

AIR CADET ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION AND RULES

SECTION 1 - STYLE AND GOVERNANCE

1. The following provisions shall constitute the Rules for the Air Cadet Association and shall be binding on all members, the Board of Trustees, sub-committees (that may be established from time to time) and subordinate Branches that may be established in the future.
2. The formal title shall be the "Air Cadet Association" and it shall be known as "Air Cadet Association". The only approved abbreviated titles of Air Cadet Association shall be "ACA" or "AC Association" or derivatives of these abbreviated titles in upper or lower case.
3. The policy and conduct of the Air Cadet Association (hereafter termed 'ACA') affairs shall be the responsibility of a Board of Trustees (hereafter named the Board). The Board members will be drawn from within the membership and may serve for an initial term of 4 years with annual re-election thereafter up to a maximum of 12 years. The Board shall consider any amendments to the Constitution and Rules of ACA that may be required. All such changes will be discussed and ratified by an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Board.
4. The main administrative structure of ACA shall initially comprise a Board of Trustees with provision for the establishment of geographical Branches based in line with the structure at Region level of the Air Cadet Organisation. The Board shall determine the approval of the establishment of Branches of ACA. Overtime the Board may establish Branches based in line with the structure at Wing level of the Air Cadet Organisation.
5. On the establishment of ACA Branches, the Board shall issue guidance to ACA Branch Secretaries to assist them in the day-to-day management of their respective organisations. The guidance shall be reviewed and updated by the Board as required.
6. The Air Cadet Association governance hierarchy is as follows:
 - 6.1 Constitution and Rules of ACA
 - 6.2 Board guidance and instructions
 - 6.3 ACA Financial Plans
 - 6.4 ACA Branch guidance and instructions.
7. Membership of ACA shall be open to any individual in the Air Training Corps or Combined Cadet Force (RAF Section) – generally encompassed in the title "Air Cadet Organisation" or "ACO" - is currently or who has been
 - 7.1 enrolled as a cadet and of adult status (18 years of age or older)
 - 7.2 a Commissioned Officer in the ACO
 - 7.3 appointed as Chaplain in the ACO
 - 7.4 appointed as an Adult NCO in the ACO
 - 7.5 appointed as a Civilian Instructor in the ACO
 - 7.6 appointed as a Civilian Committee member in the ACO

All applicants will be required to provide proof of membership of the ACO. Defining what is acceptable proof lies with the Board and maybe amended from time to time in line with changes within the ACO.

SECTION 2 – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

8. The Air Cadet Association is a national membership organisation open to present and past adult members who are serving or who have served in the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO) in the capacities defined in Rule 7. The main objective of ACA shall be to provide support and welfare in times of need or hardship to present and past members of the ACO. It will also maintain and promote esprit de corps and comradeship amongst all personnel, both present and past. In furtherance of the main objectives ACA shall support the following Aims:

8.1 To raise and channel financial resources that will benefit members of the ACO in times of need or hardship

8.2 To facilitate opportunities for members to connect on a social basis

8.3 To develop opportunities for members to support the ACO at all levels

SECTION 3 - PRINCIPLES & POLICY

9. ACA shall be a membership subscription organisation in which members will be encouraged to act cohesively for their own collective benefit, and that of the ACA and ACO

10. ACA shall be a permanent body that shall maintain non-political and non-discriminatory values at all times. Under no circumstances shall it, or any of its subordinate Branches elect or be seen to take sides as a body in any political, industrial or religious disputes. Members shall remain entirely free to act as their individual consciences may dictate; provided it is in the spirit of ACA and that, by their actions, they do not bring the ACO or ACA into disrepute in any manner that may cause embarrassment to the Royal Air Force (RAF), the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO), ACA, the Board or individual members of ACA at any level.

11. ACA shall at all times maintain legal compliance and will strive to act in good faith in the support of its members.

12. Subordinate Branches of ACA shall not amalgamate nor integrate with other societies, bodies or organisations, and must maintain their independence and integrity. However, close liaison is encouraged with other such organisations whose policies are similar or sympathetic to those of ACA.

13. The Board will from time to time, formulate and publish Policies to ensure effective and safe administration of ACA business.

SECTION 4 - MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING RIGHTS

14. There shall be three categories of membership; Full, Associate and Honorary.

14.1 Full Membership may only be conferred on those individuals currently serving as defined in Rule 7.

14.2 Associate Membership may only be conferred on those individuals who have retired from serving as defined in Rule 7.

14.3 Honorary Membership may be granted by the Board to individuals ineligible for membership under Rules 14.1 and 14.2 on such terms, conditions, and purposes as the Board may decide.

15. Full or Associate members, as defined in Rule 7, may hold office as Board or Branch Officials (see Rule 29). However, in order to maintain financial integrity, individual Full members in current service with the ACO, in any capacity, will be excluded from holding the office of Treasurer of the Board and/or subordinate Branches. The Board may co-opt Full, Associate and Honorary members to provide particular expertise on sub-committees that the Board may from time-to-time establish.

16. Only Full or Associate members of ACA may vote as individuals on any Association or Branch matter. Voting will be in person, by electronic mail or postal mail as deemed appropriate by the Board.

17. Applications for Full and Associate membership must be approved by the Board which shall have full discretion to refuse membership or withdraw the membership of any person subject, in the case of withdrawal, to their right of appeal to the Chairman of the Board. Membership details will be retained centrally in compliance with extant data protection regulations.

SECTION 5 – MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

18. All Full and Associate members shall pay an annual subscription. This shall be established by the Board and ratified at an Annual General Meeting and published in the Meeting Minutes. Membership subscriptions shall be paid centrally into ACA General Fund.

19. The ACA financial year shall be from 1 April to 31 March. ACA membership subscriptions shall be forwarded to ACA not later than 30 April annually, or within 30 days of receipt of a new member's membership subscription request.

20. Members joining at any time throughout the year will be required to pay the full annual membership subscription for their first year.

21. No member leaving ACA, for whatever reason, may lay claim upon the contributions or other monies paid by them into ACA

22. Members who fail to pay their ACA membership subscription after due notice of two calendar months shall have their membership terminated without further recourse and all ACA benefits shall cease. Individuals whose membership has been terminated under this Rule may not be introduced by another member to any ACA function or meeting, nor re-join ACA without the approval of the Board.

SECTION 6 – ACA HONORARY OFFICIALS AND SPECIALIST ADVISERS

23. The Board may, in furtherance of the aims of ACA, invite individuals, who may not be eligible for membership of ACA as defined in Rule 7, to take on the honorary role of Patron to, or President of, ACA

24. In inviting individuals to take on these roles, there shall be no presumption that rank bestows favour. However, Patrons and the President shall be persons of high standing within the community, whose patronage or presidency would bring prestige and advantage to ACA. The Board shall nominate Patrons and the President, after verifying their willingness to be nominated, for ratification at the AGM. As defined under Rule 16, neither Patrons nor the President may vote as individuals on any ACA or ACA Branch matter.

25. Advisers may be appointed by the Board for their specialist knowledge and expertise and need not be members of ACA. Such advisers shall only be invited to attend where their expertise and advice would be required for specific discussion items and they shall not have any voting rights on any ACA or ACA Branch matter.

SECTION 7 – THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

28. The primary role of the Board shall be to advise the AGM and to implement AGM decisions. It will have the authority to apply and uphold the Constitution and Rules of ACA and resolve any issues to which the Rules do not specifically apply, subject to final approval at the AGM. The Board will:

- 28.1 Decide upon matters of general management and administrative policy.
- 28.2 Draft and implement ACA's Financial Plan.
- 28.3 Create a Welfare sub committee that will consider applications from the Branches for cases of need or hardship.
- 28.3 Create sub-committees, or ad-hoc working groups, as considered necessary for the day-to-day business of ACA. Such sub-committees may include; Finance, Membership, Social Activities and Ethics.
- 28.4 Review matters brought before it and agree the items being placed on the agenda of General Meetings and the AGM.
- 28.5 Consider the approval of geographical subordinate Branches of ACA.
- 28.6 Provide guidance and advice to ACA Branches on procedures to be adopted.
- 28.7 Conduct, at intervals not exceeding two years, a formal review of the Constitution and Rules and, where necessary, propose revisions at the next AGM.

29. The ACA Board of Trustees shall be elected by the membership under procedures defined by the Board, and ratified and announced at the AGM. The Board shall comprise:

- 29.1 A Chairman
- 29.2 A Vice Chairman
- 29.3 A Secretary
- 29.4 A Treasurer

Wherever possible, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer should be elected on different years to provide continuity within the Board. Members seeking election to Board roles must be supported by at least two of the serving Trustees.

30. Trustees shall serve for a term of no more than four years when they must stand-down. They may seek immediate re-election prior to the AGM renewable annually to allow for a maximum of 12 years service. Should a Trustee retire, resign or be unable to continue in office for any reason, a member shall be co-opted by the Board as a Trustee and they shall serve until the next AGM when they may seek formal election.

31. The Board shall initially comprise the Officials detailed in paragraph 29. When ACA Branches are established, The Board will also include a Branch ACA Official from each ACA Branch or, a nominated member from that Branch who shall act on behalf of and fully represent the Branch.

32. At any General Meeting, a minimum of five Full members, which must include at least two Trustees, shall constitute a quorum. The Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman shall preside. At least three Board officials, including the Chairman, must attend the AGM.

33. The Board may co-opt any other member or non-member to attend meetings to advise on any particular issue or subject. Members co-opted in this advisory capacity shall not be entitled to vote on the subject of their advice.

34. The Board shall hold General Meetings whenever necessary (but commensurate with maintaining minimal environmental impact), at the discretion of the Chairman, but at least twice within the Financial Year and within six months of a previous meeting. The Board shall also meet at least three months before the scheduled date of an AGM. At other times, Extraordinary General Meetings may be formally requested by members of the Board.

35. Minutes or 'Notes for the Record' of each Board meeting shall be recorded by the Board Secretary and issued to the President and to all Members and Branch Secretaries (when established) within two working weeks of the subject meeting.

36. Appropriate and allowable travel expenses of Board Officials and members attending meetings in the capacity of an official shall be determined by the Board and met from ACA's General Fund. Travel costs, however, shall be set at the most cost-effective means, as

defined by the Board. Subsistence costs shall be the responsibility of individuals other than in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will be approved by the Officials of the Board and only on a case-by-case basis.

37. The Board shall be entitled to suspend, for a finite period, or expel any subordinate Branch or individual member in breach of, or ceasing to respect, the requirements of ACA's Constitution and Rules. A General Meeting of ACA shall ratify any suspension or expulsion.

38. While initially being membership managed and operated, ACA may grow to a membership size that may require additional administrative support. The Board may appoint such support staff as necessary for the efficient conduct of ACA affairs after ratification at a General Meeting. The support costs of such staff shall be met from ACA's General Fund.

SECTION 8 – ACA BRANCHES – WHEN ESTABLISHED

39. Branches of ACA will be geographically based and shall not be established or disestablished without the approval of the Board.

40. Each Branch shall elect a Branch Executive Committee (BEC), comprising a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The duty of the BEC shall be to exercise a controlling oversight of the conduct of the Branch, and to implement any constitutional or administrative directives provided by the Board.

41. A Branch AGM shall be held prior to the end of the Financial Year where the BEC members for the forthcoming year shall be elected; their names and contact details shall be reported to and approved by the EC.

42. Appropriate and allowable travel expenses of BEC Officials and members attending meetings, as defined in paragraph 31, in the capacity of an official shall be determined by the Board and met from ACA's General Fund. Travel costs, however, shall be set at the most cost-effective means, as defined by the Board. Subsistence costs shall be the responsibility of individuals other than in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will be approved by the Officials of the Board and only on a case by case basis.

43. Members of ACA may apply to join a Branch of their choice. However, individual membership details will be retained centrally.

44. Branches may temporarily amalgamate to undertake particular activities where such an amalgamation may bring mutual benefits. However, the responsibility for the administration, finances and general running of any such amalgamation shall rest solely with the Branches concerned. ACA's General Fund shall not, under any circumstances, be liable for any expenses or losses resulting from the amalgamation.

45. Any Branch having requested and received authority to close, or having been suspended from further activities by the Board, shall forward to the Board Secretary:

- 45.1 A statement of the ACA Branch Accounts, certified by the BEC Chairman.
- 45.2 The balance of remaining ACA Branch funds (after suitable disbursements have been made in accordance with the wishes of the membership through a ACA Branch General Meeting).
- 45.3 ACA Branch records and cash books relating to these funds.
- 45.4 A register of ACA Branch members – in confirmation of the membership records held centrally.

SECTION 9 - GENERAL MEETINGS AND THE AGM

46. In recognition of the environmental impact, physical meetings of ACA shall be limited to as few as required to maintain ACA's business. The AGM shall be the normal means of

debating and ratifying ACA business and it shall be held at a date and venue chosen by the Board. The date and venue shall be notified to all members and ACA Branches at least three calendar months in advance. To further minimise the environmental impact, the publication of ACA business and meeting notifications shall be enacted through a members only on-line process. The business to be transacted by an AGM of ACA shall include - but not be limited to:

- 46.1 Consideration of reports and approval of ACA accounts for the preceding year.
- 46.2 Approval of ACA's Financial Plan and Annual Budget for the forthcoming year.
- 46.3 Approval of the Board proposed independent auditors for the forthcoming financial year.
- 46.4 Approval of any ACA membership subscription charges decided upon by the Board.
- 46.5 Approval of any changes to the Constitution and/or revised Rules recommended by the Board (subject to a majority vote).
- 46.6 Election and confirmation of Board Officials.
- 46.7 Review and approval of matters of general policy, concepts and guidance.
- 46.8 Review and approval of planned national ACA events.

47. The Board shall agree items for inclusion in the agenda for the AGM at the Board General Meeting scheduled prior to the AGM. These agenda items, together with nominations for office, shall be published – as defined in Rule 46 to the President, members and ACA Branches with the Minutes of that Board General Meeting.

48. Other resolutions for discussion and ratification at the AGM as 'Any Other Business' must be advised to the Board Secretary prior to the start of the AGM but, shall not be voted upon unless the Board Officials conclude that the matter is relevant, urgent or of importance to ACA business. This does not preclude general discussion on other ACA matters at the AGM.

49. The Board may convene an Extraordinary General Meeting at any time if requested formally by Board Officials or, when established, by an ACA Board. The agenda shall be specified, with a minimum of six-weeks notice given to ACA in general.

50. All members may take part in discussions at an AGM but, only Full and Associate members shall be entitled to take part in the voting process. ACA recognises the limitations on attendance at the AGM imposed by it's dedication to minimising the impact on the environment. To this end, the discussion and voting process, though formally ratified through the mechanism of a physical AGM, shall be conducted as far as possible using a secure on-line process. This will take place following publication of the AGM notice and the outcomes and points raised shall be carried through to the AGM. The currency of this process will be maintained as technology changes occur.

51. All decisions of the AGM shall be decided by votes of the members and a simple majority shall be required. In the event of a tied outcome, the motion shall be deemed "not carried" and, to avoid repetitious discussions, a "not carried" decision of the AGM shall not be raised for formal consideration at the next consecutive AGM, unless the Board concludes that circumstances demand a repetition.

52. Members, other than Board Officials attending an AGM shall be responsible for their own travel and subsistence costs.

SECTION 10 – FINANCE

53. The Board shall ensure that the ACA General Fund is maintained at a level set in the Financial Plan and may delegate the management of the General Fund to a Finance sub-committee.

54. As membership of ACA increases, the Finance sub-committee may consider the establishment of a formal, regulated and audited investment programme for its General Fund. Investments made by ACA will comply with extant Financial Services Acts and regulations and shall be vested solely in the name of ACA Board as nominee.

55. All ACA membership subscriptions shall be paid directly into the ACA General Fund.

56. An external and independent auditor shall audit the accounts of ACA annually. An abridged copy of ACA accounts shall be published and available to all members. Unabridged copies of the accounts shall to be made available upon request and shall be included in the annual Financial Statement to the AGM.

57. Other than the handling of membership subscriptions, ACA Branches may incur costs and transact expenditure on behalf of Branch members. Branches are to forward a copy of the Branch certified Statement of Accounts to the Board Treasurer within 30 days of the end of the Financial Year.

58. The Board Treasurer or Finance sub-committee shall present an Annual Budget to ACA for the forthcoming financial year for ratification by the AGM.

SECTION 11 – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

59. Members having a complaint relating to ACA or its members shall follow an established complaints procedure. When ACA Branches are established, complaints shall be heard initially at the Branch level, under local arrangements.

60. Where the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the complainant may refer their complaint to the Board, which may establish an Ethics sub-committee to deal with the complaint. Where necessary, the Board shall provide the final level of appeal.

61. The levels of authority in the resolution of complaints shall be in order of priority:

- 63.1 First level: Branch Executive Committee (when established)
- 63.2 Second level: Association Ethics sub-committee (if established)
- 63.3 Final level: ACA Board (all complaints; pre Branch establishment and, on appeal; post Branch establishment).

62. The Board Chairman may not be a member of the Ethics sub-committee, nor may Ethics sub-committee members, as individuals, be party to any deliberation or ruling on a member of their own family. Where necessary, the Board may co-opt members with specialist skills in the area of the complaint to serve on the Ethics sub-committee.

63. Before any member, Board Official, BEC Official or ACA Branch is suspended, censured or expelled from ACA, they shall be given six-weeks formal notice to present and review their case with the Ethics sub-committee, together with details of the complaint(s) against them. Non-compliance with the formal notice shall be construed as acceptance of the complaint(s), unless a legitimate reason is given that warrants deferment of the review.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

The Board of ACA recognises the importance of approaching its responsibilities for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in a co-ordinated and committed fashion. ACA CSR programme will comprise:

- Work in the Community
- Environmental Policy
- Ethical Policy

The Board is committed to bring this combined corporate social responsibility programme to the attention of all members of ACA through its normal communication channels. In addition, this programme will be reviewed and measured annually to ensure that the commitment to environmental responsibility, the community, and the ethical policy are as up-to-date and forward thinking as possible.

Work in the Community

ACA, while meeting its Aims and Objectives, cannot operate in isolation from the many communities to which its members belong. Indeed, it is of paramount importance that ACA interacts with and supports, amongst others; the cadet, military, social, ethnic, cultural, religious, business, local and national communities with due respect and consideration for their aspirations and for the endowment of the richness of their diversity.

By providing a network of communication both during and beyond the normal periods of service in the Air Cadet Organisation (ACO), ACA will reinforce the values and ethos of the ACO. By so doing, it will strengthen the values of good citizenship, self-reliance, moral resilience and respect for others in its members and, through them, to the wider community.

Environmental Policy

ACA is committed to achieving a real and sustainable positive impact on the broader community in which it operates. It is essential that both ACA and its members should operate in an environmentally conscious manner. The objective is to minimise the impact of ACA business activity on the environment, wherever possible, through efficient utilization and preservation of natural resources.

The main business of ACA will be conducted through IT and electronic communications and, by limiting the number of large gatherings to only those required for good business practice and to meet the social needs of the members, the use of natural resources (eg. paper, gas, water, electricity, lighting, waste disposal) will be minimised.

The commitment of ACA to a sustained minimal impact on the environment will be reviewed annually

Ethical Policy

ACA will maintain the highest level of professional integrity with regard to its members and others with whom it interacts and will strive to set its standards in excess of regulation with regard to confidentiality, objectivity and independence.

ACA will respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through its business practices and will support freedom from torture, unjustified imprisonment without fair trial and any other form of oppression. In addition, ACA will support the rights of any member to freedom of expression, religious preference, political representation, cultural and ethnic diversity or gender orientation.

ACA will not tolerate discrimination, bullying or any other form of harassment within its community. The concept of 'mutual respect' will be one of AC Connects guiding principles. Members will be expected to abide by ACA Constitution and Rules and to be honest and considerate to other Members and in the performance of any official roles to which they may be appointed.

Internal procedures have been established to report grievances or suspected inappropriate behaviour to other individuals or organisations. Equally ACA will treat dishonest actions and accusations seriously; this may result in action being taken in accordance with Association's Constitution and Rules.

The Future

ACA will review the CSR Statement annually and consult with members in order to evaluate this strategy, ensure compliance, update and improve it's policies and, if necessary set new objectives for the future.

END

Document History			
Date	Version	Detail of Changes	Author
24 Feb 17	1	Draft for approval	S Silver
10 April 17	2	Approved by trustees	S Silver