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**CONSTITUTION OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND CHURCH COUNCIL  
OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Registered Charity Number 1147935

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Revised and ratified by the Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

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*Note: The Numbers appearing in Square Brackets [ --- ] are the clause numbers of the Guidelines for Diocesan By-Laws of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church issued by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin (November 2009) and are placed for reference purposes only and may be removed at any time.*

## THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND CHURCH COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN

### (A)

#### 1. **The Armenian Community Church Parish:**

The Armenian Community Church Parish shall comprise members of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church who satisfy the qualifying criteria specified in Clause 34 herewith.

#### 2. **The Armenian Community of Great Britain:**

Persons of Armenian origin and members of their immediate families residing in the United Kingdom who agree to comply with the rules and regulations of this Constitution shall constitute the Armenian Community of the United Kingdom (hereinafter referred to as "the Community").

### (B) **OBJECTS**

#### 3. THE OBJECTS of the Armenian Community and Church Council of Great Britain are:

To further such charitable purposes for the public benefit in particular but not limited to:

(a) advancing the Christian religion in particular the doctrines of the Armenian Apostolic Church and providing (for the public benefit) for the community's religious needs and encouraging the understanding of, and participation in, the Armenian Church liturgy;

(b) promoting the arts, culture and heritage of, in particular that of, the Armenian people and of Armenia,

(c) advancing education in particular in the teaching and study of the history, language, heritage and culture of the Armenian people and the Doctrine of the Armenian Apostolic Church;

(d) promoting racial harmony in particular by promoting good relations with people of advancing cultural, religious and educational exchanges for the benefit of the public,

(e) to support or further the charitable work of other registered charities in England and Wales,

WITH THE AIM to improve the community's moral, religious, educational, intellectual and social development and health and well-being and the relief of poverty

### (C) **THE COUNCIL:**

#### 4. The Council shall be known as THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND CHURCH COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN ("ACCC" or "ACCC of GB") (hereinafter referred to as "the Council"), and shall be elected in accordance with the provisions set forth in this Constitution. The Council shall be the final authority within the Community and shall represent, and act for, the Community in all official functions.

The Council shall perform two distinct functions, namely:

(a) [5.1] as **CHURCH COUNCIL**, shall function as the Parish Church Council of the community's church currently functioning from the St Yeghiche Church in Cranley Gardens, London SW7, and shall provide church facilities for the community at a church which in the opinion of the Council, is most convenient for the use of the community and in its capacity as Church Council of the community's church, the Council shall take part in the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Great Britain and Ireland upon ratification of the Constitution of the Diocese by His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians, and

(b) in its capacity as **COMMUNITY COUNCIL**, shall represent, and act for, the Community in all official functions and shall be responsible for all affairs of the Armenian Community of the United Kingdom including social, cultural, educational, or financial.

#### 5. [5.2] The Council shall comprise a total of fifteen members of the Community who shall be elected in accordance with the Electoral Rules and Regulations herein. If registered as a Charity in England and

Wales, the Officers of the Council, namely the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the two Secretaries, and the Financial Controller of the Council shall be the Trustees of the Charity and shall change in accordance with the provision herein for election of Officers and as Council Members.

6. The term of office of the Council shall be a maximum of five years from the date of the official declaration by the Election Committee of the results of the election in accordance with Section I herein. The Council shall remain in office for a minimum period of four years and may call elections for a new Council at any time so as to ensure election of a new Council during its final twelve months of office.
7. The Primate of the Armenian Church Diocese of the United Kingdom is ex-officio Honorary President of the Council. Honorary Presidency is a non-executive honorary title and the Honorary President does not have voting rights in the Council.
8. (a) At their first meeting, members of the Council shall elect from amongst themselves, a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, an Armenian language Secretary and an English language Secretary, and a Financial Controller. These officers shall remain in office for a period of about twentyfour months and shall be eligible for re-election for a further period up to the end of the term of office of the Council.  
  
(b) In order to effect any change to the Officers of the Council during their normal period of office, a motion must be passed at a meeting of the Council requiring an election of its officer or officers to be held at a special meeting to be called within one month.
9. [5.4 & 5.5 & 5.9]  
(a) In the event of a vacancy in the Council, the first "stand-by" candidate and then the second "stand-by" candidate shall be invited to join the Council.  
  
(b) Should for any reason the number of the members of the Council fall to eight or fewer (after inclusion of the "stand-by" candidates (if any), the term of office of the Council shall end and a new election shall be called.  
  
(c) In the event that the Council resolves to dissolve itself, then five members will be elected by the Council members from among themselves to serve as a caretaker body to undertake the appointing and supervising of the Electoral Committee until the election of the new council. The caretaker body will not have authority to take any decisions on behalf of or as a Council except for the proper conduct of the elections of a new Council. The outgoing Council, whatever its number, shall remain in office until the newly-elected Council takes office in accordance with the rules governing elections prescribed in this Constitution. If registered as a charity, then the five persons comprising the caretaker body shall be the trustees of the charity until a newly elected Council takes office and Council Officers are appointed by the newly elected Council.
10. Members of the Council shall not be remunerated for their services.
11. The Council shall hold at least six meetings in each year, and there shall be one special meeting each year at which the Executive Committee shall submit to the Council a financial statement and a report covering all its activities, financial or otherwise, during the previous year and shall present for approval, its proposed budget for the forthcoming year.
12. Any member who absents himself or herself without stated reason acceptable to the Council, from six consecutive meetings of the Council, or ceases to reside in the United Kingdom or who is convicted of a criminal offence during his/her term of office as member of the Council, shall ipso facto, cease to be a member of the Council.
13. The Primate, Chairman or any five members of the Council may summon a Special Meeting of the Council at any time upon giving notice to the Executive Officers of the Council, and promptly upon receipt of the request, the Secretary responsible for calling meetings shall convene a meeting of the Council by giving seven day's notice to all members of the Council.
14. (a) The Council, at their first meeting shall consider the appointment of its Executive Committee, which shall consist of not fewer than seven and not more than eleven registered members of the Community who shall have attained the age of twentyone years, and not fewer than two of its members shall be members of the Council  
  
(b) The Council has the right to dismiss any or all members of its Executive Committee and on giving written notice the dismissal shall become effective forthwith.

15. (a) In relation to the meetings of the Council, quorum shall exist if the number present is more than half of the total number of serving Council Members  
  
(b) In the event that, in the opinion of the Chairman or a majority of the members present at a scheduled regular meeting, an issue shall require a decision by voting of the Council, and a quorum has not been achieved at that meeting, the Chairman shall call a Special Meeting of the Council to be held within the ensuing fourteen days, with the single agenda to discuss that specific issue and to take a vote upon it, and quorum requirement for that special meeting shall not exist. Notice of the Special Meeting shall be sent to the members by the Secretary responsible within forty-eight hours of the decision to hold a Special Meeting being taken, using the same method as used for the transmission of meeting Minutes to each member.
16. All decisions of the Council, except in clauses otherwise stated, shall be taken by a clear majority of members present and voting, at a meeting duly convened. Each member of the Council shall have one vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a second and therefore casting vote. A meeting shall be deemed duly convened if the total number of members present at the commencement of a meeting reaches the requisite number to form a quorum and any reduction in the number attending after the meeting has commenced shall be disregarded.
17. (a) The Council shall have and maintain any number of bank accounts, and may allocate accounts to its Executive Committee and any of its other Committees, and shall approve the nomination, from among the said Committees, of a minimum of two 'authorised signatories' for each account.  
  
(b) The Council shall have full authority over all bank accounts operated by its committees or sub-committees. The Council's 'authorised signatories' shall be (i) the Chairman, (ii) the Vice Chairman, (iii) the two Secretaries and (iv) the Financial Controller. All mandates, instructions and communications to the banks shall be signed, on behalf of the Council, by any two of the five 'authorised signatories'.  
  
(c) Upon the election of a new Council all previously nominated, authorised signatories' shall cease to have such authority. The newly elected Chairman and one Secretary of the Council shall notify the banks of the election of the new Council and shall submit new mandates nominating the new 'authorised signatories' of the various accounts.
- [6.2 & 6.3] (d) The Council, may purchase or acquire land or property, sell any land or property owned by the Council, enter into lease agreement for land or property and dispose of any lease held by the Council, subject to and in accordance with the relevant Laws of the United Kingdom governing the acquisition and disposal of land ("immovable property") and Leases and the relevant decision having been taken by the Council and registered accordingly in the Minutes of Meeting of the Council, and all transaction documents must be signed by the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and the two Secretaries, and the aforementioned Minutes must specify that the said Chairman, Vice Chairman and two Secretaries have been specifically authorised by the Council to carry out the transaction and to sign the relevant transaction documents on behalf of the Council. If registered as a charity, then the relevant rules of the Charity Commission regarding the holding and disposal of land shall apply.
18. The Council shall keep a Minute Book, correspondence files and such books of accounts as may be necessary and if registered as a charity, shall satisfy at the least, the minimum requirements of the Charity Commission with regard to production of accounts and annual returns.
19. The Council shall submit a Report to the Community at least once every 24 months setting out its activities during that period together with a general statement of its financial status.
20. The Council may make further regulations as to their meetings and conduct of their administration as they think fit, including the appointment of committees formed for specific purposes.
21. The Council shall appoint from amongst themselves three members, none of whom shall be member of the Executive Committee, who will comprise the Council's Audit Committee whose duty will be to examine at any time it considers appropriate, and at least once every year, the accounts and records of the Executive Committee and its dependent committees, and to report to the Council.
22. The Council is empowered to elect delegates to represent the Community in Great Britain and abroad on occasions which in the Council's opinion shall be in keeping with the Objects of the Council and shall defray their expenses.
23. The members of the Council, shall, ex-officio, become Trustees of the London Armenian Community Trust, registered charity number 271931 and the blessings of His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians upon the election of the new Council shall constitute confirmation of the elected members of the Council for the purposes of the Trust.

24. The Council shall appoint Trustees of any other charitable trusts for which it has such responsibility.
25. Members of the Council shall be deemed to have relinquished their positions as ex-officio Trustees of the Community's Trusts upon termination of their office or upon their resignation from office.
26. Any decision made by the Council shall be immediately binding on its Executive Committee and all its dependent committees.
27. The Council shall have the power to offer its patronage and support to any Armenian organisation the activities of which do not contradict the aims of the Constitution.
28. The Council may establish, or promote the establishment of Registered Charitable Trusts.
29. In furtherance of its Objects, the Council may apply any funds anywhere within and outside the United Kingdom.
30. Should thirty members of the Community whose names are recorded in the Electoral Register (i.e. members of the community who are eligible to vote as per Clause 43 of this Constitution) submit a written and signed complaint or request for the investigation of a clearly defined issue, the Council shall convene a special meeting and invite representatives from the signatories for consultation. It shall be thereupon incumbent on the Council to arrive at a final decision and take appropriate action.

**(D.1) THE COUNCIL, IN ITS CAPACITY AS THE COMMUNITY'S PARISH CHURCH COUNCIL FUNCTIONING CURRENTLY AT THE ST YEGHICHE CHURCH IN LONDON SW7 SHALL ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING RULES:**

31 [2.1] The Parish is the union of the members of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church functioning under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Community and Church Council of Great Britain.

32 [2.1.1] The Parish shall be an indivisible part of the Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland, the spiritual centre of which is the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

33 [2.1.2] Clause 32 of this Constitution is not to be subject to modification.

34 [2.1.3] The members of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church are:

a) Individuals who are baptised and christened in the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church, who profess the teachings of the Armenian Church and accept her Holy Sacraments, and who abide by her canons and Holy Traditions.

b) Non-Armenians who have married Armenians, who themselves accept the teachings, Holy Sacraments, canons and Holy Traditions of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church.

c) The decision to accept the membership of a Non-Armenian is made by the Primate, according to defined regulations.

35 [2.2] Individuals shall cease to be members of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church if

a) he/she renounces the communion of the Church;

b) he/she acts in opposition to the canons of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church.

36 [2.3] The Parish is governed by

a) the General Assembly of the registered parishioners of the Parish,

b) the Parish Church Council and

c) the Parish Priest.

37 [2.4] The Parish shall make an annual allocation to the Diocese, according to defined regulations of the Diocesan Assembly, agreed by the Parish.

**(D.2) Parish Priest**

38 [3.1] The Parish Priest must be a clergyman (married or celibate) who has been ordained to the priesthood.

39 [3.3] The Parish Priest is appointed and removed by the Diocesan Primate in consultation with, and the request and agreement of, the Parish Church Council.

40 [3.2] Other clergymen (married or celibate) may be appointed by the Diocesan Primate in consultation with, and at the request and agreement of, the Parish Church Council to serve in the same parish as assistant to the Parish Priest.

41 [3.4] The Parish Priest shall preside over all parish organisations with the exception of the Audit Committee.

42 [3.5] The responsibilities of the Parish Priest are:

- a) to implement the preachings of the Holy Gospel, to engage in pastoral religious educational and instructional activities,
- b) to coordinate the spiritual life of the faithful entrusted to his pastoral care,
- c) to represent the parish in ecumenical life on the local level.

### **(D.3) The Parish General Assembly (General Assembly of the Registered Parishioners)**

43 [4.1] The Parish General Assembly is the highest governing body of the Parish, and elects the Council of the Parish ( known as Parish Church Council or Church Council, namely the Armenian Community and Church Council in its joint capacity as Church Council as well as Community Council).

44 [4.2] The Parish General Assembly consists of the members of the Armenian Apostolic Church who have attained the age of 18, who reside within the administrative jurisdiction of the Parish and are dues-paying members.

45 [4.3] Members rights to elect the Parish Church Council or be elected to the Council, and the method and rules of election are as as defined in Section I of this Constitution entitled: "ELECTORAL RULES & PROCEDURES FOR ELECTION OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND CHURCH COUNCIL".

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(a) An Ordinary General Meeting of the dues-paying registered members of the parish (i.e. the Parish General Assembly) may be called at any time by the Parish Church Council with a minimum of two-weeks' notice served to the addresses of the eligible members. An Ordinary General Meeting shall be deemed to have formed a quorum if 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the eligible membership is present. If at a first sitting of an Ordinary General Meeting a quorum has not been achieved, a second sitting of the meeting shall take place one hour after the specified assembly time of the first sitting, and at the second sitting, the meeting shall be deemed valid regardless of the number of members present. The members present at the meeting shall elect a Chairman and a Secretary for the meeting.

(b) An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called by the Parish Church Council if it receives written request for a meeting to be called from at least 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total number of eligible membership. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be deemed to have formed a quorum if 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the eligible membership is present. The members present at the meeting shall elect a Chairman and a Secretary for the meeting.

47 [4.7] The President of the Parish General Assembly is the Parish Priest.

48 [4.8.2] The Parish Church Council (ACCC) shall receive from the Parish Priest and from its Audit Committee annual administrative and financial reports and budgets, and the Council shall publish annual administrative and/or financial report for the information of the parishioners.

### **(E) THE PRIMATE**

This Section numbered P1 to P7 shall remain in force until the ratification by His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians, of a Constitution of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the establishment of its Governing Body, at which time all responsibilities to do with the Primate of the Church shall pass wholly to the Governing Body of the Diocese, and the Armenian Community and Church Council of Great Britain shall thereafter act in its capacity as the elected Church Council of the Community's Parish Church being currently the St Yeghiche Church in Cranley Gardens, South Kensington, London SW7.

P1. As Spiritual Head of the Diocese. the Primate is responsible for preserving and strengthening the Christian faith of the Diocese by supervising the celebration of religious ceremonies regularly and properly, and by giving spiritual guidance and comfort to all members of the Diocese unreservedly.

P2. The Primate is elected by the Council by secret ballot and with at least a two-thirds majority of the votes. The election is made from a list of candidates approved by the Catholicos. The election is subject to confirmation by the Catholicos.

P3. After an initial period of one year, the Primate shall be subject to re-election every four years.

- P4. The Primate shall be ex-officio Honorary President of the Council and may attend its meetings, without voting.
- P5. The Council, in consultation with the Primate, may appoint a clergyman to act as the Primate's deputy in his absence.
- P6. The Primate by virtue of his office may appoint additional clergy to serve the church or churches of the community with the consent of the Council.
- P7. The Primate is responsible to the Council and in the event of a written and signed complaint to the Council about the Primate, the Council shall investigate the complaint at a special meeting without the presence of the Primate. Having provided the Primate with the opportunity for an explanation, should its findings constitute a prima facie case, the Council shall refer the matter to the Catholicos for his final decision.

**(F) THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ACCC**

- 49. The Executive Committee shall be appointed by the Council for a period of two years and the term of office of the previous Executive Committee shall then cease. The members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible to re-appointment for a further period ending concurrently with the end of the term of office of the appointing Council.
- 50. The Executive Committee, at its first meeting presided over by the Chairman of the Council, shall elect their Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Armenian language Secretary, English language Secretary and Treasurer.
- 51. Authorised Signatories for a bank account allocated to the Executive Committee shall comprise as follows:  
Minimum two and maximum three of the members of the Executive Committee who are also members of the Council, and the Treasurer of the Executive Committee if he or she is not a member of the Council. To be effective, cheques must be signed by any two of the authorised signatories. (i.e. Cheques will bear the signature of at least one member of the Executive Committee who is also a member of the Council).
- 52. The Executive Committee has the following duties:
  - (a) To manage the social, educational, cultural and religious activities of the Community and hold and administer the properties of the community.
  - (b) To manage the Church Parish of the Council and hold and administer its ecclesiastical chattels and properties and to make certain that the Church Committee maintains Registers of all Baptisms, Funerals and Marriages held in the Community's Church and makes regular returns of these to the Diocesan Primature as required by the Constitution of the Diocese.
  - (c) To appoint, subject to the approval of the Council, the members of all the necessary committees required for the efficient running of the day-to-day affairs of the Community and to be vigilant over their activities. Members of the Council are eligible for service on any sub-committee if appointed by the Executive Committee.
  - (d) To appoint the Church and Pastoral Committee in consultation with the Parish Priest and to allocate to the committee banking facilities to enable the committee to handle the day to day running income and expenditure of the church such as church collections, marriage and funeral service charges and ancillary income and expenditure. The funds of the Committee form an integral part of the funds of the Church/Parish Council (ACCC). The Church and Pastoral Committee may select its chairman, secretary and treasurer but under all circumstances, the committee shall be an appointed sub-committee of the Executive Committee of the Church/Parish Council (ACCC). The ex-officio President of the Church and Pastoral Committee shall be the Parish Priest.
  - (e) To compile and maintain an up-to-date Community Membership and Electoral Register and to appoint a Registration and Contributions Committee.
  - (f) To execute the annual budget approved by the Council and once a year to submit an account of its activities to the Council, submitting also the budget for the next year for examination and approval.

(g) To keep in close contact with the Chairman and Secretary of the Council and keep them informed of all important decisions taken concerning the Community.

53. Any issue in the Executive Committee which cannot be resolved, or any disagreement, must be submitted to the decision of the Council whose verdict will be binding on the Executive Committee.
54. The Executive Committee must keep comprehensive Minutes of their meetings, files of all correspondence, and registers of movable and immovable properties owned by the Community and the Parish.
55. The term of office of all the sub-committees of the Executive Committee shall not extend further than that of the Council.
56. The Executive Committee is empowered to specify and request an annual contribution from all members of the Community over the age of eighteen years, as contribution towards the activities of the Council as specified in Clause 2. The Council shall first approve the amount of the contribution specified by the Executive Committee.
57. The Executive Committee is empowered to waive payment of the levy in the case of any member requesting relief based on their individual circumstances.

#### **(G) REGISTRATION AS MEMBER OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY**

58. Any person of Armenian origin and members of their immediate families residing in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland may register as a member of the Community.
59. It is incumbent on every member of the Community to pay the annual contribution by the prescribed due date whether requested to do so or not.
60. The Community contribution is payable by all members of the Community who are eighteen years of age and over. Persons over the age of seventy years and persons over eighteen years who are students receiving full-time education shall be entitled to exemption from paying the community contribution.

#### **(H) REGISTRATION AS MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY'S CHURCH PARISH**

61. Any person who satisfies the qualifying criteria specified in Clause 34 and 62, shall be registered as a member of the Parish upon application.

#### **(I) ELECTORAL RULES & PROCEDURES FOR ELECTION OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND CHURCH COUNCIL**

62. All Registered Members of the Community Church Parish who fulfil the following qualifications shall be enlisted in the Electoral Register and shall be eligible to vote :

The Registered Member should

(a) have been living in the U.K. and enlisted in the Community Register for at least 12 months prior to the date of closing of the electoral register in the year of election,

(b) have been 18 years of age on the declared date of election and in the event that an election is postponed, the postponed date shall not be taken into consideration.

(c) be a member of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church,

(d) have paid, or have been exempted from paying, the annual community contribution for the year immediately prior to the year in which the elections are scheduled to take place. Only the first declared date of election shall apply in relation to this clause.

63. Each qualifying member shall be entitled to cast one vote.
64. Registered Members of the Community Church Parish who fulfil the following conditions will be entitled to stand as candidates for election to the Council:



- (a) are members of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church,
  - (b) have been registered members of the Community Church Parish for a period of at least four years by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December prior to the date of election,
  - (c) have attained the age of 25 years 26 weeks prior to the first announced date of election and in the event that an election is postponed, the second postponed date shall not be taken into consideration.
  - (d) are Citizens of, or residents having leave of indefinite stay in, the United Kingdom,
  - (e) have paid the community levy, or have been exempt from paying with all arrears due (up to four years) under the Rules of the Council, not later than two weeks prior to the closing date of presentation of candidatures.
  - (f) do not have a criminal record and are not disqualified from serving as a Trustee of a Registered Charity.
  - (g) are not members of the Governing Body of any church which is not incorporated within the structure of the Armenian Community and Church Council of Great Britain.
65. Not less than thirty weeks prior to the proposed date of elections of a new Council, the Council shall appoint an Election Committee composed of a minimum number of five registered members of the Community who themselves shall not become candidates for election to the Council. The duty of the Election Committee shall be to organise the Council election in accordance with the procedure detailed hereunder. The interpretation decided upon by the Council, of any of the clauses and specifications of this Constitution shall be definitive and final, and the Chairman of the Election Committee should liaise with and consult the Chairman of the Council regarding all matters of procedure and interpretation.
  66. The Primate shall be invited by the Council, to preside over the meetings of the Election Committee and he may attend the meetings of the Committee to observe the work of the Committee as the representative of His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians.
  67. (a) The Election Committee at its first meeting shall elect from amongst its members a Chairman, and a Secretary. The expenses of the Electoral Committee shall be paid by the ACCC through its Executive Committee.  
  
(b) The Election Committee is authorised to appoint assistants who shall not themselves be candidates for the Council election and who shall have no voting power in the meetings of the Election Committee.
  68. Within two weeks of their appointment, the Election Committee shall notify by circular the date, and details of the election process, and shall invite members of the Community to submit candidates within the period specified by the Election Committee.
  69. Within eight weeks of their appointment, the Election Committee shall exhibit the Electoral Register at such place or places as it deems appropriate, for a period of not less than four weeks, to allow for objections or recommendations, if any, from any registered member of the Community who is eligible to vote, in respect of infringements of Clause 62, provided that such objections or recommendations are submitted in writing, and signed, within the period specified by the Election Committee.
  70. Should there be any written complaint questioning any decision or decisions taken by the Election Committee, the Council shall rule on the same and such ruling shall be final and conclusive. Such complaints must reach the Council not later than two weeks after the close of the electoral register.
  71. The Electoral Register shall be closed prior to the election on a date specified by the Election Committee, such date not to be less than twelve weeks before the date of the election.
  72. Each candidate who fulfils the conditions set forth in Clause 64 must submit a candidature form supported by three proposers who must be registered members of the Community and who must fulfil the electoral registration qualifications listed in Clause 62. A registered member of the community who is registered in the electoral register may propose up to fifteen candidates for election to the Council.
  73. The candidate may withdraw his/her candidature up to eight weeks prior to the date of election. If the candidate wishes to withdraw at any time within eight weeks prior to the elections, his/her name shall

not be removed from the election documentation. His/her name shall be listed as if he/she was a candidate but an announcement shall be placed at the polling station informing voters that the person has withdrawn his/her candidature and no longer wishes to become a member of the Council and any votes cast for that candidate shall not be counted. In the event that as a result of the withdrawal of candidate/s within the final eight weeks the remaining number of candidates shall become fifteen or less, but not less than nine, the committee shall not hold a ballot and shall declare the remaining candidates as duly elected.

In the event that the number of remaining candidates becomes eight or less, then the election shall be postponed for a period of six months, the period of office of the existing Council shall be extended by the same length of time and during that period the Election Committee shall organise new elections.

74. The final list of candidates (Candidates List) shall be displayed at such places as the Election Committee shall consider appropriate at least eight weeks before the date of election.
75. A Candidates List shall be sent to each registered member of the Community entitled to vote at least six weeks prior to the date of election.
76. Each candidate shall have the right, if he/she so wishes, to add under his/her name on the Candidates List, a statement in Armenian and / or English of a maximum of eighty words in each language, giving such information about himself or herself as he or she may wish, subject to the final wording being acceptable to the Election Committee.
77. Each voter shall place a prescribed sign on the ballot paper against the names of his choice. Ballot papers which carry more signs than the allowed number of candidates, or are defaced in any way, shall be considered not valid.
78. The Council shall decide the mode of election, i.e. whether (a) the election shall be by postal ballot, or (b) the election shall be by personal casting of votes.
79. (i) In the event that the Council has decided that the election shall be by postal ballot, the Election Committee shall carry out all the work necessary to prepare the final Voters and Candidates Lists. The balloting process ( particularly the printing and distribution of ballot papers, receipt of completed ballot papers and the counting of votes ) must be entrusted to an independent accredited organisation approved by the Council, to whom the Election Committee shall hand the Final Candidates List and the Final Voters List, and at the same time identical copies of the Final Voters List and Final Candidates List must also be handed by the Election Committee to the Council.  
  
(ii) In the event that the Council has decided for the election to be by personal casting of votes,
  - (a) The Election Committee shall decide the number and location of the voting stations required.
  - (b) The completed ballot paper shall be placed by the voter in person in the ballot box provided at the voting station.
  - (c) The election committee shall report to the council the relevant procedural points that will be taken for the election.
  - (d) Any voter, unable by virtue of his inability to attend the voting station allotted to him or her in person, either due to physical disability or excessive distance from his normal place of residence, may apply to the Election Committee in writing, stating his or her reasons for permission to vote by post, so long as such application is received at least fifteen days before the date of the election. The Election Committee shall decide each case individually, and in the event that the Committee accept such reasons, shall send to such voter a ballot paper duly authenticated and shall require the return of the completed ballot paper by a date prior to the date of election. The committee shall hold postal ballot sealed in their original envelopes and shall open them only during the counting of the ballot papers on the day of the elections.
  - (e) At a specified time and place, the Election Committee shall commence the scrutiny and counting of votes at a continuous sitting and shall declare the results of the election immediately after and shall also declare completion of the election after the prescribed period as per Clause 61.
80. [5.4 ] Fifteen candidates with the greatest number of votes shall be considered elected. In the event of a tie, the Election Committee shall cast lots for the last place. Candidates, if any, in sixteenth and seventeenth (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>) positions shall be nominated as "stand-by" members, and the Council shall call them to office in the order of their nomination, in the event of a vacancy in the elected Council membership of fifteen (15) members.

81. The Election Committee shall immediately announce the result of the elections but the outgoing Council shall remain in office for a further maximum period of twentyone days so as to allow fourteen days for any objections to the elections from any registered voting member of the community. The Council must rule on any objection within seven days. Such ruling shall be final and conclusive and the ballot papers must be retained in a secure deposit by the Election Committee pending such decision, upon which they will be destroyed.
82. In the event of there being only fifteen or fewer candidates in the elections at the date of closing of submission of candidatures, the Election Committee, by circular to all members of the Community, will postpone the date of the election to be held by twelve weeks and will invite additional members to put forward their candidature within the ensuing six weeks.

If as a result of any postponement, the term of office of the Council extends to the sixth year, the Council shall continue in office until the elections have been completed.

If within the specified period no additional candidates come forward, then the Election Committee shall declare that the candidates have been duly elected without a ballot so long as their number is not less than nine and the number of the elected members of the Council for the ensuing term shall be the number declared elected.

83. In the event that after the declaration of the extended period specified in Clause 82, the final number of candidates remains fewer than nine, the elections shall not proceed and the previous Council shall be mandated to continue in office for a further twelve months, during which time new elections shall be organised, and clauses 58 to 81 shall be again implemented.
84. (a) Fourteen days after the declaration of the results of the elections, or twenty one days if objections have been submitted to, and resolved by, the Council, the Election Committee shall declare the election completed and shall immediately invite the new Council to take office and may arrange for a joint meeting between the outgoing Council and the newly elected Council, in order to effect proper transfer of all files, documents, books and properties of the Council.
- (b) Following the declaration of the completion of the elections by the Election Committee, after allowing a period of two weeks to elapse so as to allow time for any objections to be submitted to the Council, the Primate shall write to His Holiness the Catholicos requesting the blessings of His Holiness upon the newly elected Council, which shall be granted by the Catholicos as acknowledgment of the Primate's request.
85. In the event that at the time of the elections the Diocese does not have a Primate or a locum tenens duly recognised by the Catholicos, the Chairman of the outgoing Council shall carry out the duties and responsibilities entrusted upon the Primate in this Constitution in connection with the election of a new Council.

#### **(J) POWER TO REVOKE OR VARY THIS CONSTITUTION**

86. The Constitution of the Armenian Community & Church Council of Great Britain may be altered or amended by the Council in a meeting particularly summoned for this purpose. A minimum of 21 days' notice shall be given to all members who shall be informed of the proposed alterations or amendments. Alterations or amendments may only be agreed if passed by a majority of at least 75% (to next whole number) of members present, provided that there are at least two-thirds (to next whole number) of the current serving Council members present. In the event that the meeting does not have the said two-thirds in number present, then a second meeting must be called at a date not more than thirtyone days later at which meeting 75% (to next whole number) of members actually present will suffice to pass any amendment or alteration, subject to a quorum having been assembled.

Any alterations or amendments to clauses in Section D must be in accordance with guidelines referring to parish constitutions of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church issued by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

If registered as a Charity, any amendment or variation made to this Constitution under the above rule shall be filed with the Charity Commission, signed by the Chairman and one Secretary.

#### **(K) DISSOLUTION OF THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY AND CHURCH COUNCIL**

87. If at any time hereafter the Council for the time being should be of the opinion that there are less than fifty Armenians remaining in Great Britain who for at least two consecutive years had been permanent residents in Great Britain and shall pass a resolution by two-thirds majority to the effect that there is therefore no longer a sufficient need for the Basic Aims of this Constitution and if after the expiration of a further five years from the passing of that first resolution the Council then in office shall be of the same opinion and shall again pass a resolution by simple majority to the same effect, then, and in that case the dissolution of the Community shall take effect. The funds of the Community can then be used for such charitable purposes to benefit Armenians throughout the world as the Council then in office shall decide in consultation with the Catholicos

**(L) NOTES**

88. Throughout these clauses in all references to the Catholicos or the Primate, the clause "or his Locum Tenens" shall be understood.
89. In all constitutional matters, legal or otherwise, the English text of this document shall be considered as the official version and the Armenian Community & Church Council of Great Britain shall be subject to the laws of England and Wales.
90. Unless otherwise specified within this constitution, all decisions and elections within the Council and all committees shall be carried by a clear majority (i.e. by consent of more than half of the number of members voting - excluding any abstainers.) so long as a quorum exists.
91. In Council meetings and committees, quorum shall exist when more than half of the total number of members of the committee are present.  
Voting by proxy is not allowed.  
Apologies for absence shall be for attendance record purposes only and shall not be taken into consideration for any other purpose.