

Constitution of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, United Kingdom and Ireland

1. Name

1.1. The name of this organisation is the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, United Kingdom and Ireland (hereafter ASLE-UKI)

ASLE UK was established on 25th September 1999 at Bretton Hall. It was renamed ASLE-UKI in 2010.

2. Aims

2.1 The aims of ASLE-UKI are:

- a) to encourage scholarship, criticism, and appreciation of environmental literature, and of the relationship between literature and the environment, in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Republic of Ireland (RoI);
- b) to encourage new writing in the UK and RoI that considers the environment and environmental concerns.
- c) to encourage scholarship, criticism, and appreciation of the relationship between environmental literature and other creative forms.

2.2 To meet these aims, the activities of ASLE-UKI may include, but will not be limited to:

- a) publishing *Green Letters*: a scholarly peer-reviewed journal;
- b) holding regular conferences, normally biennially;
- c) holding regular postgraduate and early career conferences, normally biennially;
- d) disseminating news and information relevant to the aims of the association through appropriate channels, which may include, but are not limited to, printed communications, email, a website, and social media;
- e) encouraging and/or organising lectures, discussions, panels, literary readings, and other forums, either alone or in collaboration with other organizations, that further the aims of the association;
- f) developing, supporting, and maintaining research networks and/or networks of creative writers;
- g) any other lawful activities that further the aims of the association.

2.3 In pursuit of its aims, ASLE-UKI may affiliate with other organisations with similar aims, either in the UK, RoI, or elsewhere.

2.4 In pursuit of its aims, ASLE-UKI will maintain such books and records as may be required by law and are consistent with the purpose of the Association.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership of ASLE-UKI is open to all who subscribe to aims of the association and who pay an annual subscription.

3.2 Membership of ASLE-UKI entitles members to:

- a) receive regular issues of *Green Letters*;
- b) receive regular newsletters and other communications, which may be printed or electronic;
- c) participate as a speaker, chair, or panel respondent at conferences and other events organised by the Association;
- d) vote in all matters raised at general meetings of the association including election of Chair, Deputy Chair, and other elected Executive Committee members;
- e) stand for election or seek appointment to the Executive Committee of the Association;
- f) nominate candidates for election or appointment to the Executive Committee;
- g) to participate in activities and conferences organised by our affiliate organisations, where the constitution of those organisations permits it.

3.3 ASLE-UKI does not discriminate in any way against members or potential members on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, nationality, ethnic origin, physical disability, or sexual orientation.

3.4 Subscriptions may be collected directly by ASLE-UKI or by a third party, subject to the agreement of a General Meeting.

3.5 Changes to subscription rates must be recommended by the Executive Committee and approved by a General Meeting.

3.6 Subscriptions fund the operations and activities of ASLE-UKI, including but not limited to administrative services, governance, planning, meetings, special projects, and publications.

3.7 ASLE-UKI will maintain a membership directory which may contain the name, address, email address, social media addresses, institutional affiliations, and other strictly relevant details of each member. All data will be managed in accordance with current data protection legislation in the UK and RoI.

3.8 Members who fail to pay their subscription for up to one year after it becomes due will be in arrears. Their rights and privileges may be suspended until they return to good standing.

3.9 Members who fail to pay their subscription for more than one year will be lapsed. Their rights and privileges will cease until they re-join the Association.

3.10 Members may terminate their membership at any time by submitting a written or electronic resignation letter to the Chair. Membership fees already paid will not be refunded.

4. Executive Committee

4.1 The Executive Committee is the primary policy-making body of ASLE-UKI. It will review programming, procedures, and policies of the Association regularly and revise them as needed to meet the Association's purposes most effectively. The Committee will meet at least once every calendar year, at the call of the Chair. The purpose of this meeting will be for business transaction, budgeting, planning, programme review, etc. Between formal meetings, the Executive Committee members may conduct its business by mail, email, telephone, or other means, as necessary.

4.2 The Executive Committee consists of:

- a) Elected members. These are the President, the current Vice-President or Immediate Past President., Treasurer, Secretary, two Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee, and two Postgraduate/Early Career Officers;
- b) Appointed members. These may include, but are not limited to, Editor of *Green Letters*, Web Editor, Membership Secretary, Biennial Conference Director, Outreach Officer, Diversity Officer, or any other roles deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

4.3 All members of the Executive Committee have voting privileges.

4.4 Decisions of the Executive Committee will be determined by a majority vote of those voting (whether in meeting or by correspondence), provided:

- a) If meeting physically, there is a quorum of four members;
- b) If voting by email or other form of correspondence, all members must have been sent the proposition which is to be decided. They will have five working days in which to respond. After five working days, the matter will be decided if a minimum of four votes have been received.

4.5 Members of the Executive Committee are required to attend all meetings of the Executive Committee and to report on their activities. Where attendance is impossible, members may exceptionally, with the agreement of the President, attend remotely by video link or submit a written report.

4.6 Members of the Executive Committee must normally be resident or employed in the UK or ROI and must be members of the Association in good standing.

4.7 Members of the Executive Committee will receive no payment for their service, but may claim expenses in accordance with the Association's expenses policy.

4.8 ASLE-UKI aims to reflect and represent the interests, membership, and diversity of the UK and Ireland in its election and appointment of members to the Executive Committee.

4.9 The Trustees of the Association will be the President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the current Vice-President or Immediate Past President.

5. Subcommittees

5.1 The Nominating Subcommittee will consist of the Trustees of the Association and any appointed officer responsible for diversity and/or inclusivity. The Nominating Committee will receive nominations for each office of the Association for which an election will be held in that calendar year, and for determining each candidate's willingness to serve.

5.2 The Advisory Board will consist of scholars of international standing in the field, nominated and invited by the Executive Committee. The role of the Advisory Board is to offer expert advice as and when requested by the Executive Committee.

5.3 Ad hoc and special project subcommittees, task forces, etc., can be established by the Executive Committee as needed.

5.4 Subcommittees may meet in person or conduct their business by mail, email, telephone, or other means, as necessary.

6. Duties of Members of the Executive Committee

6.1 The President will:

- a) preside at meetings of the ASLE-UKI Executive Committee and the general membership, and will represent ASLE-UKI and its purposes to other organisations and the general public;
- b) report to the general membership at least annually on the state of the Association;
- c) in meeting any Association responsibility, the President may call upon other Members of the Executive Committee, and such ad hoc committees as the President may wish to appoint, for assistance.

6.2 The Vice President will assist the President and may act temporarily as President whenever the President is absent, has resigned, or is otherwise unable to perform the duties of that office. The Vice President is also the President-Elect and will automatically become President when the President's term expires.

6.3 The immediate Past President acts as Vice President when there is no elected Vice President in post.

6.4 The Secretary will:

- a) record the minutes of all meetings of the general membership and the Executive Committee and, preserve records of the actions of the Association;
- b) act as a primary point of contact for the Association by maintaining and regularly checking the Association's postal and electronic addresses;
- c) be responsible for scheduling and arranging all ASLE-UKI meetings;

- d) communicate news about the Association's activities and other matters of interest to the general membership by way of written correspondence, email, social media, or any other appropriate form.

6.5 The Treasurer will:

- a) transact the day-to-day financial business of the Association;
- b) maintain bank accounts in the name of ASLE-UKI;
- c) Oversee any disbursements made by the Association;
- d) maintain financial records of the Association's transactions and disbursements;
- e) prepare and maintain the Association's financial and expenses policies, subject to the agreement of the Executive Committee;
- f) prepare the annual budget and propose it for the scrutiny and passage by vote of the Executive Committee;
- g) report biennially to the Biennial General Meeting on the state of membership and finances.

6.6 The Ordinary Members will represent the general membership of ASLE-UKI in a judicious manner, and may undertake the coordination of such forward-looking special projects or tasks that the Executive Committee may deem appropriate for and in accordance with the aims of ASLE-UKI.

6.7 The Postgraduate/Early Career Members will represent the interests of postgraduate and early-career members. They will be responsible for the organisation of the biennial postgraduate conference.

6.8 The duties of Appointed Members of the Executive Committee will be determined by the Executive Committee and reviewed at appropriate intervals.

7. Elections and Appointments

7.1 Election of Executive Committee members will be conducted biennially at the Biennial General Meeting, usually held in the year of the ASLE-UKI conference. The only exception is the President, assumed by the Vice-President as President-elect, who then serves a four-year term.

7.2 Any ASLE-UKI member who meets the criteria in Section 4.5 may stand for election provided they are proposed and seconded by ASLE-UKI members in good standing present at the Biennial General Meeting. Candidates may be proposed in absentia if their permission has been obtained in advance. After being nominated, candidates may be invited to give a short statement to the Biennial General Meeting prior to the election.

7.3 Election is by a show of hands of all ASLE-UKI members in good standing present at the Biennial General Meeting, with the exception of the President who only votes when there is a tie.

7.4 In the case of a tie, the President will ask for a second vote, at which point one or more of the candidates may withdraw if they wish. If the second vote also results in a tie, the President will cast their vote in favour of the candidate nominated by the Nominating Subcommittee.

7.5 The Secretary will alert the general membership to any vacancies on the Executive Committee in good time for the Biennial General Meeting.

7.6 The Nominating Subcommittee will ensure that there is at least one candidate for each position to be filled in the next election.

7.7 The Nominating Subcommittee will appoint members of the Association who meet the criteria in paragraph 4.5 to various roles as specified in paragraph 4.3 (b). Appointments must be ratified by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

8. Terms of Office

8.1 Terms of office for Members of the Executive Committee begin immediately following the close of the Biennial General Meeting.

8.2 The President will serve a term of four years.

8.3 The Vice-President will be elected halfway through the President's four-year term. The Vice-President is President-Elect and will automatically succeed to President when the President's term expires.

8.4 The Immediate Past President will serve on the Executive Committee for two years after the end of his or her term, assuming the duties of Vice-President. When their term expires, they may immediately stand for election to any vacant position on the Executive Committee with the exception of Vice-President. They may stand again for Vice-President, should the position be vacant, once a further two years has elapsed.

8.5 The Treasurer and Secretary will serve on the Executive Committee for two years. They may stand for re-election up to three times, to a maximum of eight years in post.

8.6 The two Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee will serve on the Executive Committee for two years. They may not stand for re-election as Ordinary Members at the end of those two years, but may stand for election to any other vacant position. They may again stand for election as an Ordinary Member once two years has elapsed.

8.7 The two Postgraduate/Early Career Officers will serve on the Executive Committee for two years. and may each be re-elected for further two years as long as they remain postgraduate students at the time of their election.

8.8 Appointed members will normally serve on the Executive Committee for two years. All appointed roles will be reviewed at the Biennial General Meeting, and may be extended for a further two years. There is no limit to the number of times an appointee may be reappointed.

9. Vacancies

9.1 A vacancy arises when an elected or appointed member of the executive committee:

- (a) informs the President that he or she wishes to resign from his or her office before the next Biennial General Meeting;
- (b) is unable to continue in their role due to death or serious illness;
- (c) is suspended from the Executive Committee after failing to attend two consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee without giving apologies;
- (d) is suspended from the Executive Committee by agreement of the Trustees.

9.2 The Trustees of the Association may suspend a member from the Executive Committee if the Trustees believe unanimously that the member is failing to carry out the duties of office, or is carrying them out in a way that is detrimental to the interests of the Association. If the member facing suspension is a Trustee, the suspension would require only the unanimous agreement of the other Trustees.

9.3 A suspended elected member may return to office if re-elected at a General Meeting of the Association, if the terms of office permit it.

9.4 A suspended appointed member may return to office if he or she provides assurances to the Trustees that he or she will in future fulfil his or her duties to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee.

9.5 When a vacancy arises for an elected position, the President, with the agreement of the Trustees, may appoint an Acting Member. Acting Members may remain in post until the next Biennial General Meeting of the Association, at which time the position becomes available for election in the normal way. Members who have served as Acting Members may stand for election to the same position at a General Meeting. Their time as Acting Member will not be taken into account in their ensuing term of office.

9.6 When a vacancy arises for the role of President, the Vice-President or Immediate Past President will assume the role of President until elections can be held at the next Biennial General Meeting.

9.7 When a vacancy arises for an appointed position, the President, with the agreement of the Trustees, may immediately appoint an Acting Appointed Member. The appointment must be ratified by a majority vote of the Executive Committee at the earliest convenient opportunity.

10. General Meetings

10.1 The Association will hold a Biennial General Meeting, usually at the ASLE-UKI conference.

10.2 The Biennial General Meeting will:

- a) accept the minutes of the previous year's Annual Meeting, subject to any corrections, and consider any matters of a biennial nature arising therefrom;

- b) receive reports on the preceding two years' work from Members of the Executive Committee;
- c) receive the financial accounts of the Association;
- d) set the membership fees of the Association;
- e) elect members to vacant positions on the Executive Committee;
- f) review the appointment of appointed members of the Executive Committee;
- g) provide a formal occasion for members to question the Executive Committee, and to provide suggestions and feedback for the Executive Committee's consideration;
- h) transact any other business of a biennial nature.

10.3 A General Meeting is quorate when it is attended by either 12 members of the Association in good standing or 10% of the current membership if the Association has fewer than 115 members.

10.4 In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Committee has the power to cancel the Biennial General Meeting or to change its date or location.

10.5 In exceptional circumstances, an Emergency General Meeting can be called at any time by a simple majority of the Executive Committee or by 20% or more members of the Association writing to the Secretary within a four-week period to request an EGM ('in writing' includes notice given by email). The agenda for an EGM will be at the discretion of the Trustees, but must allow sufficient time for consideration of items raised by the Association's general membership.

10.6 Members of the Association must be given at least one month's notice of general meetings in writing, by email, or through other appropriate means.

11. Disbursement of Funds

11.1 The Executive Committee has power to disburse funds to individuals or groups on behalf of the Association's membership for purposes which directly contribute to the Association's aims. Such funds may be offered as prizes, awards, grants, bursaries, or any other form consistent with the Association's aims.

11.2. Criteria for the award of competitive funds must be published by the Executive Committee no less than one month before the final application date.

11.3 Applications for funding may be subject to peer review, and must include mechanisms for documenting and monitoring expenditure.

11.4 The Executive Committee has in addition the power to pay travel, accommodation, and other expenses to individuals or groups on behalf of the Association's membership for purposes which directly contribute to the Association's aims.

12. Amendments to the Constitution

12.1 This constitution may be amended or replaced by a two-thirds majority vote of members in good standing present at a General Meeting of the Association, provided that the meeting is quorate in accordance with paragraph 10.3.

12.2 A new or amended constitution comes into effect immediately following the close of the General Meeting at which it is adopted.

12.3 The Executive Committee will publish the Association's current constitution on its website in a timely fashion.

13. Dissolution

13.1 ASLE-UKI may be dissolved upon recommendation of a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee and approval by ballot of two-thirds of the Association's members who vote on the question of dissolution. At least one month must be allowed for return of all ballots.

13.2 The President, Vice-President, and Secretary shall form the Dissolution Committee and carry out all tasks necessary to concluding the business of the Association, which may include, but are not limited to, placement of ASLE-UKI records and papers in an appropriate archive, notification to the general membership of the Association's dissolution, and finalising the remaining publication schedule of *Green Letters*.

13.03 In the event of dissolution, any assets remaining after liabilities have been met shall be distributed to a recognised charity with environmental interests.

This revised version of the ASLE-UKI Constitution was adopted by the Executive Committee at the University of Plymouth, 4 September 2019.