

RULES OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND LAY MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION

1. NAME NORTHERN IRELAND LAY MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION

2. OBJECTS

- a) To promote and encourage liaison between members throughout Northern Ireland.
- b) By discussion and exchange of information and views to make the procedure, treatment and penalties uniform and consistent throughout Northern Ireland.
- c) To assist and advise in the preparation of training programmes for members.
- d) To discuss and advise on projected legislation and/or other changes affecting all matters coming within the judicial competence of Lay Magistrates.
- e) To make known the work, objects and scope of the Lay Magistracy in Northern Ireland
To join and/or become affiliated to other similar Associations in England, Wales and Scotland and/or International Associations.
- g) To promote and encourage liaison between other groups including, but not limited to: Police Service of Northern Ireland, Public Prosecution Service, Probation Board for Northern Ireland, Youth Justice Agency, Youth Conferencing Service, Guardian Ad Litem Agency, Judicial Studies Board for Northern Ireland and Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Association shall consist of Ordinary, Honorary or Associate members.

a) Ordinary Members

All members of the Lay Magistracy in Northern Ireland, who have paid the annual subscription.

b) Honorary Members:

Members who have served on the bench for at least ten years AND who have rendered outstanding service to the Association AND who have retired by virtue of age or for other reasons acceptable to the Association shall be eligible for election to Honorary Membership at an Annual General Meeting of the Association. Nominations should reach the Executive Committee via the Divisional Representative, at least three months before the AGM.

II. Persons who have been directly connected with the administration of the law as it concerns the young and who may be elected at an Annual General Meeting of the Association.

c) Associate Members:

Persons or associations of persons who, by their qualifications, appointments or achievements or, in the case of associations, by their

objectives, can contribute to the work of the Association, shall be eligible for election to associate membership at an Annual General Meeting of the Association on payment of such annual subscription as may from time to time be resolved at an Annual General Meeting.

d) **Loss of Membership:**

Membership is lost:

- a. by resignation in writing addressed to the Secretary or to the Executive Committee;
- b. by being struck off the list of members for non-payment of the subscription;
- c. by exclusion following a decision taken by at least a two thirds majority of members present, and eligible to vote, at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting for damaging the prestige, good name or interests of the Association.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

4.1 PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

- a) The Association shall have a President and a Vice-President.
- b) The President shall be the Lord Chancellor.
- c) The Vice-President shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting and shall hold office for five years unless removed from office as under Section 3.d. (iii).
- d) The Vice-President will be eligible for re-election for one further period of five years. -
- e) Nominees for the position of Vice-President must have been a member of the Lay Panel or a Lay Magistrate of at least ten years standing who have rendered outstanding service to the Association.
- f) Nominations should reach the Executive Committee at least three months before the Annual General Meeting.
- g) The Vice-President shall deputise for the Lord Chancellor at all formal gatherings of the Association.
- h) The Vice-President shall take the Chair for the election of a new Chairman.

4.2 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- a) The Executive Committee of the Association shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, a Training Committee representative and not more than eight Divisional representative members.
The immediate past Chairman shall remain on the Executive Committee, in an advisory capacity, without voting rights, for a period of one year.¹
The Executive Committee may, if it is deemed necessary, co-opt additional Lay Magistrates for a period of up to one year.

¹ Rules amended at AGM 2010

- b) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall hold office for two years. The Vice- Chairman shall be eligible for election as Chairman.
- c) In the event of the Vice-chairman being unable, or unwilling, to go forward as Chairman the outgoing Chairman shall be eligible for re-election for one further period of one year.
- d) A representative member shall, so far as possible, be elected from each of the Crown and County Court Divisions in Northern Ireland except in the case of the Belfast Division which shall elect two representative members
- e) The Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer shall retire annually but shall be eligible for re-election each year.
- f) Except as allowed for in clauses (b), (c) and (e) representative members will sit on the Executive Committee for a period not exceeding three years. However, in exceptional circumstances, such members may be eligible to sit for a period of one further year.
- g) The Executive Committee shall have power to co-opt for the remaining term of office when an elected Executive Committee member ceases to occupy that position.
- h) Nominations for any vacancy or vacancies in the offices of Chairman, Vice- Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer or Representative Members shall be forwarded in writing to reach the Honorary Secretary not later than three months prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting,
- i) The Executive Committee shall have power to submit nominations to the Annual General Meeting in respect of any vacancy which may occur on the Committee.
- j) The Executive Committee and Sub-Committees shall meet at such intervals as are deemed appropriate by the Chairman, but not less than four times per year.
- k) Five members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.
- l) Membership of the Executive Committee will be deemed to have ceased where a member is absent from more than two meetings in a year, unless through illness, or other valid reason.
- m) A Member of the Executive Committee deemed to have damaged the prestige; good name or interests of the Association may be suspended prior to a full hearing at the next Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting. Removal from office requires a decision taken by at least a two thirds majority of members present at that meeting and eligible to vote.

5. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- a) An Annual General Meeting shall be held between September and October ² each year and every member shall receive not less than twenty-one days notice of such meetings.
- b) An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be convened upon a request by the Executive Committee or upon a requisition by not less than twenty members, which requisition shall state the business to be considered at the meeting. Such meetings shall be held within twenty-one days of the receipt of the Notice of Requisition by the Secretary.

² Rules amended at AGM April 2011

- c) At any General Meeting every ordinary paid up member present shall have one vote.
- d) Twenty members present shall form a quorum for a General Meeting.
- e) Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority except as allowed for under Clauses 3d. (c), 4.2. (m); and 9.
- f) In the case of an equality of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.

6 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ordinary Members and Associate Members shall pay such annual subscription as may from time to time be resolved at an Annual General Meeting.

7. BANKING ACCOUNT

- a) Subscriptions and all other monies received by the Association shall be paid by the Treasurer into a Bank Account in the name of the Association at the Branch of Bank Ltd or such other bank as the Executive Committee may decide.
- b) Cheques shall be signed by any two of three designated members of the Executive Committee.
- c) The accounts of the Association shall be audited and presented at the Annual General Meeting each year.

8. EXPENSES OF MANAGEMENT

All the proper costs, charges and expenses of and incidental to the management of the Association shall first be defrayed out of the income of the Association.

9. AMENDMENT OE RULES

These rules may be altered repealed or added to by a resolution passed by no less than a two-thirds majority of members present in person, and entitled to vote, at an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for that purpose.

10. DISSOLUTION

If the Association is dissolved, any property remaining after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to some other institution or institutions having objects similar to those of the Association.

[2011]