

Draft prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Diocesan By-Laws of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church approved by the Diocesan Representative Assembly in 2009 at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, and to be adopted by the First Parish Assembly of the Parish of St Yeghiche Church.

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH OF THE SAINT YEGHICHE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF CRANLEY GARDENS, KENSINGTON, LONDON SW7

PREFACE, DEFINITIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS:

a) Devolution of the management of the Church from the Armenian Community and Church Council of Great Britain (ACCC) and the establishment by the ACCC of the Parish has been approved by the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin by letter to the ACCC, No.538 dated 11th of April 2013.

b) (i) The Word “Church” in connection with the Church of the Parish of Saint Yeghiche Church shall be taken in its ecclesiastical sense and shall not mean, or imply in any way to be or mean, the building of the Saint Yeghiche Church.

The building of the Saint Yeghiche Church is the property of the Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Charitable Trust and the church building at the present time is placed at the disposal of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church by way of an agreement made in 2003 with the Primate of the United Kingdom, as the representative of His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians. This agreement provides for limited use of the Building for "...the celebration of divine worship...including, for the avoidance of doubt, baptisms, weddings, funerals and other special events" on Sundays and specifically excludes use of the Hall in the Building.

(ii) As per specification made by the owners of the church building - the Manoukian Charitable Trust - Mr Manoukian covers the costs of fully maintaining the church building including heating, lighting and cleaning costs and therefore the dues collected from its members by the Parish shall be used towards Parish costs and not towards the costs of maintaining and running the church building.

c) The words “Diocese” and “Diocesan” are included in the following clauses so as to be in accordance with the wording of the Guidelines approved by the Diocesan Representative Assembly, and all reference to and use of “Diocese” or “Diocesan” shall become effective in the event that a Constitution of the Diocese of the United Kingdom has been ratified by His Holiness the Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians at the See of Holy Etchmiadzin, and a Diocese has been established; and also until such time, “Diocesan Primate” shall be construed to mean “Primate of the United Kingdom”.

(A) THE PARISH

1.1 The Parish is the union of the children of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church residing in the United Kingdom and registered as members of the Parish.

1.1.1 The Spiritual Centre of the Parish is the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and in the event that a Diocese is established in the United Kingdom, the Parish shall be an indivisible part of the United Kingdom Diocese, the spiritual centre of which is the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin.

1.1.2 Clause 1.1.1 is not subject to modification.

1.1.3 The children of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church are:

- a) Individuals who are baptized 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.

1.2 An individual shall cease to be a child 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.

1.3 The Parish is governed by:

- a) The Parish Priest;
- b) The Parish Assembly;
- c) The Parish Council.

1.4 The Parish shall make an annual allocation to the Diocese, according to defined regulations of the Diocesan Assembly (This Clause shall become effective when a Diocese has been established and the Parish has become a part of the Diocese).

(B) THE PARISH PRIEST

2.1 The Parish priest may be a clergyman (married or celibate) who has been ordained to the priesthood.

2.2 Other clergymen (married or celibate) may serve in the same parish as assistant to the Parish Priest.

2.3 The Parish Priest is appointed and removed by the Diocesan Primate in consultation with the Diocesan and Parish Councils.

2.4 The Parish Priest is the president of all parish organisations, with the exception of the Auditing Committee.

2.5 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) to represent the parish whenever necessary.

(C) THE PARISH ASSEMBLY

3.1 The Parish Assembly is the highest governing body of the Parish

3.2 The Parish Assembly consists of children of the Armenian Church who have attained the age of 18 years, who reside within the administrative jurisdiction of the Parish and are dues-paying members.

3.3 Members have the right to elect the Parish Council and be elected to the Parish Council, following at least one year of membership (*this requirement not to apply to the first meeting of the Parish Assembly at which the First Parish Council shall be elected*), and in they have paid their membership dues.

3.4 The Parish Assembly must be convened at least once every year,
a) by invitation of the Parish Council bearing the signatures of the Parish Priest and the Chairman;
b) by invitation of the Parish Priest pr the Parish Council with the permission of the Diocesan Primate;
c) by written request of 1/3 of Parish dues-paying members.

3.5 The date for convening the Parish Assembly and its Agenda shall be announced at least one month in advance, and if the laws of the United Kingdom do not require any prerequisites,
a) through written notice invitation to the dues-paying members;
b) through posting on the church's notice board;
c) through publication in the official journal or newsletter of the Parish (if applicable).

3.6 The Parish Assembly has a legitimate quorum when at least 1/3 of the dues-paying members are present.

3.7 The president of the Parish Assembly is the Parish Priest.

3.8 The prerogatives/rights of the Parish Assembly are:

3.8.1 To elect

(a) in its first session

- (i) the Officers of the Assembly – chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and assistant secretary, who shall continue in their positions until the election of Officers in a subsequent meeting of

- the Assembly;
- (ii) the balloting committee, who shall continue in their positions until the election of a subsequent balloting committee in a subsequent meeting of the Assembly

(b) the Parish Council;

(c) an Auditing Committee, for the same length of tenure as the Parish Council;

(d) a Nominating Committee and if applicable, a Properties Management Board;

(e) Delegates to the Diocesan Assembly, with a tenure of four (4) years.

Note: A Minimum of two (2) candidates are required to be on the ballot for each respective office.

3.8.2 To accept the administrative and/or financial reports of the Parish Priest, Parish Council, Auditing Committee and other parish organisations.

3.8.3 To present proposals for the Diocesan Assembly regarding the activities of the Diocese and issues with the Diocesan Constitution.

3.8.4 To approve the annual budget for the Parish and the plan for the activities of the Parish for the upcoming year.

3.8.5 The decision of the Parish Assembly and the Annual Parish budget are subject to ratification by the Diocesan Primate and the Diocesan Council.

(D) THE PARISH COUNCIL

4.1 The Parish Council is the executive committee of the Parish, with the Parish Priest as president.

4.2 The members of the Parish Council are elected by the Parish Assembly (between five (5) and fifteen (15) members, always maintaining an odd number). The Parish Council elects its officers — chairman, vice chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer.

4.3 Assistant clergyman (married or celibate) to the Parish Priest may participate in Parish Council meetings, without the right to vote.

4.4 If the case of a vacancy on the Parish Council, the position shall be filled by the alternate who secured the highest number of votes.

4.5 The number of alternates on the Parish Council may not exceed 50% of the elected members. Otherwise, a new election of the council shall take place.

4.6 The duration of the Parish Council's term of office is determined by the Diocesan Assembly. In the absence of a Diocese/Diocesan Assembly, the term of office of the Parish Council shall be four (4) years

4.7 Members of the Parish Council may be elected to no more than two Consecutive terms.

4.8 The responsibilities and rights of the Parish Council are:

a) to assist the Parish Priest in securing the preaching of the Holy Gospel, religious-educational and instructional activities, and liturgical life, all under the jurisdiction of the Parish;

b) to procure the budget;

c) to prepare the annual Parish budget and present it to the Parish Assembly for ratification;

d) to implement the decisions of the Parish Assembly;

e) to implement the directives of the Diocesan Primate and the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;

f) to establish committees under the auspices of the Parish Council, to the extent of its jurisdiction;

g) to accept reports and activity plans of organizations operating under the auspices of the Parish Council (church ladies committee, church youth groups, Sunday School, Christian Education, charitable);

h) to conduct the parish's ongoing operations.

4.9 The powers of the Parish Council are discontinued if:

a) more than 50% of its elected members cease to be active or are replaced with alternates;

b) the Parish Council is working in contradiction to either the Parish Constitution or the Diocesan Constitution. In this case, the Diocesan Primate and the Diocesan Council dissolve the Parish Council and schedule new elections.

(E) PARISH FINANCES AND ASSETS

5.1 The resources of the Parish are generated from:

a) the sale of candles, liturgical items and literature;

b) sacraments;

c) donations;

d) membership dues;

e) financial enterprises with the permission of the Diocesan Primate and the Diocesan Council;

f) endowment funds.

5.2 The financial resources of the Parish are expended according to the budget accepted by the Parish Assembly and ratified by the Diocesan Primate and Diocesan Council.

5.3 Real (immovable) property owned by the Parish may be dispossessed by the decision of the Parish Assembly, with the permission of the Diocesan Primate and Diocesan Council, having previously informed the Catholicos of All Armenians regarding same.

(F) PARISH DISSOLUTION

6.1 In case a parish is dissolved, the financial and real assets of the Parish are transferred to the Diocese following the payment of parish obligations.

(G) AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

Amendment must be made in accordance with any additions or alterations made to the Guidelines for Diocesan By-Laws of the Holy Armenian Apostolic Church approved by the Diocesan Representative Assembly at the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and approved by His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians subsequent to November 4th, 2009, OR specific amendments or additions authorised to be made to this Constitution in particular, by the Diocesan Representative Assembly and approved by His Holiness the Catholicos of All Armenians.

THIS CONSTITUTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE PARISHIONERS OF THE PARISH OF SAINT YEGHICHE CHURCH AT THEIR FIRST MEETING (PARISH ASSEMBLY) HELD ON THEth DAY OF,

Signed:

..... **Bishop Vahan Hovhanessian PhD., Primate.**

..... **Name:
Chairman of the Assembly.**

..... **Name:
Secretary of the Assembly.**