

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GUYANA PRESS ASSOCIATION

1. The name of the organisation (hereinafter called the “Association”) is the **Guyana Press Association.**

The office of the Association will be situated in Georgetown.

The objectives for which the Association is established are:

- (i) To advance the professional, intellectual and social interest of all those who are regularly and creatively involved in the communications media in Guyana
- (ii) To promote the development of journalism; journalism being defined as gathering, editing, presenting and commenting on news, information and events and editorial policy-direction of the content of newspapers, magazines, press or syndicated services, professional or business publications, radio, television, cinema and the teaching of journalism
- (iii) To encourage and foster the observance of high professional standards by its members and to establish and prescribe such standards
- (iv) To promote and gain recognition of Association as the professional organisation representing journalists
- (v) To promote the professional training of those to be creatively involved in the communications media
- (vi) To do all in its power to safeguard the freedom of the press and the freedom of journalists engaged in their legitimate professional activities and to preserve the standards of the profession
- (vii) To take such action (in keeping with its status as a professional body) as it deems necessary whenever the rights and liberties of the press and of journalists and any of its members are threatened
- (viii) To arrange meetings discussions, conferences and the like on matters of common interest and generally to act as a clearing house for the exchange of ideas on the practice of journalism
- (ix) To develop and foster relations with related bodies or authorities
- (x) To issue a bulletin or journal and other publications

- (xi) To establish a library
- (xii) To institute a record of members

- (xiii) To borrow, raise or receive money for the purpose of the Association on such terms as may be thought fit

- (xiv) To purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any real personal property and any rights or privileges which the Association may think necessary or convenient for the promotion of its objects , and to construct, maintain and alter any buildings or erections necessary or convenient for the work of the Association

- (xv) Generally to undertake all such activities as are likely to benefit the practice of journalists and the interest of its members

- (xvi) To do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above subjects or any of them

MEMBERSHIP

4. Membership of the Association shall be made up of the following classes:

(i) **Full Membership**

Any person who satisfies the Council that he devotes a major part of his/her time and earns a major part of his/her income from journalism as set out in Clause 3 (ii) will eligible for full membership. Such members shall be entitled to exercise full voting rights in the affairs of the Association. A person should have been involved in the practice of journalism as defined in the Clause 3 (ii) for three consecutive years to be entitled to the membership

(ii) **Honorary Life Membership**

In exceptional circumstances, the Council of the Association shall be empowered to confer Honorary Life Membership upon individuals from within or outside the Association in recognition of outstanding services to journalism, subject to ratification by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Honorary Life Members will be entitled to all privileges other than voting rights

(iii) **Associate Membership**

Associate Membership shall be open to part-time practitioners of journalism and personnel from such other related fields as the Council may decide from time to time. Associates will be entitled to receive notice of, attend any general meeting of the Association, and also be entitled to receive all statements and accounts presented to the Annual General Meeting but will not be entitled to vote at such meetings

(iv) **Corporate Membership**

Corporate Membership shall be open to such organisations that support the objectives of the Association and as the Council may decide upon from time. Corporate Members shall be entitled to nominate two persons, who would be free to participate in all activities of the Association other than General Meetings. Corporate Members shall not be entitled to receive notice of or attend any General Meetings or vote at these meetings but they will be entitled to receive all statements and accounts presented to the Annual General Meeting

(v) **Student Membership**

Student Membership shall be open to students, who at the time of application, can satisfy the Council of their interest in journalism. Student members shall be entitled to receive notice and attend but not vote at any General Meeting of the Association

5. A person or organisation wishing to apply for membership of the Association in any of the categories described in Clause 4 shall submit an application on a form to be supplied by the Association and which shall include an undertaking to abide by its Code and Regulations
6. All members of the Council shall vote upon each name submitted to it and acceptance of membership shall be made by a simple majority of elected members of the Council

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

7. Membership Cards shall be issued each year and shall remain the property of the Association and shall be returned to the Secretary immediately a member ceases to be a member of the Association, unless the Council grants permission in individual cases for such cards to be retained.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

8. Unless otherwise determined by a General Meeting, subscriptions shall be as follows:-

- (a) Members - \$ 2,400 annually
- (b) Associates - \$ 6,000 annually
- (c) Corporate Member - \$12,000 annually
- (d) Student Members - \$ 1,200 annually

Persons applying for admission shall pay a registration fee of \$1,000 and annual subscription.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLINARY POWERS

9. Where any member fails to pay his subscription to the Association in full within three months after it has become due, his membership will be terminated unless the Council in their absolute discretion waive payment wholly or in part.

10.1 The Council shall be empowered to warn, admonish, reprimand, suspend or terminate the membership of any member who commits an act or conducts himself in such a manner that the Council shall deem him to have:-

- (a) violated any such standards of professional conduct as may be established or prescribed
- (b) act in breach of any rule made by the Council or in breach of the Constitution of the Association;
- (c) brought or is likely to bring the practice of journalism, journalists or the Association into disrepute.

10.2 In the exercise of its powers to admit to membership or to discipline, the Council shall be advised by:-

- (i) A Membership Committee
- (ii) A Professional Practices and Disciplinary Committee

These and other committees, which shall be deemed necessary shall be appointed Council

- 10.3 In every case of discipline, the member shall have the right to appear before the Professional Practices and Disciplinary Committee and shall have the right to appeal in writing not more than thirty (30) days after the decision of the Council to the Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting.

GENERAL MEETINGS

11. The Association shall hold a members' meeting once monthly and an Annual General Meeting at such time and place as may be determined by the Council, and shall specify the meeting as such in the notices calling it
- 12.1 The Council may, whenever it thinks fit, convene an Extraordinary General Meeting. Extraordinary General Meetings shall also be convened at the request of no less than one-third of the voting membership of the Association
- 12.2 Thirty (30) days notice in writing, at the least, of every Annual General Meeting, and twenty one (21) days notice in writing at the last of every other General Meeting (exclusive in every case both of the day on which it is served or deemed to be served and of the day for it is given) specifying the place, the day and the hour of the meeting, and in the case of special business, the general nature of that business shall be given
- 12.3 A notice may be served by the Association upon any member, either personally or by sending it through the post addressed to such member at his/her registered address as appearing in the register of members
- 12.4 Any notice, if served by post, shall be deemed to have been on the second (2nd) day following that on which the letter containing the same is put in the post and, in proving such service, it shall be sufficient to prove that the letter containing the notice was properly addressed and put into the post office
- 12.5 The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non receipt of such notice, by any person entitled to receive notice thereof shall not invalidate any resolution passed or proceeding had at any meeting.

PROCEEDINGS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

13. Any voting member wishing to bring before any General Meeting any resolution shall give notice of such resolution to the Secretary not less than fourteen (14) days before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting and no such resolution shall come before the meeting unless such notice has been given (or unless the Annual General Meeting shall see fit to dispense with this rule). The Secretary shall, at least seven (7) days before an Annual General Meeting send to every voting member notice of any resolution proposed
- 13.1 No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum is present when the meeting proceeds to business. A quorum shall consist of no less than one-fourth (1/4) of the voting membership of the Association except where a meeting has fallen through for want of a quorum and in that case the meeting shall be held on the same day of the following week and whatsoever number of members attend shall constitute a quorum
- 13.2 The President for the time being of the Council shall preside as Chairman at every General Meeting but if, at any meeting he or the Vice President shall not be present or shall be unwilling to preside, the members of the Council present shall choose one of their members to preside
- 13.3 The Chairman may, with the consent of the meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting), adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place but no business shall be transacted at any adjourned meeting other than business, which might have been transacted at the meeting from which the adjournment took place
- 13.4 No amendments should be made to the Constitution except by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at an Annual General Meeting
- 13.5 At any General Meeting, a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, unless a poll is demanded by at least five voting members present, before or upon the declaration of the resolution of the show of hands.

VOTES OF MEMBERS

- 14.1 Subject as herein provided, every voting member shall have one vote
- 14.2 Save, as herein expressly provided, no member other than a voting member duly registered, who shall have paid subscription and other sum (if any) which shall be due and payable to the Association in respect of his/her membership, shall be entitled to vote on any question either personally or by proxy, or as a proxy for one other member, at any General Meeting to elect office bearers and/or make amendments to the Constitution
- 14.3 The instrument appointing a proxy shall be in writing under the hand of the appointer

COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

- 15.1 A Council of Management shall be elected to serve for a period of two years at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.
- 15.2 Until otherwise determined by a General Meeting, the Council shall be constituted of the following:
- President
 - Vice-President
 - Honorary Treasurer
 - Honorary Assistant Treasurer
 - Four voting members of the Association
- 15.3 The President shall not hold office for more than three consecutive terms
- 15.4 The Council shall have power to co-opt members or Associates but the members co-opted will not be entitled to vote on the Council

REGISTER

16. The Council shall maintain a Register of Full Members, Honorary Life Members, Associates, Corporate and Student Members.

REGULATIONS

- 17.1 Subject, as hereafter provided by the Council, shall have power to make regulations on all matters not provided for in these provisions and to do all such things, which it may deem necessary for attaining the objectives of the Association provided that no such regulation shall have the effect to the extent that it is inconsistent with these provisions. All regulations shall be published to members thirty (30) days of being made. The Council may, in like manner and upon publication alter or revoke any regulation. The regulations are annexed herein as follows:

APPENDIX A:

Code of Professional Conduct

- 17.2 Notwithstanding the power conferred by this Clause, the Association by Special Resolution may alter or revoke any regulation without prejudice to any act or thing already done pursuant thereto:

Powers of the Council

- 18.1 The business of the Association shall be managed by the Council, who shall pay all such expenses of and preliminary and incidental to the promotion, formation and establishment of the Association, as it thinks fit, and may exercise all such powers of the Association, and on behalf of the Association all such acts as may be exercised and done by the Association, as are not by these provisions required to be exercised or done by the Association in General Meeting
- 18.2 The members for the time being of the Council may act, notwithstanding any vacancy in its body, provided always that in case of members of the Council shall at any time be or be reduced in number to less than the quorum prescribed by or in

accordance with those provisions, it shall be lawful for them to act as the Council for the purpose of filling vacancies in their body or for summoning a General Meeting but not for any other purpose.

Proceedings of the Council

19.1 The Council may meet together for the dispatch of business, adjourn or otherwise regulate their meetings as they may think fit, and determine the quorum necessary for the transaction of business. Unless otherwise determined, the quorum of the Council shall be five of its membership

Questions, other than admission to membership and disciplinary matters arising at any meeting, shall be decided by a majority of votes of members present. Admission to membership and disciplinary matters must be decided by a majority of elected members of the Council. In case of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall either use his casting vote or declare the motion or amendment not carried

19.2 The Council shall cause proper minutes to be kept of all appointment of officers made by the Council and of the proceedings of all formal meetings of the Association and of the Council and of the committees of the Council, and all business to be signed by the Chairman of such meeting or by the Chairman of the next such meeting or by the Chairman of the next succeeding meeting, shall be sufficient evidence without any further proof of the facts therein stated

19.3 Any member of the Council absent from three successive meetings of the Council without leave of absence shall be deemed to have vacated the seat.

Accounts

20.1 The Council shall cause to be kept proper books of accounts with respect to:

- (a) all sums of money received and expended by the Association and the matters in respect of which such receipts and expenditure take place
- (b) all sales and purchases of goods by the Association
- (c) the assets and liabilities of the Association

- 20.2 Proper books shall not be deemed to be kept if there are not kept such books of accounts as are necessary to give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the Association and to explain its transactions.
- 20.3 At the Annual General Meeting in every year, the Council shall lay before the Association a proper income and expenditure account for the period since the last preceding account made up to date not more than two months before such meeting, together with a proper balance sheet made up as at the same date. Every such balance sheet shall be accompanied by proper reports of the Council and the Auditors.

Audit

- 21.1 Once at least in every year the accounts of the Association shall be examined and the correctness of the income and expenditure account and balance sheet ascertained by one or more properly qualified Auditor or Auditors. Auditors shall be appointed at each Annual General Meeting.

Declaration of Principles and the Conduct of Journalists

22. This International Declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in the gathering, presenting, disseminating and commenting on news and information and in describing events.
1. Respect for the truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist
 2. In pursuance of this duty, he/she will defend the twin principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news and the right of comment and criticism
 3. The journalist reports only in accordance with the facts of which he/she knows the origin. He/she will not suppress essential information or falsify documents
 4. He/she will use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents
 5. Any published information, which is found to be harmful or inaccurate, he/she will do his utmost to rectify

