



## ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT CELEBRANTS

### CONSTITUTION

September 2010

*Herewith the Constitution (Rules) with amendments and deletion as agreed by the members present at the AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at Eynsham Hall Oxfordshire – these will be implemented immediately*

**1.0** The name of the Association shall be the Association of Independent Celebrants (Hereinafter called "AOIC").

**2.0** The AOIC is established and headquartered in the United Kingdom.

**2.1** To support Independent Celebrants throughout the United Kingdom and internationally. It offers educational opportunities to all people of no faith and any faith and seeks to educate the public about their rights and options at ceremonies to mark births, marriages, deaths and other significant Life moments or events.

**2.1.2** To inform the public about how to find the right kind of ceremonies which mark the critical stages of life. Ceremonies are created and celebrated according to the needs, values and wishes of the individual and their family, rather than the needs of an established religion or a philosophical society. We believe all peoples should have whatever content they wish during their Ceremony and we believe this right to information and ceremonies will encourage citizenship and religious and racial harmony.

**2.1.3** Because an increasing number of people are becoming aware that they are free to include whatever content (*reading, music, poems, tributes etc.*) they wish in their Ceremony (*funeral, baby naming, renewal of marriage vows etc.*) and their needs, wants and wishes are to be respected **above all else**. The aim of the AOIC is to train, promote and support Independent Celebrants who will conduct each ceremony to reflect the values and wishes of the person or family, not necessarily those of the celebrant, whether those wishes and beliefs are religious or not

**2.2.1** To provide support to encourage the continuous professional development of members of the association.

**2.2.2** AOIC members to operate under their own right and individuality, to adhere to the highest standards of the celebrant profession as contained within the AOIC's Code of Practice and to encourage continued professional development. The AOIC will at all times, promote the

individuality of the Celebrant and their work and the individuality of the families who request this type of ceremony.

### **3.0 MEMBERSHIP**

**3.1.1** Membership of the AOIC shall be open to celebrants and affiliated bodies, irrespective of political party, nationality, religion or political opinion

**3.1.2** The annual cost of membership shall be reviewed every year by the elected Committee and full payment or monthly commitment is due annually on April 01

**3.1.3** Membership of the AOIC entitles you to stand as an elected member of the committee. All AOIC members are entitled to vote at the Association's meetings.

**3.1.4** The Committee shall fix the rate of annual subscription. Membership card, Identification badge and copy of the AOIC logo shall be issued by the committee who shall have the right, for good and sufficient reason, to terminate the membership of any member, provided that the member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Association before a decision is made. The Identity badge, Membership card and AOIC logo remain the property of the AOIC and must be returned upon termination of membership.

**3.1.5** A membership category of Fellows will be awarded in due course following a peer review, assessment and evidence of continuing professional development

### **4.0 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP – This section to be deleted until reviewed and recommendations are made by the sub-committee**

**4.1** Associate Membership of the AOIC is open to a person who has successfully completed a recognised training course/seminar, sponsored or carried out by the AOIC and fulfils the following requisites:

**4.1.1** Applies for Associate Membership within 6 months of having passed such course/seminar as above.

**4.1.2** Provides proof of having shadowed a member of the AOIC committee for three months.

**4.1.3** Received a favourable report ref above.

**4.1.4** Can provide checkable character references.

**4.1.5** Been invited, examined and passed by the AOIC committee.

**4.2** Associate Membership is normally for a maximum of 2 years, after which a review is carried out by AOIC Management.

**4.3** The Associate member pays an annual fee of £50.00 and is not entitled to the benefits of a full membership, e.g. Insurance.

**4.4** An Associate Member is expected to attend the regular meetings of the AOIC.

**4.5** An Associate Member has no voting rights.

## **5.0 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**5.1** Except as provided otherwise in this Constitution the policy and general management of the affairs of the AOIC shall be directed by the Committee which shall meet at least once a year and shall consist of not less than three full members of the Association, elected at an Annual General Meeting.

**5.2** Nominations to become a member of the committee must be from fully paid-up members of the AOIC, whose signed application should be signed by a fully paid up proposer and seconder and submitted in writing, either on paper or electronic format which must be in the hands of the Secretary of the Association at least 28 days before the Annual General Meeting hereinafter mentioned.

**5.3** The Executive Committee elected at an Annual General Meeting shall have the power to co-opt further members. Co-opted members and Associate members shall not have the right to vote on executive committee issues

**5.4** The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall be the Officers of the Association, shall be full Individual Members of the Association and shall be elected annually by and from the members at the Annual General meeting. The office of President shall not be held by anyone person for more than 3 consecutive years.

## **6.0 FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**6.1** The Executive Committee may make such regulations as its members consider appropriate for the efficient conduct of the business of the Committee and the AOIC.

**6.2** The Executive Committee may appoint sub-committees, advisory groups or working parties of its own members and other persons as it may from time to time decide necessary for the carrying out of its work and may determine their terms of reference, duration and composition. All such sub-committees shall make regular reports on their work to the Executive Committee.

**6.3** The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any failure to elect or any defect in the election, appointment, co-options or qualifications of any member.

## **7.0 CHAIRING MEETINGS**

**7.1** All meetings of the Association or of any of its sub-committees shall be presided over by its President, or in his/her absence, its Vice-President. If neither is present, those present may elect one of their number to take the Chair. [The Chairperson of any meeting shall have a second or casting vote].

## **8.0 FINANCE**

**8.1** All monies raised by or on behalf of the AOIC shall be applied to further the objectives of the Association and for no other purpose provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment of legitimate out-of-pocket expenses to members of the Association engaged upon the approved business of the AOIC.

**8.2** The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Association.

**8.3** The financial year of the Association shall run from 1 April to 31 March.

**8.4** The accounts shall be audited at least once a year by an auditor or auditors who shall be two members of the executive committee.

**8.5** An audited statement of accounts for the last financial year shall be submitted by the Committee to the Annual General Meeting.

**8.6** A bank account shall be opened in the name of the Association. The Committee shall authorise in writing the Treasurer and 2 members of the Committee to sign cheques on behalf of the Association. All cheques must be signed by not less than 2 of the 2 authorised signatories.

## **9.0 TRUST PROPERTY**

**9.1** The Association may appoint and may terminate the appointment of not less than 2 people to act as Trustees for the purpose of holding any monies or property belonging to the Association. The title to all or any such real and/or personal property which may be required by or for the purposes of the Association shall be vested in the Trustees who shall hold such property in trust for the Association. The Trustees shall act under the instructions of the Committee who shall, subject to the approval and consent of the Association as determined by a General Meeting, have power to fill vacancies among the Trustees.

## **10.0 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**10.1** An Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held at such place and time (not being more than 15 months after the holding of the preceding Annual General Meeting) as the Committee shall determine.

**10.2** At such an Annual General Meeting the business shall include the following:

**10.2.1** The election of members to serve on the Committee;

**10.2.2** The appointment of an auditor or auditors;

**10.2.3** The consideration of an Annual Report of the work done by or under the auspices of the Committee;

**10.2.4** The consideration of the audited accounts;

**10.2.5** The transaction of such other matters as may from time to time be considered necessary.

## **11.0 SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

**11.1** The Committee may at any time at its discretion and shall upon a requisition signed by not less than three fifth members, having the power to vote and giving reasons for the request, call a Special General Meeting of the Association for the purpose of altering the Constitution in accordance with Clause 12 hereof or of considering any matter which may be referred to them by the Committee or for any other purpose.

## **12.0 RULES OF PROCEDURE AT ALL MEETINGS**

### **Voting**

**12.1** Subject to the provisions of Clause 12 hereof all questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote thereat. [In case of an equality of votes the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote].

### **Minutes**

**12.2** Minute books shall be kept by the Committee and all sub committees and the appropriate Secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions.

### **Quorum (Definition)**

**12.3** The quorum at General Meetings of the Association shall be 3 and at meetings of the Committee shall be 3 or such other numbers as the Committee may from time to time determine.

### **Standing Orders**

**12.4** The Committee shall have power to adopt and issue Standing Orders and/or Rules for the Association. Such Standing Orders and/or Rules shall come into operation immediately provided always that they shall be subject to review by the Association in General Meeting and shall not be inconsistent with this Constitution.

## **13.0 ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Any alterations to this Constitution shall receive the assent of not less than two thirds of the members of the Association present and voting at the Annual General Meeting or a meeting specially called for the purpose provided that notice of any such alteration shall have been received by the Secretary in writing not less than 28 clear days before the meeting at which the alteration is to be brought forward.

## **14.0 DISSOLUTION**

If the Committee by a simple majority decides at any time that on the grounds of expense or otherwise it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Association, they shall call a meeting of full members of the AOIC. If such decision shall be confirmed by a simple majority of those present and voting at such meeting the Committee shall have power to dispose of any assets held by or in the name of the Association

## **15.0 OVERSEAS ORGANISATIONS**

**15.1** Organisations of Independent Celebrants abroad can apply to become members of the AOIC.

**15.2** Organisations of Independent Celebrants in the UK whose statute and structure fulfil and reflect the AOIC's Constitution can also apply to become members of the AOIC

**15.3** Individual Celebrants based abroad can join the AOIC, and enjoy the benefits thereof except for certain benefits available only in the U.K. e.g. Insurance.

**15.4** AOIC recognized organisations abroad must be Constituted according to the AOIC Constitution in the U.K. and any changes must be agreed by the AOIC committee in the U.K.

**15.4.1** The name of the organisation should include "Association of Independent Celebrants" with either a prefix or suffix to reflect local laws and or geographical situation.

**15.4.2** There will only be one such organisation in each country recognized by the AOIC.

**15.5.1** Application to become a member organisation of the AOIC shall be submitted to the committee of the AOIC, and the decision of the committee shall be final.

**15.5.2** Once admitted to the AOIC, such organisations shall be known as AOIC Overseas Organisations.

**15.6** The AOIC Committee in the U.K. shall have the authority to monitor such "Overseas Organisations" and if need be, following due procedures (TBA) reserve the right to end the relationship. The decision of the committee in the U.K. is final.

**15.7** "Overseas Organisations" shall submit a list of members of the previous year, on January 01 each year, and shall pay an annual fee of £10 in sterling per such member to the AOIC in the UK on the following February 01 each year.

**15.8** Any training must be of a course recognized by the AOIC.

**15.9** The logo/badge of the AOIC shall form the basis of any logo/badge produced locally. Such design to be submitted to the AOIC before being released.

## **INDEMNITY**

The Association shall indemnify and keep indemnified every officer, member, volunteer and employee of the Association from and against all claims, demands, actions and proceedings (and all costs and expenses in connection therewith or arising there from) made or brought against the Association in connection with its activities, the actions of its officers, members, volunteers or employees, or in connection with its property and equipment but this indemnity shall not extend to liabilities arising from willful and individual fraud, wrongdoing or wrongful omission on the part of the officer, member, volunteer or employee sought to be made liable. The Treasurer shall affect a policy of insurance in respect of this indemnity