

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS
NATIONAL CONSTITUTION
(Revised) APRIL 2003**

1. Name

The name of the Association shall be :-

'THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS'.

Hereinafter referred to in this Constitution as the 'Association'.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Association shall be:-

- 2.1 To promote and safeguard the interest of its members and their dependants and to actively liaise with other pensioner organizations.
- 2.2 To promote measures for Member's welfare, companionship and social contacts.
- 2.3 To maintain links with serving members of the Fire Service.
- 2.4 The Association has no political affiliation.

3. Membership

Membership of the Association shall be open to:-

- 3.1 Former uniformed personnel, whether wholtime or part time who have retired or were discharged (other than on grounds of having committed an offence or misdemeanour) from Fire Brigades maintained by Fire Authorities in the United Kingdom, under the Fire Services Act to date.

Every such person joining the Association shall be styled a 'Member' with the power to vote at Branch meetings.

- 3.2 A member may join his local Brigade Branch, where such a Branch exists. However, if that member wishes, because of other factors, he/she may become a Direct Member of NARF.
- 3.3 Branches, at their discretion, may admit other persons as Associate Members, who will be entitled to all the rights and benefits afforded to members, providing that they pay the prescribed annual subscription at Branch, District and National levels. Those Associate Members and Honorary members who do not pay the prescribed annual subscription will have no rights and will not benefit from any of the services offered by the Association. Their names will not be recorded on the National Database.
- 3.4 The National Council, District Committees or Branches may grant Honorary Life Membership to such persons as they deem appropriate.
- 3.5 Annually, at a National Council Meeting, the National Subscription for Direct Members of the Association shall be determined as in Section 7.

- 3.6 The Direct Membership Secretary (or other designated person) will maintain a record of all Direct Members details and will pass relevant membership details to the National Membership Secretary. The designated person will also inform the Direct Members about any subscription alterations.
- 3.7 Direct members may submit a Motion for an Annual General Meeting, provided that the Motion has the written support from 14 other Direct Members and is submitted in accordance with the rules of the Association.
- 3.8 The Council may suspend / cease membership of any member, if the Council consider that the individual has :-
- a) Brought the association into disrepute, or
 - b) Carried out any action designed to undermine, or considered to have undermined the authority of the National Council of the Association, or
 - c) Been found to have mismanaged or misappropriated Association funds, or
 - d) Carried out any other action or misdemeanour, which the Council considers to have adversely affected the image and/or aims of the Association.
 - e) In extreme cases which warrant an 'instant' judgement being made, any three of the Principal Officers of the Council may make a decision to suspend a member, but, will be accountable to the National Council at the following Council Meeting and will have to justify their actions at that meeting.
 - f) Any member so suspended shall be entitled to a hearing and if desired with representation, following which the member will have the suspension withdrawn or membership denied.

4. Organisation

- 4.1 Branches elect their own Officers and Committee from their members and make their own rules and Standing Orders, provided that these are not inconsistent with this Constitution.
- 4.2.1 Branches shall (save in exceptional circumstances as determined by the National Council) be grouped into workable Districts and each Branch shall be entitled to be represented on and vote at meetings of the District Committee.
- 4.2.2 Districts shall, from their members, elect their own Officers and Committee, hereafter referred to as 'District Committee'. They are to make their own rules or Standing Orders, provided that they are not inconsistent with this Constitution.
- 4.2.3 Records of business transacted by the District Committee shall be maintained and copies of Minutes of such meetings shall be sent to each of their Branch Secretaries.
- 4.2.4 District Secretaries shall be responsible for circulating promptly to the Secretaries of the Branches within their District, all relevant information forwarded by the General Secretary.
- 4.2.5 District Secretaries will make known to the General Secretary any decisions taken within the District which may need to be passed to Direct Members.
- 4.2.6 Direct Members will be members of a separate District, to be known as District 15 and will be represented on The Council by the Direct Membership Secretary.

5. National Council

5.1 The business of the Association shall be managed by a National Council, hereafter referred to as ' The Council '.

The Council is the governing body of the Association and shall have the power to make Standing Orders not inconsistent with the Constitution. All business and matters of procedure at the Council and Council Committee meetings, shall be conducted in accordance with such Standing Orders. The Council shall have the power to vary, alter or revoke, any such Standing Orders.

5.2.1. The Council shall consist of:-

National President

National Vice President

General Secretary

National Treasurer

One representative, elected annually by each District Committee.

5.2.2. The President will preside at the Annual General Meeting and meetings of The Council.

He shall have the right to attend such other meetings as he may consider necessary to further the aims of the Association.

He shall perform such further functions and duties as may be assigned to him by The Council.

5.2.3. The Vice-President shall, in the absence of the President, preside and undertake the duties of the President at such meetings. He shall carry out such further duties as may be assigned to him by The Council.

5.2.4 The General Secretary will be responsible, under the direction of The Council for conducting general correspondence and keeping accurate records as necessary for efficient administration. He shall on all occasions, as far as it is practicable, act only within agreed policies of The Council. Any matters not defined in these policies or queries which may arise are to be referred to the next meeting of The Council before any action is taken, or if urgent, must be referred to the President for his ruling. The General Secretary will ensure that all members of The Council and District Secretaries, are kept informed of all relevant matters. He shall attend Annual General Meetings and all meetings of The Council, at which he will ensure that an accurate record is made, to include the names of all those attending, apologies received for non-attendance, matters discussed and decisions reached. He will produce this record in the form of Minutes kept on file, copies of which he/she will circulate to all members of The Council and District Secretaries. He will present these Minutes at the next applicable meeting for acceptance and signing by the Chairman of that meeting. If the General Secretary is absent from a meeting, the Chairman of that meeting will arrange for the Minutes to be recorded and passed on to the General Secretary for file and circulation. The General Secretary will perform such other duties as specified in this Constitution or as directed by The Council.

5.3.1 The appointment of the National President and Vice-President shall be for an initial period of three years (save in exceptional circumstances as determined by The Council), elected at an Annual General Meeting.

After this period has elapsed, the National Council may recommend to the members that, in the interests of continuity and efficiency, both officers be permitted to continue in post for a further period of three years, subject always to their agreement. Thereafter, both officers may subsequently offer themselves for re-election in future years.

- 5.3.2 Should the National President not seek to remain in post after the initial period, the Vice-President will normally succeed to the post of National President and will in any event, normally succeed the President after a six year term of office has elapsed.
- 5.3.3 The appointment of the National Vice-President shall follow the recommendation of The Council.
- 5.3.4 The Council is empowered to appoint a General Secretary and a National Treasurer, each with an assistant, if considered necessary. Such appointments to be reported to the next Annual general Meeting.
- 5.3.5 The Council shall have the power to co-opt, when necessary, for a specific purpose, a person, or persons, who may, or may not be members of the Association. Such co-opted persons shall not have the power to vote at the meetings of The Council and any co-options shall cease at the meeting of The Council, held prior to the Annual General Meeting. They will be eligible for a further period of co-option if required.
- 5.3.6 Life Vice-Presidents may be appointed by members at an Annual General Meeting on the recommendation of The Council, as a recognition of outstanding service to the Association. Life Vice-Presidents shall be non-voting members of The Council.
- 5.3.7 When a District Representative is unable to attend a meeting of The Council the District representative, as authorised by the District Committee, should appoint a substitute to attend, with the authority to vote, provided that the substitute is a member of the District Committee.
- 5.3.8 The Council may appoint such committees as is considered necessary, with specific terms of reference and authority.
- 5.3.9 The Council shall regulate its own proceedings within the terms of this Constitution and Standing Orders.
- 5.3.10 The quorum for a Council Meeting shall be two thirds of the Council Members empowered to vote at such meetings. Voting shall be by a show of hands, or by ballot, as decided by The Council National Officers shall have one vote. District Representatives with a registered membership of less than 600, shall have one vote:
- 600 - 1199 shall have two votes:
1200 and over shall have three votes.
- If the votes are equal, The Chairman of that meeting shall have a second casting vote.
- 5.3.11 Reasonable travelling expenses and out of pocket expenses may be allowed to members of The Council attending meetings of The Council, or are otherwise engaged on Association business with the authority of The Council or the President, as set out in Standing Orders.

6 Assets

The income and property of the Association shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the 'Aims and Objectives' of the Association as set out in Clause 2 of this Constitution.

7. Finance

7.1 Subscriptions

- 7.1.1 The Financial Year shall be from 1st January to the 31st December.
- 7.1.2 The annual subscriptions shall be determined for the following year at an Annual General Meeting and are payable to the District Treasurer for every Member of each Branch within the appropriate District.
- 7.1.3 The District Treasurer shall forward the subscriptions to the National Treasurer using the form provided, as early as possible following the 1st January each year.
- 7.1.4 In the event that a Branch is not part of a District, in accordance with Clause 4.2.1 of this Constitution, the Branch Treasurer shall forward the subscriptions for that Branch directly to the National Treasurer, in the same manner as in Clause 7.1.3.
- 7.1.5 All Direct Members will annually pay to the National Treasurer that subscription as determined by The Council, from year to year, at the Spring National Council meeting. It will be the Direct Member's responsibility to forward the subscription to the National Treasurer by using the Membership Renewal Form, which will be published each year in the NARF Autumn Newsletter.
- 7.1.6 In the event of a Branch or District being unable to continue effectively, for whatever reason, that Branch or District may ask the National treasurer, on behalf of The Council, to hold all financial assets belonging to that Branch or District for a maximum period of ten years, at the end of which time the assets become the property of the Association, with the Branch or District having no further claim to the monies. However, if the Branch or District is able to reform in the ten year period, then the financial assets will be returned to the Branch or District, along with 50% of the net interest (i.e. that is for each year that the account is held by the (National Treasurer), on the account of that Branch or District.
- 7.1.7 Any member who is more than twelve months in arrears with their subscriptions, shall be removed from the National Database, providing that the Member has been given due notice, in writing that he / she are in default.

7.2 Accounts

- 7.2.1 The National Treasurer shall be responsible, under the general direction of The Council, for the administration of the Association's financial affairs.
- 7.2.2 The National Treasurer shall be responsible for the accounting, records and financial procedures of the Association in relation to income received, expenditure, assets and liabilities.
- 7.2.3 The National Treasurer shall be responsible for the Association's banking arrangements and shall operate such accounts in the name of the Association.
- 7.2.4 The National Treasurer shall submit a statement of the Association's financial position to all meetings of The Council.

- 7.2.5 The National Treasurer shall, at the Annual General Meeting of the Association, submit a statement of the Association's financial affairs. The statement should be independently audited by a competent auditor, duly elected at the previous Annual General Meeting. Where possible, this statement should be in the hands of Council Members, with the notice of the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.2.6 In normal circumstances, the National Treasurer shall be the only Officer empowered to incur expenditure on behalf of the Association, albeit exceptionally the President shall have power to act.

8. Annual General Meeting

- 8.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held at such time and place as The Council determine, usually in the month of March.
- 8.2 The Agenda and the procedure for the Annual General Meeting shall be in accordance with Standing Orders and the Programme determined by The Council.
- 8.3.1 The voting in Council Meetings shall be in accordance with Clause 5.3.10 of the Constitution.
- 8.3.2 The voting at Annual General Meetings will be by a show of hands, unless a Member calls for a 'card vote'. The number of voting members detailed on the 'card vote' shall be the total paid up membership of the District as at the 31st December of the previous year.

9 Notices of Motion proposed for the Annual General Meeting

- 9.1 Notices of Motion proposed for the Annual General Meeting may be submitted by District Committees, or by Branches via District Committees. All Notices of Motion shall be sent to reach the General Secretary not later than 31st December each year.
- 9.2 Notices of Motion received by the specified date, shall be placed on the Agenda and circulated to all District Committees by the General Secretary not later than 31st January each year. District secretaries shall be responsible for informing the Branches within their District. The General Secretary shall also inform the Secretaries of Branches not included in a District, in accordance with Clause 4.2.1 of this Constitution.
- 9.3 Any amendment to a Notice of Motion must be received by the General Secretary in sufficient time for him to circulate these at least fourteen days before the commencement of the Annual General Meeting.
- 9.4 Any closing dates must be rigorously adhered to.
- 9.5 Composition of Motions will be discussed by The Council at its meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 9.6 Emergency Motions

A Motion of some matter of importance, which has arisen since the specified closing date for the Motions for the Annual General Meeting may be accepted, provided that no less than two thirds of the Council Members agree.

10. Special General Meetings

- 10.1 A Special General Meeting of the Association may be convened by the President, or in response to a request, in writing, to the General Secretary, by not less than six separate District Committees. The General Secretary shall convene such meetings.
- 10.2 Procedure shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, for the conduct of such meetings.
- 10.3 Voting shall be in accordance with Clause 8.3.2 of this Constitution.
- 10.4 Direct Members may not call a Special general Meeting.

11 Alterations to the Constitution

- 11.1 This Constitution should only be subject to review at intervals of not less than THREE years, in order to expedite the business of the Annual General Meeting and minimize costs.
- 11.2 This Constitution shall not be rescinded, altered or added thereto except at the appropriate Annual General Meeting of the Association, at which, such changes must be approved by not less than two thirds of the Members present. Such Notices of Motion shall be given in accordance with Clause 9 of this Constitution and notified to all District Committees and Branches by the appropriate Secretaries.

12 Dissolution of the Association

- 12.1 The Association shall not be dissolved except by a Special General Meeting of the Association, convened for the specific purpose in accordance with the procedure set out in Clause 10 of this Constitution.
- 12.2 The Association shall not be dissolved unless two thirds of the Members present vote in favour of dissolution.
- 12.3 If the decision is taken to dissolve the Association, then it shall be competent for the Members present, at this Special General Meeting, to arrange for the disposal of the Assets of the Association.