

The Constitution of the Old Cryptian's Club 2009

The 2007 AGM was critical of the Committee for its lack of democratic accountability and requested that it look at the Constitution and report back to the next AGM. The Committee did so but the outcome was controversial; ultimately it was agreed that the new constitution would be debated at an EGM in 2009, the preceding AGM having approved the provision of proxy voting.

The 1901 Constitution was found by the Committee to have a number of problems – it did not require financial accountability or define voting membership; it allowed ex-Presidents to be full Committee members in perpetuity without further election; there was no provision for proxy voting and there were ambiguities around items such as Committee co-options and powers which, when challenged, could and did bring Committee work to a halt. There were also suggestions that there were other more legitimate versions of the Constitution than the one being considered although in the event, none have surfaced.

Your Committee therefore decided to rewrite the Constitution not for changes sake but to meet with best modern practice and to retain past wording where it met that standard. We determined to make explicit the ownership of the Club by the members, and the accountability of the Committee to those members. We sought also to provide a clear set of enabling rules to allow the Committee to respond to the requirements of members more effectively and efficiently.

At the same time, the Committee endeavoured to address other long outstanding issues. For some years, the Club has been facing falling membership and attendance despite resolute and persistent efforts to recruit; when over half the academic staff are female as well as nearly 20% of the sixth form, we have but one female member; we have straitened finances despite operating on a shoestring; and perhaps because of these factors, increasing difficulty in filling the major work offices – we have sought a Treasurer for three years and a permanent Secretary for almost as long. Our own traditional methods have not been successful so your Committee resorted to other strategies well tried elsewhere. Amalgamation with another body by definition is not an option at this stage but the RAF Club extended membership to entire families and the BMA actively solicits Club members from other professions.

On the same principles, your Committee recognised that the running of a school community is now a team effort extending well beyond traditional teaching staff and the Headmaster should be supported in his wish to reach out to other team members whether they be teaching assistants or School Governors. Club membership should therefore no longer be restricted to teaching staff. Secondly, your Committee felt strongly that widows and widowers of members who want to continue the interest of their former partners and to participate in Club activities in their own right should be allowed to do so as fully paying members if they wished. Thirdly, your Committee wish to extend the privileges of

membership to the partners of all current and future members although only one vote would be eligible to be cast on Club decisions.

Your Committee believe that these changes in membership eligibility will, over time, enormously increase the potential membership for our social activities and greatly widen the pool of talent available to support Club work. We do not anticipate instant change but rather an increase over time of those who are part of the wider Crypt fellowship and a tangible demonstration that the Crypt family potentially includes all the members of the current educational world engaged in supporting and taking forward the best interests of present and future Cryptians.

Finally, your Committee have given many hours of debate and consideration over the last two years to these proposals which are complex in detail but balanced in outcome. We therefore commend them as a package to members; and after full exploration and discussion at the EGM therefore, this package in its entirety will be accepted or rejected by members.

The Committee.