

# THE RUSKIN COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP PROPOSED CONSTITUTION (April '10)

## 1. NAME OF THE ORGANISATION:

The Ruskin Fellowship, hereafter referred to as 'the Fellowship'.

## 2. ADMINISTRATION:

Subject to the matters set out below the Fellowship shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the members of the elected Executive Committee, constituted by Clause 6 of this constitution.

## 3. OBJECTS:

The objects of the Fellowship are:

- (i) to promote and advance the learning ethos and historic tradition of adult education of Ruskin College for working class men and women to enable them to attain their full potential.
- (ii) to provide opportunities for members to meet for social and educational purposes.
- (iii) the encouragement and provision and other means of support for the work of the labour and other human rights movements.

## 4. POWERS:

- (i) In furtherance of the objects but not otherwise, the committee may exercise the following powers to:
- (ii) raise funds and to invite and receive contributions or donations from persons desiring to promote all or any of the objects of the Fellowship.
- (iii) publicise and promote opportunities and benefits of learning at Ruskin College.
- (iv) publicise the various scholarships and other known funding held by the college available for eligible students.
- (v) promote and encourage the circulation of a newsletter and other publications associated with the college.
- (vi) organise and run conferences and promote recreational activities in the regions; convene and constitute such advisory committees as the committee may think fit; publish pamphlets, reports, leaflets, submit articles to newspapers and journals; pursue activities and do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objectives.

## 5. MEMBERSHIP:

Membership of the Fellowship is open to the categories listed below with the proviso they agree to abide by this constitution and any conditions properly imposed by the committee and to pay the annual subscription as determined by the committee and confirmed by the membership at an Annual General Meeting.

Membership of the Fellowship is open to:

(i) all past students of Ruskin College (including past students who re-enrol at the college who are current Fellowship members).

past members of the staff of Ruskin College.

(ii) Ruskin students who attended the college for a period of not less than one academic year and who are either unemployed or engaged in further full-time study may be associate members of the Fellowship for a maximum of three years. The subscription for this category will be a one-off payment as determined by the Annual General Meeting.

(iii) With the exception of those described in above (Clause ii) membership of the Fellowship shall be subject to the payment of either an annual subscription or a life membership fee. The level of annual subscription and life membership fees shall be prescribed by the Annual General Meeting.

## 6. THE FELLOWSHIP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC):

(a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting open to all members where policy is decided.

(b) The following officers shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting:

(i) A president who shall hold office for not more than two consecutive years.

(ii) A secretary.

(iii) A treasurer.

(iv) A deputy president who shall act in the absence of the president who shall hold office as the deputy president for no more than three consecutive years.

(v) A membership secretary.

(vi) Editor of the newsletter.

(c) Administration of the Fellowship's activities shall be the responsibility of an Executive Committee comprising the officers referred to in item 6 (b) above.

(d) Persons who need not be members may be invited by the EC to attend a particular meeting because of their special expertise. They shall have no voting rights.

(e) Should vacancies on the EC arise, the duties of any vacant positions are to be shared between the remaining members of the EC. Such a vacancy can be filled from the membership and such an appointee shall complete the term of service of the member he or she is replacing and shall be eligible for re-election in the prescribed manner at the next Annual General Meeting, but this latter procedure is to be invoked only if the Fellowship would otherwise cease to function. In this event the entire membership is to be contacted.

(f) The proceedings of the EC shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint.

(g) A member of the committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

(i) is absent from two consecutive meetings without giving notice to an officer of the EC. The secretary to contact the individual concerned before any action is taken.

(ii) is subject to a vote of no confidence from the committee, which must have been instigated at the request of (at least two) lay-members.

(iii) notifies in writing to the EC a wish to resign.

## 7. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

As from 2010, the election of members of the EC shall be held by a postal ballot of the membership, which shall be conducted according to the following rules:

(a) The election of the EC shall take place annually.

(b) The election shall be by a first-past-the-post system.

(c) All participants in the EC election ballot must be Fellowship members.

(d) All Fellowship members shall be given the opportunity to vote in the EC election ballot (except the president who shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie).

(e) All Fellowship members shall be given the opportunity to nominate themselves as candidates for election onto the EC.

(f) To be eligible for election all candidates' nominations must have been seconded by another Fellowship member.

(g) Candidates' nominations may be accompanied by a manifesto of no more than 200 words.

(h) To be eligible for election all candidates must submit their nominations and manifestos to the Fellowship Secretary at least two weeks before the membership's summer mail-out (henceforth 'mail-out').

(i) The names of all eligible candidates are to be listed on ballot papers which are to be included in the mail-out.

(j) The option to vote for 'None of the above' is to be included at the end of the list of candidates.

(k) Voting instructions, sealable ballot paper-returning envelopes, and all candidate's manifestos are also to be included within the mail-out.

(l) For inclusion in the ballot, completed ballot papers must be returned to the Fellowship Secretary before the AGM.

- (m) All sealed ballot paper-returning envelopes are to remain sealed until the AGM.
- (n) At the AGM all returned ballot papers are to be counted and the successful candidates announced.
- (o) Any remaining vacant EC positions are to be filled via secret ballots of candidates coming forward at the AGM.
- (p) The new EC take up their posts immediately after the close of the AGM.

#### 8. MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE:

- (i) The EC shall hold at least four ordinary meetings each year.
- (ii) A special meeting may be called at any time by the chairman or by any two members of the committee making a request to the chairman.
- (iii) All Fellowship meetings shall be chaired by the president, or by the deputy president in their absence, or by an elected chair in the absence of both.
- (iv) A meeting is quorate when at least four members of the EC are present at the meeting. Where there is not a quorum, point 8.(ii) above is invoked.
- (v) Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members of the EC present (except the president) and voting on the question, but in the case of a tied vote the president shall have a casting vote to maintain the status quo.
- (vi) The EC shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its meetings and these minutes shall be available for inspection should a member request it.

#### 9. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

- (i) The Annual General Meeting of the Fellowship (hereafter called the AGM) shall be held in the month of September in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter but not later than 15 months after the preceding AGM.
- (ii) Every AGM shall be called by the EC. The secretary shall give at least 21 days notice of the AGM to all the members of the Fellowship. All members of the Fellowship shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.
- (iii) Accidental omission to give notice to any member shall not invalidate the proceedings of the AGM.
- (iv) The president, treasurer and membership secretary shall present their report for the preceding year to each AGM for approval. The treasurer's shall be a written report.
- (v) The EC shall appoint an examiner of the accounts for the following year.

## 10. PROCEDURE AT ANNUAL GENERAL AND OTHER MEETINGS:

- (i) The secretary or other person specially appointed by the secretary shall keep a full record of proceedings at every general meeting of the Fellowship.
- (ii) The quorum for AGMs shall be nine.
- (iii) If within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved. It shall be adjourned to a suitable day and time as the EC may direct, provided 21 days notice is given to all members. If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall be a quorum.

## 11. FINANCE:

- (i) The treasurer shall present to the AGM a financial statement for the preceding financial year. The financial year shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December. The financial statement shall be subject to audit by a person appointed as auditor at the AGM.
- (ii) The Fellowship shall not be responsible for expenditure by regional groups but special grants may be made by the EC to regional groups at its discretion.
- (iii) Reasonable travel expenses may be claimed by EC members. No claims will be accepted without travel documents or tickets attached to completed claim forms. Private transport mileage allowance may be claimed at the rate of half of that of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

## 12. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION:

Subject to the following provisions to this clause, the constitution may be altered by a motion passed by a simple majority of the members present and voting at an AGM. The agenda of the AGM must include notice of the motion, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.