

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

CONSTITUTION

1 Preamble

- 1.1 The name of this Association shall be "The British Association for Irish Studies".
- 1.2 Membership of the Association shall be open to anyone with a bona fide interest in Irish Studies.
- 1.3 The Association is a non-political and non-sectarian body.
- 1.4 Policies shall not be accepted or adopted which would conflict with the 1.3 or with the Objectives of the Association as defined in 2 or would have the effect of the Association ceasing to be a charity at law.
- 1.5 The Association will encourage local activity by its members which is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Association, and will encourage, to this end, the formation of local BAIS groups.

2 Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 To establish a means of communication between those interested in Irish Studies in all disciplines.
- 2.2 To promote a knowledge and understanding of (a) Ireland and the relations between the peoples of the two states in these islands and (b) the experience of the Irish in Britain and their contribution to British society.
- 2.3 To produce and distribute materials and to encourage the development of teaching resources in support of 2.1 above.
- 2.4 To encourage research and writing in Irish Studies.
- 2.5 To seek funding to secure the continued existence and to promote the objectives of the Association.
- 2.6 To organise a Biennial Irish Studies Conference and such other activities as may be suggested by the relevant Standing Committee(s) and agreed by the Council.
- 2.7 To promote Irish Studies at all levels of the education systems within the United Kingdom.
- 2.8 To encourage the use of appropriate qualifications in Irish Studies as a means of access to higher education.
- 2.9 To encourage links with and exchanges between educational institutions in Britain, Ireland and the rest of Europe.

3 Membership

- 3.1 Members must pay the annual dues at the rate recommended by the Council and ratified by the Membership.
- 3.2 Full-time students and those not in paid employment shall pay annual dues at the concessionary rate recommended by the Council and ratified by the Membership.
- 3.3 Membership lapses if the annual dues are not paid within six months of the date membership is due.
- 3.4 No person under the age of 18 years shall be entitled to serve as an Officer or member of Council, or to vote in election.
- 3.5 The Membership Committee shall present an updated Register of Membership to the Council for ratification every quarter. This Register will constitute the official List of Members.
- 3.6 The membership year shall begin on 1 January.

4 Council and Officers

- 4.1 The Association shall have a Council of 15 members, including the Officers designated in 4.2, elected from among the Members of the Association.
- 4.2 The Officers of the Association shall be: a Chair, a Vice-Chair, an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer.
- 4.3 Members of Council are trustees of BAIS and are legally responsible for the proper running of the Association. All members of Council will be supplied with a document

explaining their responsibilities and must acquaint themselves with the contents of this document.

- 4.4 The responsibilities of Officers and Members of Council are set out in the Standing Orders.
- 4.5 The Council is responsible for ratifying the policy of the Association, which will be formulated by Standing Committees (5.4 below).
- 4.6 Chairing of Council Meetings shall rotate as per Standing Orders.
- 4.7 All Officers and members of Council shall act as members of Standing Committees.
- 4.8 The quorum for Council Meetings shall be eight Members of Council.
- 4.9 Intervals between Meetings of Council shall not normally be less than one calendar month, or greater than two calendar months.
- 4.10 The Council is responsible for arranging the dates and locations for the Annual Meetings of the Association.
- 4.11 The Council has the power to appoint the Editor and/or the Editorial Board of any Journal, Proceedings, Newsletter and any other publications of the Association, on the recommendation of the Publications Committee.
- 4.12 The Council is responsible for supervising Association elections in accordance with the provisions set out in 9 below and in the Standing Orders.

5 Standing Committees

- 5.1 The Council shall have power to constitute Standing Committees which shall consist of Members of Council who shall have power, where appropriate, to add non-Council Association members to their number by co-option.
- 5.2 Standing Committees shall be reconstituted following each Council Election.
- 5.3 To facilitate the process of co-option described in 5.1 above, a register of Members of the Association willing to serve on Standing Committees will be maintained.
- 5.4 Standing Committees shall formulate policies and programmes within their particular areas of responsibility for ratification by Council, and shall be responsible for carrying out Council policy in those areas.
- 5.5 A list of existing Standing Committees shall be published in the Standing Orders and shall be updated annually. The roles of Standing Committees shall also be set out in the Standing Orders.
- 5.6 Standing Committees shall consist of not less than 2 persons and not more than 14.
- 5.7 While the Finance Committee will be responsible for overall co-ordination of Association expenditure, subject to the approval of Council, Standing Committees shall prepare annual budgets and work within these when they have been ratified by Council.
- 5.8 Standing Committee reports shall be tabled at each Council meeting, or at intervals deemed appropriate by Council.
- 5.9 The work of Standing Committees shall be reviewed annually by the Council.
- 5.10 Apart from those Standing Committees mentioned in the Constitution, new Standing Committees shall be constituted or existing Standing Committees disbanded as deemed appropriate.
- 5.11 A proposal to abolish a Standing Committee mentioned in the Constitution will be deemed an amendment of the Constitution.

6 Fundraising

- 6.1 The Finance Committee will be responsible for the development and conduct of a Fundraising Strategy, subject to the ratification of that strategy by Council.
- 6.2 An external Funding Group shall be constituted and shall function as set out in Standing Orders.
- 6.3 The Finance Committee will liaise with an external Fundraising Group which will identify sources of corporate funding and assist with applications for such funding.
- 6.4 The Finance Committee will be represented by the Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and one other member of the Finance Committee on this external Fundraising Group.
- 6.5 Applications for statutory funding and funding from charitable trusts will be handled by the Finance Committee.

7 Affiliation

- 7.1 Educational bodies or institutions, or professional bodies representing educators may affiliate to BAIS on payment of the appropriate affiliation fee as set by the Council from time to time and as contained in the Standing Orders.

- 7.2 The Association, will convene two meetings per year of an Advisory Conference consisting of one representative of each of the affiliated bodies.
- 7.3 Each advisory conference will be presided over by the Chairperson of the Association, will be attended by members of Council, and will receive reports on the work of the Association.
- 7.4 Each conference will offer advice on the work of the association which must be considered by the Council.
- 7.5 Affiliates will receive the publications of the Association but will not have the right to vote in elections.

8 General Meetings

- 8.1 The Association will hold an Annual General Meeting.
- 8.2 An Agenda will be circulated to all Members at least four weeks before a General Meeting.
- 8.3 Annual Reports of all duly constituted Standing Committees will be submitted to the General Meeting for its approval.
- 8.4 An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be called by the Association Chair (President, Cathaoirleach?) as set out in Standing Orders if his /her ruling on an interpretation of the Constitution or Standing Orders is challenged by a meeting of Council. The purpose of such an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be to determine on the ruling in dispute. An agenda, which shall include the time and place of such a meeting, shall be circulated to all members at least four weeks before the meeting.
- 8.5 An Extraordinary General Meeting must be called by the Association Chair if he/she has received a request to do so, in which the matter to be considered by such an Extraordinary General Meeting is set out, if that request is signed by not less than two-thirds of the members of Council or by not less than two-thirds of the current membership of the Association. The purpose of such a n Extraordianry General Meeting shall be to consider the matter set out in the request for such a meeting, and an agenda, stating the time and place of such a meeting, shall be circulated to all members at least four weeks before the meeting.

9 Elections

- 9.1 Elections for Officers and Members of Council shall be held every two years, the process beginning not more than four months before the relevant Annual General Meeting and being completed not less than six weeks preceding it by a postal ballot of all paid-up Members.
- 9.2 The Council shall, by means of a circular letter to all Members, request nominations for the posts detailed in 4.1 and 4.2 above not less than six weeks before the date on which it is proposed to distribute ballot papers.
- 9.3 Members wishing to stand for election must be nominated and seconded by current Members of the Association.
- 9.4 Members wishing to stand for election must, at the time of nomination and seconding, signify a willingness to fulfill the duties and obligations of the position to which they are elected (4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, Standing Orders); and they may, at the same time, supply a brief curriculum vitae in writing to the designated Returning Officer for circulation with the ballot papers.
- 9.5 Members standing for designated Officer positions must also allow their names to appear on the ballot paper for non-designated Council positions. If elected to Officer positions they will be eliminated from the election for non-designated Council positions. If they are not elected to Officer positions their candidatures will stand for election to non-designated Council positions and they must, if elected, be prepared to accept the responsibilities of non-designated members of Council.
- 9.6 The Council shall appoint a Returning Officer, who shall be a Member of the Association but not a candidate for election, to conduct the Council Election. Council shall also appoint three Scrutineers, who shall likewise be members of the Association but not candidates, to observe the opening of ballot return and to assist the Returning Officer with the counting of ballots. No election shall be valid without the presence of at least two duly appointed Scrutineers at the opening and counting of ballots.
- 9.7 Only a member whose name appears on a Membership List ratified by the Council three months prior to an election shall be entitled to stand for election or to vote in an election.

- 9.8 The process of election shall be that set out in the Standing Orders. However the Council may invite the Electoral Reform Society or a similar body to supervise the conduct of a Council Election, should it decide that circumstances require such action.
- 9.9 Candidates may be present at the count or may request the presence of one observer per candidate to attend on their behalf.

10 Amendment of the Constitution

- 10.1 Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed at the Annual General Meeting of the Association, provided that notice has been given in writing to the Honorary Secretary not less than six weeks before the Annual General Meeting and that the proposed amendment has been circulated to Members with the Agenda of the Meeting.
- 10.2 Amendments, properly notified and put to an Annual General Meeting, shall be debated and if approved by a simple majority of those present shall be submitted to all Members of the Association for their approval in a postal ballot. Written statements in support of the amendment(s) shall be supplied to the Honorary Secretary for circulation to all members with the ballot papers on the amendment(s), and opposing statements shall also be accepted and circulated.
- 10.3 No amendment may be accepted which would have the effect of the Association ceasing to be a charity in law or which shall conflict with the 1.3 above or with the Objectives of the Association as stated in 2 above.
- 10.4 The contents of Standing Orders may be amended by a decision of a two-thirds majority of a quorate meeting of the Council, provided that the proposed amendments have been notified to members of Council on the Agenda circulated previous to the meeting.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

STANDING ORDERS

1. COUNCIL OFFICERS:

The officers and their functions are:

1.1 Chair:

The Chair will:

1.1.1 represent the Association as its public figurehead, carrying out related publicity duties. He/she will not exercise any executive function

1.1.2 be an ex-officio member of every committee

1.1.3 chair the advisory conferences held by affiliated bodies

1.1.4 chair GMs

1.1.5 call extraordinary GMs

1.1.6 be one of four authorised signatories of BAIS cheques

1.1.7 ensure the aims, objectives and constitution are adhered to, that there is no breach of standing orders and that there are no irregularities. Any decision in this role can be overturned by a majority of votes in the council, subject to appeal to an extraordinary GM

1.2 Vice-chair:

The Vice-Chair will:

1.2.1 deputize for Chair

1.2.2 be a member of the publications committee

1.2.3 be a member of the finance committee and fundraising group

1.3 Secretary:

The Secretary will:

1.3.1 act as convener of the secretarial and publicity committees

1.3.2 be responsible for press statements

1.3.3 be a member of publications committee

1.3.4 in consultation with rotating chair, prepare and circulate agenda for council meetings

1.3.5 be responsible for the minuting of council meetings

- 1.3.6 be responsible for the receipt, copying and circulation of committee reports
- 1.3.7 be responsible for dealing with queries (telephone/mail etc)
- 1.3.8 be responsible for dealing with correspondence and external agencies
- 1.3.9 oversee distribution of bulk mail by relevant standing committees

1.4 **Treasurer:**

The Treasurer will:

- 1.4.1 act as convener of the finance committee
- 1.4.2 be a member of the fundraising group
- 1.4.3 be an authorised signatory of BAIS cheques
- 1.4.4 be responsible for the control and maintenance of financial documentation and the preparation of accounts
- 1.4.5 be responsible for auditing arrangements
- 1.4.6 be responsible for the presentation of audited accounts to the AGM
- 1.4.7 be responsible for banking all monies
- 1.4.8 be responsible for paying all bills

2. **COMMITTEES:**

The committees and their functions are:

2.1 **Finance:**

- 2.1.1 produce, implement and monitor the Association's business plans
- 2.1.2- set priorities for fundraising
- 2.1.3- submit applications for statutory and charity funds
- 2.1.4- identify and, in liaison with other appropriate committees, publicise the sources of support; e.g. by producing brochure listing supporters of BAIS
- 2.1.5- budgeting and monitoring of expenses
- 2.1.6- receive, and account for, membership fees passed on by the membership committee
- 2.1.7- supervision of all funds, including membership fees and those obtained from external sources
- 2.1.8 to form the main link between the fundraising group and the council, and provide the dynamism and drive behind the group

2.2 Secretarial and Publicity:

- 2.2.1 to assist the secretary in his/her administrative duties as required
- 2.2.2 the editor of any journal published by, or in association with, BAIS, will be a member
- 2.2.3 edit, produce and distribute *Newsletter*
- 2.2.4 publicise, through regular bulletins and flyers, information of interest to members. This might concern books, events, standing list of Irish journals and information on subscriptions (e.g. *Irish Review*)
- 2.2.5 prepare and release press statements, and develop a public relations programme
- 2.2.6 produce and distribute publicity pamphlets and leaflets

2.3 Publications:

- 2.3.1 the editor, *Irish Studies Review*, will be a member
- 2.3.2 compile, maintain and distribute a survey of Irish Studies in higher education (research register)
- 2.3.3 arrange for the distribution of the *Irish Literary Supplement* and any other relevant publication
- 2.3.4 compile and distribute any other publication of the Association, other than those provided for elsewhere

2.4 Membership:

- 2.4.1 deal with all membership matters and processes
- 2.4.2 receive fees and forward them to finance committee
- 2.4.3 appoint membership Secretary to be responsible for mailing listing of members and updating membership list
- 2.4.4 present updated register to council for ratification every quarter
- 2.4.5 process and despatch all documents relating to membership and elections
- 2.4.6 promote new membership and encourage renewals

2.5 Education:

- 2.5.1 co-opt members to allow for representation from the spread of institutions and range of levels in education
- 2.5.2 develop educational policies and strategies
- 2.5.3 may act or reconstitute itself so as to form sub-committees or other bodies which will allow it to achieve the Association's aims and objectives
- 2.5.4 act so as to promote the educational objectives of the Association

2.6 Irish Language:

- 2.6.1 provide other services to teachers of Irish language, including, training days and advice
- 2.6.2 produce and distribute Irish language newsletter

2.7 Conference/Cultural:

- 2.7.1 organise cultural events to meet needs of fundraising
- 2.7.2 organise biennial and specialist conferences
- 2.7.3 develop cultural 'network'
- 2.7.4 organise BAIS lectures

3. AFFILIATED BODIES:

3.1 Groups will pay an annual affiliation fee as follows:

- 3.1.1 local groups formed by BAIS members (£10 fee)
- 3.1.2 local Irish Studies groups formed by non-BAIS members (£20 fee)
- 3.1.3 HE institutions with degree course (£30 fee)
- 3.1.4 LEAs (£50 fee)
- 3.1.5 WEAs (£50 fee)
- 3.1.6 professional educational bodies and other professional bodies (£50 fee)
- 3.1.7 trade unions (representing professional educational bodies or providing education themselves) (£50 fee)

3.2 Each affiliated group will nominate one member to the advisory body

3.3 Meetings will be presided over by the Association's elected Chair

3.4 The advisory body will represent its views, advice and recommendations to the council through the Association's elected Chair

4. FUNDRAISING GROUP:

4.1 Interested, non-member parties will be co-opted

4.2 The group will be informal and loosely structured

4.3 It will offer advice which may be formulated as policy by the finance committee and ratified by the council through established procedure

4.4 Potential donors and/or advisers to be identified by the finance committee and approached on a personal basis

4.5 Group assembled by 'networking' through personal contact by peers, i.e. by using the 'pyramid' method

4.6 The group will devise an appeal structure

4.7 The Vice chair and Treasurer will supply the dynamism and the drive, and the finance committee will provide the link between group and council

5. ELECTORAL SYSTEM:

5.1 Council members will be elected by STV (Single Transferable Vote)

5.2 There will be a separate ballot for electing each of the designated council officers (Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary and Treasurer), and one ballot for electing non-designated officers (the other 11 council members)

5.3 All ballot papers will be despatched, and should be returned, in the same envelope, in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 6 below

5.3 The names of those standing for designated officer posts will also appear on the list of candidates for election to non-designated officer positions

5.4 The ballots for designated officer posts will be counted first, and the names of the successful candidate struck off the list of those standing for non-designated officer membership of the council

5.5 Ballots for the 11 non-designated officer posts will then be counted, and candidates elected according to the preferences expressed

6. ELECTION PROCEDURE:

6.1 Each member entitled to vote shall receive:

6.1.1 five ballot papers, one for each designated officer position and one for non-designated officers

6.1.2 a form on which they must print and sign their name, signifying their entitlement to vote

6.1.3 an information sheet indicating how the voting procedure is to be carried out and the address to which the ballots are to be returned

6.2 The member entitled to vote shall:

6.2.1 complete the ballot papers

6.2.2 place them in an envelope and seal the envelope

6.2.3 complete the form, signifying entitlement to vote and place this and the sealed envelope in a second envelope

6.2.4 seal, stamp and address this second envelope to the Returning Officer

6.3 At the counting of the ballots:

- 6.3.1 the outside envelope will first be opened and the signed sheet signifying entitlement to vote and the second envelope containing the completed ballots will be removed
- 6.3.2 the name on the signed sheet will be checked against the list of members entitled to vote
- 6.3.3 the envelopes containing ballots of members entitled to vote will be placed together pending the count
- 6.3.4 envelopes containing completed ballots which are not accompanied by the signed sheet indicating entitlement to vote, or which are accompanied by sheets signed by persons not entitled to vote, will be deemed spoiled votes
- 6.3.5 when this process has been completed in a satisfactory manner, the envelopes containing the accepted ballots shall be opened and the votes counted