

# Cercle français de Belfast

## Constitution



## Constitution

### Cercle français de Belfast

#### 1. Definition

The Cercle français de Belfast is a not-for-profit community organisation, with the following objectives:

To explore, study, and publicise the culture, language, and nature of France and the French-speaking world;

To organise social events to achieve these objectives;

To attract new members, in pursuit of these objectives; and

To link with other organisations, including the Alliance Française de Londres and its affiliates.

#### 2. Values

Members of the Cercle are expected to be committed to the objectives, and to their achievement by, with, and for all members.

#### 3. Management

The Cercle's Committee has responsibility for the management of the Cercle's affairs. The membership of the Committee is limited to no more than 12, to be elected at the Annual General Meeting. If there are more than 12 candidates, conduct of the election will be the responsibility of the last available President or Membership Secretary. If there are vacancies on the Committee, the Committee may co-opt other members, until the maximum number is reached.

To meet special needs or eventualities, the Committee may temporarily raise the number of members above 12, by co-opting particular individuals.

Whenever possible, members shall be elected for two years, and their election staggered so that half of the team changes at each Annual General Meeting.

The posts to be filled by Committee members are:

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Membership Secretary  
Communications Secretary  
Committee Secretary

The President of the Cercle will be supported by the Vice President. As far as possible, the other posts named above will be supported by a deputy.

Whenever possible, every Committee member will be consulted before decisions are made. To make urgent decisions on behalf of the Cercle, the necessary quorum is two-thirds, the decision being accepted if a simple majority is obtained. (A quorum is the minimum number required for the proceedings to be “valid”; the term valid therefore also concerns the discussion as well as the vote.) Such decisions will be accepted as full Committee decisions.

A decision approved by email will be as valid as if it had been passed at a Committee meeting. Approval must be received by the Recipient (the person nominated in advance by the Committee for that purpose). The date of a decision shall be the date of the email from the Recipient confirming formal approval.

Committee meetings will normally be chaired by the President or the Vice President, with minutes or decisions being recorded by a member determined and consulted beforehand. In the absence of both the President and the Vice President the members present will agree on who will chair the meeting, and who will take notes of record.

#### 4. Finance

The available funds shall be applied solely to the stated objectives.

Unless acting in a professional capacity, no member shall receive payment for services provided other than for legitimate expenses incurred on behalf of the Cercle.

The commissioning of professional services will be subject to good commercial practice, such as discussion of terms in the absence of providers, rates of reimbursement to be determined by the Committee, and payment based on presentation of an appropriate invoice. Members are required to declare an interest where one is present.

In the event of dissolution of the Cercle, its property will be realised, and after the payment of all debts and liabilities, the resulting sum transferred to some other institution which has objectives similar to those of the Cercle. This is to be determined by the Committee, at or before the time of dissolution, or, if necessary, by arbitration.

The Treasurer shall keep appropriate books of accounts, showing all sums received and paid, and shall have authority to give receipts for cash paid to the Cercle. Annual accounts shall be produced for examination and agreement at the Annual General Meeting. Payments on the general banking account shall be authorised by the signatories required by the bank; monies expended shall require the sanction of the Committee.

## 5. Meetings

### a) Annual General Meeting

Confirmation of the minutes of the preceding AGM as a true record.

The Annual Report, including the Secretary's Report, the Treasurer's Report, and the Chairperson's Report. The Annual Statement of Accounts approved by the Committee, before the AGM, is to be included.

The Election of Committee members to vacant seats on the Committee.

Any other appropriate business.

A minimum of fourteen days' notice in writing shall be sent to each member prior to an AGM, and include all annual reports, and any other material for discussion. The quorum for an AGM is 12.

### b) Extraordinary General Meeting

An EGM may be called at the discretion of the Committee, or on a request in writing to the Secretary from five members of the Cercle, stating the objective of the meeting. At least fourteen days' notice of the EGM, specifying the business, shall be given in writing, to every member of the Cercle, by the proposers.

No other business shall be transacted at such meetings.

### c) Committee Meetings

The Committee shall meet at least three times a year. Meetings may be held face-to-face or by video/telephone conference. Any matter which is not provided for in this Constitution shall be dealt with by the Committee whose decision will be final.

### d) Membership

Every member who has paid the annual subscription shall have a vote in all AGMs and EGMs.

## 6. General

This Constitution may not be altered except at a General Meeting, notified with fourteen days' notice to all members, providing a copy of this Constitution, and full details of the proposed alterations.

### Policies

Members of the Cercle believe that everyone has the right to participate in its activities as a member of the Committee, speaker, event organiser or participant. No-one will be prevented from taking part on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, social background, religion, or ethnicity.

Our current focus is the encouragement of adult participation; we do not have the resources or the capacity to cater for the needs of children under the age of 18 at monthly events. Activities in schools and other youth localities will be supported where we are

satisfied that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect all parties. Wherever possible (subject to financial or other constraints), events will be held in venues which are accessible, and suitable, for wheelchair users; the Cercle will regularly review this policy, and its implications.

### Child Protection

The Cercle français de Belfast considers people under 18 years old to be children. Any child of any age is welcome to our activities, provided he or she is accompanied by a responsible adult. We will not organise activities where participating children come into isolated one-to-one contact with a volunteer away from the accompanying adult supervision.

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