuance of these objectives, Members of HighlandLIT will:

- 1) Hold an Annual General Meeting and call Extraordinary General Meetings, as required
- 2) Annually elect an Executive Committee from the membership
- 3) Open a bank account
- 4) Generate income and fundraise
- 5) Commission, purchase or hire professionals, goods, services and facilities

4. Structure

A) HighlandLIT Membership

Membership is open to any individual over 16 years of age who has paid the annual fee to be a member. Membership shall entitle the holder to:

- 1) Participation in General Meetings
- 2) Propose and vote on amendments to the constitution
- 3) Vote on proposals tabled by the committee at the meeting
- 4) Request to attend a committee meeting as an observer
- 5) Stand for election to the committee
- 6) Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred by carrying out HighlandLIT work

7) Any other benefit as determine by the committee

B) Committee membership

The day-to-day running of HighlandLIT shall be the responsibility of a committee consisting of not less than three and no more than ten elected members, with a minimum quorum of three. Committee members are elected by the members attending the Annual General Meeting. A minimum of three members are to be elected each year to the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Other roles are determined by the committee depending upon need, advertised prior to the General Meeting and a member elected to each role.

Following election each committee member will:

- 1) Hold a specific role (or combined roles) on the committee for one year
- 2) Stand down at the end of the year or give written notice if needing to resign before the year's end
- 3) Stand for election to the committee for no more than six consecutive years
- 4) Hold regular committee meetings sufficient to organise planned events
- 5) Vote on proposals for the furtherance of the Aim and Objectives of HighlandLIT
- 6) Organise an Annual General Meeting on behalf of members giving members a minimum of 14 day notice of the date of the meeting, providing the agenda and papers relating to the business of the meeting
- 7) Receive automatic membership (free gratis) whilst serving on the committee
- 8) Attend free of charge when assisting at events organised by HighlandLIT
- 9) Receive refunds of out-of-pocket expenses made whilst undertaking committee work

Decision making is on the basis of a simple majority vote. If there is an equal number of votes on each side, the Chair will have an additional casting vote.

5. Data Protection

HighlandLIT will collect data to enable it to achieve its aim and objectives only. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure personal information is held securely and will not be shared with a third party without the consent of the individual concerned.

6. Equality and Diversity

HighlandLIT membership is open to all and members are expected to respect the diversity and equality of each member. HighlandLIT hosted events are open to the general public and the committee will make every effort to avoid direct or indirect discrimination in the planning of events. Together, members and the committee will work to create a safe and inclusive atmosphere in pursuance of the aim and objectives of HighlandLIT.

The Chair should be informed if someone believes someone has been treated unfairly or discriminated against. The Chair has the power to investigate the incident, report the findings to the committee in order that the committee decide what action may be taken. The Chair has the power to remove someone's membership and bar membership, if the committee think this an appropriate response.

7. General Meeting

HighlandLIT's member's ultimate authority is the Annual General Meeting at which it shall hold the committee to account. The Annual General Meeting will take place in the first three months of the calendar year with a minimum quorum of six. Its role will be to:

- 1) Receive the Chair's report
- 2) Accept the end of year financial statements
- 3) Approve its constitution
- 4) Agree policy statements, as required
- 5) Elect the committee for that year

Extraordinary General Meetings may be called by either a simple majority of the committee or a written request by 25% of the membership.

Changes to the Constitution can be brought to the Annual General Meeting by the Committee, or can be proposed at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting by the membership. To call a meeting, 14 day notice is required, providing the agenda and proposed changes to the constitution. Changes are made by majority voting with the chair casting the deciding vote when the vote is equally split.

8. Events

- 1) Hold regular events for members and guests, at which for example, they can:
 - a) Read their work
 - b) Attend writing workshops
 - c) Meet published writers and poets and hear them discuss their experiences and read from their work
 - d) Discuss books
- 2) Organise occasional events for members and guests, at which for example, they can:
 - e) Entre competitions
 - f) Attend residential courses
 - g) Meet other groups
- 3) Co-host with another provider regular or occasional events for the public, at which for example, they can contribute to:

- h) Reading and the discussion of books
- i) Creative writing
- j) Promoting local festivals
- k) National events and strategy

7. Accounts

The financial year shall run from January to December. A Balance Sheet will be presented by the Committee at the year's end Annual General Meeting.

The Committee shall:

- 1) Maintain a bank account on behalf of HighlandLIT members with a minimum of two signatories
- 2) Ensure all money is spent in pursuance of the aims and objectives as laid out in this constitution
- 3) Ensure proper accounting records are maintained
- 4) Comply with any statutory accounting requirements, seeking external audit, if required
- 5) Ensure funds raised from a funder are spent within the rules of the funding body

8. Dissolution

Members can decide to fold HighlandLIT following a two thirds majority vote at a General Meeting. This is a two stage process:

1. Following a successful proposal to dissolve the organisation at a General Meeting the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary are tasked with winding-up the assets of the membership, including, as required:

- Paying creditors
- Notifying funders and return unspent funds
- Disposal of equipment
- Closure of website and social media accounts
- Closure of bank account
- Deciding where to deposit money still held (for example: donated to a Highland and/or Island organisation involved with promoting reading or writing)
- Any other task deemed necessary

2. Call an Extraordinary General Meeting to report back on the final closure arrangements and for the remaining committee members stand down and record the end the organisation formally.

9. Indemnity

No Member can be held liable for any loss suffered by the HighlandLIT unless wilfully caused by that member.

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