

# HTSI Template SCIO Constitution (Two Tier)

## CONSTITUTION

of

## Rural GP Association of Scotland

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## **GENERAL**

### **Type of organisation**

- 1 The organisation will, upon registration, be a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

### **Scottish principal office**

- 2 The principal office of the organisation will be in Scotland (and must remain in Scotland).

### **Name**

- 3 The name of the organisation is Rural GP Association of Scotland.

### **Purposes**

- 4 The organisation's purpose is:
  - a) The Advancement of Education in Science through
    - i. Acting as a forum for the educational and professional needs of rural GPs in Scotland;
    - ii. Representing the interests of rural GP practices in Scotland, and the clinicians associated with those practices; and
    - iii. Promoting access to learning environments for students for the purpose of developing the primary healthcare team.

### **Powers**

- 5 The organisation has power to do anything which is calculated to further its purposes or is conducive or incidental to doing so.
- 6 No part of the income or property of the organisation may be paid or transferred (directly or indirectly) to the members - either in the course of the organisation's existence or on dissolution - except where this is done in direct furtherance of the organisation's charitable purposes.

### **Liability of members**

- 7 The members of the organisation have no liability to pay any sums to help to meet the debts (or other liabilities) of the organisation if it is wound up; accordingly, if the organisation is unable to meet its debts, the members will not be held responsible.

- 8 The members and charity trustees have certain legal duties under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005; and clause 7 does not exclude (or limit) any personal liabilities they might incur if they are in breach of those duties or in breach of other legal obligations or duties that apply to them personally.

### **General structure**

- 9 The structure of the organisation consists of:-
- (a) the MEMBERS - who have the right to attend members' meetings (including any annual members' meeting) and have important powers under the constitution; in particular, the members appoint people to serve on the board and take decisions on changes to the constitution itself;
  - (b) the BOARD - who hold regular meetings, and generally control the activities of the organisation; for example, the board is responsible for monitoring and controlling the financial position of the organisation.
- 10 The people serving on the board are referred to in this constitution as CHARITY TRUSTEES.

## MEMBERS

### Qualifications for membership

- 11 **Full Membership** shall be open all rural GPs working in Scotland who support the purposes.

Full Members are eligible to stand for election to the Board and to vote at any General Meeting or AGM

If a Full Member ceases to comply with any of these criteria, they will be obliged to inform the Board who will decide whether the membership should be reclassified or terminated, and notify them accordingly.

- 12 **Trainee Membership** shall be open to any Trainee GP working in Scotland who support the purposes.

Trainee Members are not eligible to stand for election to the Board but can vote at any General Meeting or AGM.

If a Trainee Member ceases to comply with any of these criteria, they will be obliged to inform the Board who will decide whether the membership should be reclassified or terminated, and notify them accordingly.

- 13 **Student Membership** shall be open to those who are studying for a primary medical qualification at a Scottish medical school and who support the purposes.

Student Members are neither eligible to stand for election to the board nor vote at any General Meeting or AGM.

- 14 **Honorary Membership** shall be open to retired rural GPs who worked in Scotland, and others of significant standing with reference to rural General Practice, who support the purposes.

Honorary Members are not eligible to stand for election to the Board nor vote at any General Meeting, but can vote in trustee elections at AGMs.

If an Honorary Member ceases to comply with any of these criteria, they will be obliged to inform the Board who will decide whether the membership should be reclassified or terminated, and notify them accordingly.

- 15 **Associate Membership** shall be open to those who are neither a GP, Trainee GP, retired rural GP or medical student, but who support the purposes.

Associate Members are neither eligible to stand for election to the Board nor to vote at any General Meeting or AGM.

Each member which is an organisation shall appoint one named authorised representative (who is an individual person) to represent and act for such member at all AGMs and GMs. Any change in the appointment of an authorised representative may be made at any time by the appointment member, but only by written notice to the organisation. Such notice will take effect upon its receipt by the organisation.

- 16 Employees of the organisation are not eligible for membership.
- 17 The following conditions apply to membership:
  - a) At least three quarters of the members of the organisation are Full and Trainee Members; and
  - b) In the event that the number of members falls below 20 or that at least three quarters of the members do not consist of Full and Trainee Members, the board may not conduct any business other than to ensure the admission of sufficient Full and Trainee Members to achieve the minimum number and/or maintain the majority.

### **Application for membership**

- 18 Any person who wishes to become a member must submit an application for membership which can be found on the organisations website.
- 19 Upon confirmation of the applicants ID and registration with the GMC or student status (where applicable), the application will then be considered.
- 20 The organisation may, at its discretion, refuse to admit any person to membership.
- 21 The organisation must notify each applicant promptly (in writing or by e-mail) of its decision on whether or not to admit them to membership.

### **Membership subscription**

- 22 Membership subscriptions, if any, will be set by the board annually and voted upon at each AGM.
- 23 Membership will not be considered active until payment of any membership fees.

- 24 If a member fails to renew their annual subscription, they will no longer be deemed members.

### **Register of members**

- 25 The board must keep a register of members, setting out
- (a) for each current member:
    - a) their full name and address; and
    - b) the date on which they were registered as a member of the organisation;
  - (b) for each former member - for at least six years from the date on which they ceased to be a member:
    - a) their name; and
    - b) the date on which they ceased to be a member.
- 26 The board must ensure that the register of members is updated within 28 days of any change:
- (a) which arises from a resolution of the board or a resolution passed by the members of the organisation; or
  - (b) which is notified to the organisation.
- 27 If a member or charity trustee of the organisation requests a copy of the register of members, the board must ensure that a copy is supplied to them within 28 days, providing the request is reasonable; if the request is made by a member (rather than a charity trustee), the board may provide a copy which has the addresses blanked out.

### **Withdrawal from membership**

- 28 Any person who wants to withdraw from membership must give a written notice of withdrawal to the organisation, signed by them; they will cease to be a member as from the time when the notice is received by the organisation.

### **Transfer of membership**

- 29 Membership of the organisation may not be transferred by a member.

### **Re-registration of members**

- 30 The board may, at any time, issue notices to the members requiring them to confirm that they wish to remain as members of the organisation, and allowing them a period of 28 days (running from the date of issue of the notice) to provide that confirmation to the board.
- 31 If a member fails to provide confirmation to the board (in writing or by e-mail) that they wish to remain as a member of the organisation before the expiry of the 28-day period referred to in clause 30, the board may expel them from membership.
- 32 A notice under clause 30 will not be valid unless it refers specifically to the consequences (under clause 31) of failing to provide confirmation within the 28-day period.

### **Expulsion from membership**

- 33 Any person may be expelled from membership by way of a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of those present and voting at a members' meeting, providing the following procedures have been observed:-
- (a) at least 21 days' notice of the intention to propose the resolution must be given to the member concerned, specifying the grounds for the proposed expulsion;
  - (b) the member concerned will be entitled to be heard on the resolution at the members' meeting at which the resolution is proposed.

### **Termination**

- 34 Membership of the organisation will terminate on death.

## **DECISION-MAKING BY THE MEMBERS**

### **Members' meetings**

- 35 The board must arrange a meeting of members (an annual members' meeting or "AGM") in each calendar year.
- 36 The gap between one AGM and the next must not be longer than 15 months.
- 37 Notwithstanding clause 35, an AGM does not need to be held during the calendar year in which the organisation is formed; but the first AGM must still be held within 15 months of the date on which the organisation is formed.
- 38 The business of each AGM must include:-
- (a) a report by the chair on the activities of the organisation;
  - (b) the election/re-election of charity trustees, as referred to in clauses 79 to 86;
  - (c) consideration of the annual accounts of the organisation;
  - (d) the appointment of the auditor (if applicable); and
  - (e) the report of the auditor (if applicable).
- 39 The board may arrange a special members' meeting at any time.

### **Power to request the board to arrange a special members' meeting**

- 40 The board must arrange a special members' meeting if they are requested to do so by a notice (which may take the form of two or more documents in the same terms, each signed by one or more members) by members who amount to 5% or more of the total membership of the organisation at the time, providing:
- (a) the notice states the purposes for which the meeting is to be held; and
  - (b) those purposes are not inconsistent with the terms of this constitution, the Charities and Trustee (Investment) Scotland Act 2005 or any other statutory provision.
- 41 If the board receive a notice under clause 40, the date for the meeting which they arrange in accordance with the notice must not be later than 28 days from the date on which they received the notice.



## Notice of members' meetings

- 42 At least 14 clear days' notice must be given of any AGM or any special members' meeting.
- 43 The notice calling a members' meeting must specify in general terms what business is to be dealt with at the meeting; and
- (a) in the case of a resolution to alter the constitution, must set out the exact terms of the proposed alteration(s); or
  - (b) in the case of any other resolution falling within clause 53 (requirement for two-thirds majority) must set out the exact terms of the resolution.
- 44 The reference to "clear days" in clause 42 shall be taken to mean that, in calculating the period of notice,
- (a) the day after the notices are posted (or sent by e-mail) should be excluded; and
  - (b) the day of the meeting itself should also be excluded.
- 45 Notice of every members' meeting must be given to all the members of the organisation, and to all the charity trustees; but the accidental omission to give notice to one or more members will not invalidate the proceedings at the meeting.
- 46 Any notice which requires to be given to a member under this constitution must be: -
- (a) sent by post to the member, at the address last notified by them to the organisation; *or*
  - (b) sent by e-mail to the member, at the e-mail address last notified by them to the organisation.
- 47 If members and charity trustees are to be permitted to participate in a members' meeting by way of audio and/or audio-visual link(s) (see clause 50), the notice (or notes accompanying the notice) must:
- (a) set out details of how to connect and participate via that link or links; and
  - (b) (particularly for the benefit of those members who may have difficulties in using a computer or laptop for this purpose) draw members' attention to the following options:

- (i) participating in the meeting via an audio link accessed by phone, using dial-in details (if that forms part of the arrangements);
- (ii) appointing the chairperson of the meeting as proxy, and directing the chairperson on how they should use that proxy vote in relation to each resolution to be proposed at the meeting;
- (iii) (where attendance in person is to be permitted, either on an open basis or with a restriction on the total number who will be permitted to attend) attending and voting in person at the meeting;
- (iv) (where clause 48 applies) submitting questions and/or comments in advance of the meeting.

48 Where a members' meeting is to involve participation *solely* via audio and/or audio-visual link(s), the notice (or notes accompanying the notice) must include a statement inviting members to submit questions and/or comments in advance of the meeting, which (subject to clause 49) the chairperson of the meeting will be expected to read out, and address, in the course of the meeting.

49 Where clause 48 applies, the chairperson of a members' meeting will not require to read out or address any questions or comments submitted by members in advance of the meeting if and to the extent that the questions or comments are of an unreasonable length (individually or taken together), or contain material which is defamatory, racist or otherwise offensive.

#### **Procedure at members' meetings**

50 The board may if they consider appropriate (and must, if this is required under clause 51) make arrangements for members and charity trustees to participate in members' meetings by way of audio and/or audio-visual link(s) which allow them to hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting, providing:

- (a) the means by which members and charity trustees can participate via that link or links are not subject to technical complexities, significant costs or other factors which are likely to represent - for all or a significant proportion of the membership - a barrier to participation;

- (b) the notice calling the meeting (or notes accompanying the notice) contains the information required under clause 47; and
  - (c) the manner in which the meeting is conducted ensures, so far as reasonably possible, that those members and charity trustees who participate via an audio or audio-visual link are not disadvantaged with regard to their ability to contribute to discussions at the meeting, as compared with those members and charity trustees (if any) who are attending in person (and vice versa).
- 51 If restrictions arising from public health legislation or guidance are likely to mean that attendance in person at a proposed members' meeting would not be possible or advisable for all or a significant proportion of the membership, the board must make arrangements for members and charity trustees to participate in that members' meeting by way of audio and/or audio-visual link(s) which allow them to hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting; and on the basis that the requirements set out in paragraphs (a) to (c) of clause 50 will apply.
- 52 A members' meeting may involve two or more members or charity trustees participating via attendance in person while other members and/or charity trustees participate via audio and/or audio-visual links; or it may involve participation solely via audio and/or audio-visual links.
- 53 References in clauses 47 to 52 to members should be taken to include proxies for members and authorised representatives of members which are corporate bodies.
- 54 The quorum for a members' meeting shall be (a) 10 Full and Trainee Members or (b) 10% of the Full and Trainee Members, present in person or by proxy.
- 55 An individual participating in a members' meeting via an audio or audio-visual link which allows them to hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting will be deemed to be present in person (or, if they are not a member or the authorised representative of a member which is a corporate body), will be deemed to be in attendance) at the meeting.
- 56 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes after the time at which a members' meeting was due to start - or if a quorum ceases to be present during a members' meeting - the meeting cannot proceed; and fresh notices of meeting will require to be sent out, to deal with the business (or remaining business) which was intended to be conducted.
- 57 The chair of the organisation should act as chairperson of each members' meeting.

- 58 If the chair of the organisation is not present within 15 minutes after the time at which the meeting was due to start (or is not willing to act as chairperson), the charity trustees present at the meeting must elect (from among themselves) the person who will act as chairperson of that meeting.

### **Voting at members' meetings**

- 59 Every member has one vote, which must be given personally (subject to clause 61).
- 60 All decisions at members' meetings will be made by majority vote – with the exception of the types of resolution listed in clause 61.
- 61 The following resolutions will be valid only if passed by not less than two thirds of those voting on the resolution at a members' meeting (or if passed by way of a written resolution under clause 70):
- (a) a resolution amending the constitution;
  - (b) a resolution expelling a person from membership under clause 33;
  - (c) a resolution directing the board to take any particular step (or directing the board not to take any particular step);
  - (d) a resolution approving the amalgamation of the organisation with another SCIO (or approving the constitution of the new SCIO to be constituted as the successor pursuant to that amalgamation);
  - (e) a resolution to the effect that all of the organisation's property, rights and liabilities should be transferred to another SCIO (or agreeing to the transfer from another SCIO of all of its property, rights and liabilities);
  - (f) a resolution for the winding up or dissolution of the organisation.
- 62 If there is an equal number of votes for and against any resolution, the chairperson of the meeting will be entitled to a second (casting) vote.
- 63 A resolution put to the vote at a members' meeting will be decided on a show of hands – unless the chairperson (or at least two other members present at the meeting) ask for a secret ballot.
- 64 Where members are participating in a meeting via an audio or audio-visual link, they may cast their votes on any resolution orally, or by way of some form of visual indication, or by use of a voting button or similar, or by way of a message sent electronically – and providing the board have no

reasonable grounds for suspicion as regards authenticity, any such action shall be deemed to be a vote cast personally via a show of hands.

- 65 The chairperson will decide how any secret ballot is to be conducted, and they will declare the result of the ballot at the meeting.
- 66 Where members are participating in a meeting via audio and/or audio-visual links, the chairperson's directions regarding how a secret ballot is to be conducted may allow those members to cast their votes on the secret ballot via any or all of the methods referred to in clause 64, providing reasonable steps are taken to preserve anonymity (while at the same time, addressing any risk of irregularities in the process).
- 67 The principles set out in clauses 64 and 66 shall also apply in relation to the casting of votes by an individual in their capacity as proxy for a member or as the authorised representative of a member which is a corporate body.
- 68 Whilst actual attendance by Members is to be encouraged at meetings, any Member shall be entitled to complete one form of proxy to appoint a proxy to attend a meeting on their behalf, in respect of which the following apply:
- a) a proxy need not be a member;
  - b) a proxy is appointed to attend and vote at any meeting instead of an Member shall have the same right as the Member who appointed him or her to speak at the meeting and to vote thereat;
  - c) the form appointing the proxy shall be in terms of Schedule 1 annexed to these Clauses;
  - d) the form appointing a proxy and the power of attorney or other authority (if any) under which it is signed, or a certified copy thereof, shall be lodged at the Principle Office no less than 48 hours before the time of the meeting at which the proxy is to be used; and
  - e) no form of proxy shall be valid more than 12 months from the date it was granted.

### **Technical objections to remote participation in members' meetings**

- 69 This constitution imposes certain requirements regarding the use of audio and/or audio-visual links as a means of participation and voting at members' meetings; providing the arrangements made by the board in relation to a given members' meeting (and the manner in which the meeting is conducted) are consistent with those requirements:

- (a) a member cannot insist on participating in the members' meeting, or voting at the members' meeting, by any particular means;
- (b) the members' meeting need not be held in any particular place;
- (c) the members' meeting may be held without any particular number of those participating in the meeting being present in person at the same place (but, notwithstanding that, the quorum requirements - taking account of those participating via audio and/or audio-visual links - must still be met);
- (d) the members' meeting may be held by any means which permits those participating in the meeting to hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting;
- (e) a member will be able to exercise the right to vote at the members' meeting (including where a secret ballot is to be held) by such means as is determined by the chairperson of the meeting (consistent with the arrangements made by the board) and which permits that member's vote to be taken into account in determining whether or not a resolution is passed.

### **Written resolutions by members**

- 70 A resolution agreed to in writing (or by e-mail) by all the members will be as valid as if it had been passed at a members' meeting; the date of the resolution will be taken to be the date on which the last member agreed to it.

### **Minutes**

- 71 The board must ensure that proper minutes are kept in relation to all members' meetings.
- 72 Minutes of members' meetings must include the names of those present; and (so far as possible) should be signed by the chairperson of the meeting.
- 73 The board shall make available copies of the minutes referred to in clause 71 to any member of the public requesting them; but on the basis that the board may exclude confidential material to the extent permitted under clause 135.

## **BOARD**

### **Number of charity trustees**

- 74 The maximum number of charity trustees is 11; out of that:
- (a) no more than 3 shall be charity trustees who were co-opted under the provisions of clauses 87 and 88.
- 75 The minimum number of charity trustees is 3.

### **Eligibility**

- 76 A person shall not be eligible for election/appointment to the board under clauses 79 to 86 unless they are a member of the organisation; a person appointed to the board under clause 87 need not, however, be a member of the organisation.
- 77 A person will not be eligible for election or appointment to the board if they are: -
- (a) disqualified from being a charity trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005; or
  - (b) an employee of the organisation.

### **Initial charity trustees**

- 78 The individuals who signed the charity trustee declaration forms which accompanied the application for incorporation of the organisation shall be deemed to have been appointed by the members as charity trustees with effect from the date of incorporation of the organisation.

### **Election, retiral, re-election**

- 79 At each AGM, the members may elect any member (unless they are debarred from membership under clause 77) to be a charity trustee.
- 80 All candidates for election must be proposed and seconded by Full Members, and any election will be decided by simple majority.
- 81 The board may at any time appoint any member (unless they are debarred from membership under clause 77) to be a charity trustee.
- 82 At the second and each subsequent AGM, one third of the charity trustees elected/appointed under clauses 79 and 81, shall retire from office – but shall then be eligible for re-election under clause 79.

- 83 A retiring trustee shall be eligible for re-election after one term of office, but no trustee can serve more than two consecutive terms of office (with one term equalling three years), with the exception of clause 85, without at least one year out of office before being eligible again.
- 84 If no other trustees has or trustees have decided to agree to retire, the elected trustees to retire at each AGM shall be those who have been longest in office since their last election, with exception to clause 85.
- 85 The only exception to clauses 83 and 84 is where the board agree that for the purposes of continuity and where it is deemed to be in the interest of the organisation, to retain trustees, who would otherwise be eligible for retirement from the board.
- 86 A charity trustee retiring at an AGM will be deemed to have been re-elected unless: -
- (a) they advise the board prior to the conclusion of the AGM that they do not wish to be re-appointed as a charity trustee; or
  - (b) an election process was held at the AGM and they were not among those elected/re-elected through that process; or
  - (c) a resolution for the re-election of that charity trustee was put to the AGM and was not carried.

#### **Appointment/re-appointment of co-opted charity trustees**

- 87 In addition to their powers under clause 81, the board may at any time appoint any non-member of the organisation to be a charity trustee (subject to clause 74, and providing they are not debarred from membership under clause 77) either on the basis that they have been nominated by a body with which the organisation has close contact in the course of its activities or on the basis that they have specialist experience and/or skills which could be of assistance to the board.
- 88 At each AGM, all of the charity trustees appointed under clause 87 shall retire from office – but shall then be eligible for re-appointment under that clause.

#### **Trainee Representation on Board**

- 89 The Trainee Members shall at each AGM select one of their own number, to act as the Trainee Representative, who will not be a Charity Trustee but who will be entitled to attend all board meetings (with a vote) to put forward the view and interests of Trainee Members. If the Trainee Members



cannot select one of their own to act as the Trainee Representative, the Board may appoint a Trainee Member on their behalf.

### **Student Representation on Board**

90 The Student Members shall at each AGM select at least two of their own number, to act as the Student Representatives, who will not be a Charity Trustees but who will be entitled to attend all board meetings (with a vote) to put forward the view and interests of Student Members. If the Student Members cannot select their Student Representatives, the Board may appoint the Student Members on their behalf.

### **Termination of office**

- 91 A charity trustee will automatically cease to hold office if: -
- (a) they become disqualified from being a charity trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005;
  - (b) they become incapable for medical reasons of carrying out their duties as a charity trustee - but only if that has continued (or is expected to continue) for a period of more than six months;
  - (c) (in the case of a charity trustee elected/appointed under clauses 70 to 73) they cease to be a member of the organisation;
  - (d) they become an employee of the organisation;
  - (e) they give the organisation a notice of resignation, signed by them;
  - (f) they are absent (without good reason, in the opinion of the board) from more than three consecutive meetings of the board - but only if the board resolves to remove them from office;
  - (g) they are removed from office by resolution of the board on the grounds that they are considered to have committed a material breach of the code of conduct for charity trustees (as referred to in clause 108);
  - (h) they are removed from office by resolution of the board on the grounds that they are considered to have been in serious or persistent breach of their duties under section 66(1) or (2) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005; or
  - (i) they are removed from office by a resolution of the members passed at a members' meeting.

- 92 A resolution under paragraph (g), (h) or (i) shall be valid only if: -
- (a) the charity trustee who is the subject of the resolution is given reasonable prior written notice of the grounds upon which the resolution for their removal is to be proposed;
  - (b) the charity trustee concerned is given the opportunity to address the meeting at which the resolution is proposed, prior to the resolution being put to the vote; and
  - (c) (in the case of a resolution under paragraph (g) or (h)) at least two thirds (to the nearest round number) of the charity trustees then in office vote in favour of the resolution.

### **Register of charity trustees**

- 93 The board must keep a register of charity trustees, setting out:-
- (a) for each current charity trustee:
    - a) their full name and address;
    - b) the date on which they were appointed as a charity trustee; and
    - c) any office held by them in the organisation;
  - (b) for each former charity trustee - for at least 6 years from the date on which they ceased to be a charity trustee:
    - a) the name of the charity trustee;
    - b) any office held by them in the organisation; and
    - c) the date on which they ceased to be a charity trustee.
- 94 The board must ensure that the register of charity trustees is updated within 28 days of any change:-
- (a) which arises from a resolution of the board or a resolution passed by the members of the organisation; or
  - (b) which is notified to the organisation.
- 95 If any person requests a copy of the register of charity trustees, the board must ensure that a copy is supplied to them within 28 days, providing the request is reasonable; if the request is made by a person who is not a charity trustee of the organisation, the board may provide a copy which

has the addresses blanked out - if the SCIO is satisfied that including that information is likely to jeopardise the safety or security of any person or premises.

### **Office-bearers**

- 96 The charity trustees may elect (from among themselves) a Chair, a Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Conference Secretary, Student Liaison Officer, and an RGPAS Representative.
- 97 In addition to the office-bearers required under clause 96, the charity trustees may elect (from among themselves) further office-bearers if they consider that appropriate.
- 98 All of the office-bearers will cease to hold office at the conclusion of each AGM, but may then be re-elected under clause 96 or 97.
- 99 A person elected to any office will automatically cease to hold that office: -
- (a) if they cease to be a charity trustee; *or*
  - (b) if they give to the organisation a notice of resignation from that office, signed by them.

### **Powers of board**

- 100 Except where this constitution states otherwise, the organisation (and its assets and operations) will be managed by the board; and the board may exercise all the powers of the organisation.
- 101 A meeting of the board at which a quorum is present may exercise all powers exercisable by the board.
- 102 The members may, by way of a resolution passed in compliance with clause 61 (requirement for two-thirds majority), direct the board to take any particular step or direct the board not to take any particular step; and the board shall give effect to any such direction accordingly.

### **Charity trustees - general duties**

- 103 Each of the charity trustees has a duty, in exercising functions as a charity trustee, to act in the interests of the organisation; and, in particular, must:-
- (a) seek, in good faith, to ensure that the organisation acts in a manner which is in accordance with its purposes;

- (b) act with the care and diligence which it is reasonable to expect of a person who is managing the affairs of another person;
  - (c) in circumstances giving rise to the possibility of a conflict of interest between the organisation and any other party:
    - a) put the interests of the organisation before that of the other party; or
    - b) where any other duty prevents them from doing so, disclose the conflicting interest to the organisation and refrain from participating in any deliberation or decision of the other charity trustees with regard to the matter in question;
  - (d) ensure that the organisation complies with any direction, requirement, notice or duty imposed under or by virtue of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 104 In addition to the duties outlined in clause 103, all of the charity trustees must take such steps as are reasonably practicable for the purpose of ensuring: -
- (a) that any breach of any of those duties by a charity trustee is corrected by the charity trustee concerned and not repeated; and
  - (b) that any trustee who has been in serious or persistent breach of those duties is removed as a trustee.
- 105 Provided they have declared their interest - and have not voted on the question of whether or not the organisation should enter into the arrangement - a charity trustee will not be debarred from entering into an arrangement with the organisation in which they have a personal interest; and (subject to clause 106 and to the provisions relating to remuneration for services contained in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005), they may retain any personal benefit which arises from that arrangement.
- 106 No charity trustee may serve as an employee (full time or part time) of the organisation; and no charity trustee may be given any remuneration by the organisation for carrying out their duties as a charity trustee.
- 107 The charity trustees may be paid all travelling and other expenses reasonably incurred by them in connection with carrying out their duties; this may include expenses relating to their attendance at meetings.

### **Code of conduct for charity trustees**

- 108 Each of the charity trustees shall comply with the code of conduct (incorporating detailed rules on conflict of interest) prescribed by the board from time to time.
- 109 The code of conduct referred to in clause 108 shall be supplemental to the provisions relating to the conduct of charity trustees contained in this constitution and the duties imposed on charity trustees under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005; and all relevant provisions of this constitution shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the provisions of the code of conduct in force from time to time

## **DECISION-MAKING BY THE CHARITY TRUSTEES**

### **Notice of board meetings**

- 110 Any charity trustee may call a meeting of the board *or* ask the secretary to call a meeting of the board.
- 111 At least 7 days' notice must be given of each board meeting, unless (in the opinion of the person calling the meeting) there is a degree of urgency which makes that inappropriate.
- 112 If charity trustees are to be permitted to participate in a board meeting by way of audio and/or audio-visual link(s), the charity trustees must, in advance of the meeting, be provided with details of how to connect and participate via that link or links; and (particularly for the benefit of those charity trustees who may have difficulties in using a computer or laptop for this purpose) the charity trustees' attention should be drawn to the following options:
- (a) participating in the meeting via an audio link accessed by phone, using dial-in details (if that forms part of the arrangements);
  - (b) (where attendance in person is to be permitted, either on an open basis or subject to a restriction on the total number who will be permitted to attend) the ability to attend the meeting in person.

### **Procedure at board meetings**

- 113 No valid decisions can be taken at a board meeting unless a quorum is present; the quorum for board meetings is 55% of all charity trustees, present in person, provided that the elected trustees are always in the majority at any board meeting.
- 114 An individual participating in a board meeting via an audio or audio-visual link which allows them to hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting will be deemed to be present in person (or, if they are not a charity trustee, will be deemed to be in attendance) at the meeting.
- 115 If at any time the number of charity trustees in office falls below the number stated as the quorum in clause 113, the remaining charity trustee(s) will have power to fill the vacancies or call a members' meeting - but will not be able to take any other valid decisions.
- 116 The chair of the organisation should act as chairperson of each board meeting.

- 117 If the chair is not present within 15 minutes after the time at which the meeting was due to start (or is not willing to act as chairperson), the charity trustees present at the meeting must elect (from among themselves) the person who will act as chairperson of that meeting.
- 118 Every charity trustee has one vote, which must be given personally (subject to clause 124).
- 119 All decisions at board meetings will be made by majority vote.
- 120 If there is an equal number of votes for and against any resolution, the chairperson of the meeting will be entitled to a second (casting) vote.
- 121 The board may if they consider appropriate (and must, if this is required under clause 122), allow charity trustees to participate in board meetings by way of an audio and/or audio-visual link or links which allow them to hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting, providing:
- (a) the means by which charity trustees can participate via that link or links are not subject to technical complexities, significant costs or other factors which are likely to represent – for all, or a significant proportion, of the charity trustees – a barrier to participation; and
  - (b) the manner in which the meeting is conducted ensures, so far as reasonably possible, that those charity trustees who participate via an audio or audio-visual link are not disadvantaged with regard to their ability to contribute to discussions at the meeting, as compared with those charity trustees (if any) who are attending in person (and vice versa).
- 122 If restrictions arising from public health legislation, directions or guidance are likely to mean that attendance in person at a proposed board meeting would not be possible or advisable for one or more of the charity trustees, the board must make arrangements for charity trustees to participate in that board meeting by way of audio and/or audio-visual link(s); and on the basis that:
- (a) the requirements set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) of clause 106 will apply; and
  - (b) the board must use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that all charity trustees have access to one or more means by which they may hear and contribute to discussions at the meeting.
- 123 A board meeting may involve two or more charity trustees participating via attendance in person while other charity trustees participate via audio

and/or audio-visual links; or it may involve participation solely via audio and/or audio-visual links.

- 124 Where a charity trustee or charity trustees are participating in a board meeting via an audio or audio-visual link, they may cast their vote on any resolution orally, or by way of some form of visual indication, or by use of a voting button or similar, or by way of a message sent electronically.
- 125 The board may, at its discretion, allow any person to attend (whether in person or by way of an audio or audio-visual link) and speak at a board meeting notwithstanding that they are not a charity trustee - but on the basis that they must not participate in decision-making.
- 126 A charity trustee must not vote at a board meeting (or at a meeting of a sub-committee) on any resolution which relates to a matter in which they have a personal interest or duty which conflicts (or may conflict) with the interests of the organisation; they must withdraw from the meeting while an item of that nature is being dealt with.
- 127 For the purposes of clause 126: -
- (a) an interest held by an individual who is “connected” with the charity trustee under section 68(2) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (husband/wife, partner, child, parent, brother/sister etc) shall be deemed to be held by that charity trustee;
  - (b) a charity trustee will be deemed to have a personal interest in relation to a particular matter if a body in relation to which they are an employee, director, member of the management committee, officer or elected representative has an interest in that matter.
- 128 The principles set out in clause 69 (technical objections to remote participation) shall apply in relation to remote participation and voting at board meetings, as if each reference in that clause to a member were a reference to a charity trustee and each reference in that clause to a members’ meeting were a reference to a board meeting.
- 129 A resolution agreed to in writing (or by e-mail) by a majority of the charity trustees then in office shall (subject to clauses 130 and 131) be as valid as if duly passed at a board meeting.
- 130 A resolution under clause 114 shall not be valid unless a copy of the resolution was circulated to all of the charity trustees, along with a cut-off time (which must be reasonable in the circumstances) for notifications under clause 131.



- 131 If a resolution is circulated to the charity trustees under clause 130, any one or more charity trustees may, following receipt of a copy of the resolution, notify the secretary that they consider that a board meeting should be held to discuss the matter which is the subject of the resolution; and if any such notification is received by the secretary prior to the cut-off time:
- (a) the secretary must convene a board meeting accordingly, and on the basis that it will take place as soon as reasonably possible;
  - (b) the resolution cannot be treated as valid under clause 114 unless and until that board meeting has taken place;
  - (c) the board may (if they consider appropriate, on the basis of the discussions at the meeting) resolve at that board meeting that the resolution should be treated as invalid, notwithstanding that it had previously been agreed to in writing (or by e-mail) by a majority of the charity trustees then in office.

### **Minutes**

- 132 The board must ensure that proper minutes are kept in relation to all board meetings and meetings of sub-committees.
- 133 The minutes to be kept under clause 132 must include the names of those present; and (so far as possible) should be signed by the chairperson of the meeting.
- 134 The board shall (subject to clause 135) make available copies of the minutes referred to in clause 132 to any member of the public requesting them.
- 135 The board may exclude from any copy minutes made available to a member of the public under clause 134 any material which the board considers ought properly to be kept confidential - on the grounds that allowing access to such material could cause significant prejudice to the interests of the organisation or on the basis that the material contains reference to employee or other matters which it would be inappropriate to divulge.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Delegation to sub-committees**

- 136 The board may delegate any of their powers to sub-committees; a sub-committee must include at least one charity trustee, but other members of a sub-committee need not be charity trustees nor members.
- 137 The board may also delegate to the chair of the organisation (or the holder of any other post) such of their powers as they may consider appropriate.
- 138 When delegating powers under clause 136 or 137, the board must set out appropriate conditions (which must include an obligation to report regularly to the board).
- 139 Any delegation of powers under clause 136 or 137 may be revoked or altered by the board at any time.
- 140 The rules of procedure for each sub-committee, and the provisions relating to membership of each sub-committee, shall be set by the board.

### **Operation of accounts**

- 141 Subject to clause 142, the signatures of two out of three signatories appointed by the board will be required in relation to all operations (other than the lodging of funds) on the bank and building society accounts held by the organisation; at least one out of the two signatures must be the signature of a charity trustee.
- 142 Where the organisation uses electronic facilities for the operation of any bank or building society account, the authorisations required for operations on that account must be consistent with the approach reflected in clause 141.

### **Accounting records and annual accounts**

- 143 The board must ensure that proper accounting records are kept, in accordance with all applicable statutory requirements.
- 144 The board must prepare annual accounts, complying with all relevant statutory requirements; if an audit is required under any statutory provisions (or if the board consider that an audit would be appropriate for some other reason), the board should ensure that an audit of the accounts is carried out by a qualified auditor.

## **Indemnity**

- 145 Subject to the terms of the 2005 Act and without prejudice to any other indemnity, the Charity Trustees, or Member of any sub-committee, the Organisation office bearers and all employees of the Organisation shall be indemnified out of the funds of the Organisation against any loss or liability (including the costs of defending successfully any court proceedings) which he, she or they may respectively incur or sustain, in connection with or on behalf of the Organisation and each of them shall be chargeable only for so much money as they may actually receive and they shall not be answerable for the acts, receipts, neglects or defaults of each other, but each of them for his or her own acts, receipts, neglects or defaults only.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Winding-up

- 146 If the organisation is to be wound up or dissolved, the winding-up or dissolution process will be carried out in accordance with the procedures set out under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 147 The winding-up of the organisation may take place only on the decision of no less than two thirds of its Full and Trainee Members who are present and voting at a GM called specifically (but not necessarily exclusively) of the purposes.
- 148 If, on the winding-up of the organisation, any Property or assets remain, after satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, such Property (including any land acquired by it in terms of the Part 2 or Part 3A of the Land Reform Act 2003 or Part 5 of the Land Reform Act 2016) shall be given or transferred to such other community body or bodies or charitable Group as may be:
- a) determined by no less than two thirds of the Full and Trainee Members of the Organisation who are present and voting at a General Meeting called specifically (but not necessarily exclusively) for the purpose; and
  - b) ensuring such assets are transferred to another body which has purposes which resemble closely the purposes of the Organisation;
  - c) approved by the OSCR (and its successors).

### Alterations to the constitution

- 149 This constitution may (subject to clause 150) be altered by resolution of the members passed at a members' meeting (subject to achieving the two thirds majority referred to in clause 61) or by way of a written resolution of the members.
- 150 The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 prohibits taking certain steps (eg change of name, an alteration to the purposes, amalgamation, winding-up) without the consent of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

## Interpretation

- 151 References in this constitution to the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 should be taken to include: -
- (a) any statutory provision which adds to, modifies or replaces that Act; and
  - (b) any statutory instrument issued in pursuance of that Act or in pursuance of any statutory provision falling under paragraph (a) above.
- 152 In this constitution: -
- (a) “charity” means a body which is either a “Scottish charity” within the meaning of section 13 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 or a “charity” within the meaning of section 1 of the Charities Act 2011, providing (in either case) that its objects are limited to charitable purposes;
  - (b) “charitable purpose” means a charitable purpose under section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 which is also regarded as a charitable purpose in relation to the application of the Taxes Acts.
  - (c) “GP” means a UK General Medical Council registered Medical Practitioner, who has membership of the GP Register;
  - (d) “Medical Student” means any undergraduate training to become a doctor;
  - (e) “others of significant standing” means those who have positively contributed to the field but who may not have served as a rural GP. However, who is considered to be a person “of significant standing” will be determined by the board.
  - (f) “Rural GP” means a GP who works in a rural healthcare setting. The RGPAS board of trustees will have the final judgement on what constitutes a rural healthcare setting for the purposes of RGPAS membership, with reference to the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, (8-fold) bands 5, 6, 7, and 8;
  - (g) “Scottish medical school” means a medical school located geographically in Scotland; and
  - (h) “Trainee GP” refers those who are GP Speciality Trainee Doctors or Foundation Trainee Doctors.

**Schedule 1  
Form of Proxy**

The form appointing the Proxy in terms of **Clause 68** shall be in the following terms, adapted as appropriate:

**Rural GP Association of Scotland**

I.....,

of.....,

being an Member of the above Organisation hereby

appoint.....,

of .....

and, failing him or her, .....

of.....,

as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the (Annual General/General) meeting of the Organisation to be held on..... and at any adjournment thereof.

This form is to be used in favour of/against the resolution.

Signed.....day of .....

*Signature of Member appointing proxy* .....

## Schedule 2

### Office Bearers Roles and Responsibilities

#### Chairperson

The Chairperson or their deputy will chair all meetings of RGPAS and its board of trustees, and will represent RGPAS to all interested parties. They will present the Association or boards viewpoint without prejudice. In the event of a balanced vote at any meeting, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

#### Secretary

The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the Association. In the absence of an appointed administrator, they will keep minutes of any meetings the Association may have. They will liaise with the Treasurer and the membership secretary. Along with the appointed administrator, the Secretary will also be responsible for the maintenance of the website and social media accounts.

#### Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep the funds of the Association. The appointed administrator will manage day-to-day management of income and expenditure. The Treasurer shall produce audited accounts annually, which will be presented to the AGM. The financial year end will be 30th September. They will manage the funds to further the aims and work of the Association. The funds shall be kept in a bank account or other investment, as may be determined by the Association.

#### Membership Secretary

The membership secretary will maintain the membership list of the Association. This will include reconciling the membership list against subscriptions received, and managing the membership of the RGPAS chatline. They will also be responsible for ensuring that members understand and uphold the aims and good name of the organisation.

#### Conference secretary

The conference secretary will organise the Association's education schedule, including the Annual Conference as instructed by the board, and with the support of the appointed administrator

#### Student liaison officer

The student liaison officer will maintain links with undergraduate and postgraduate organisations and educational establishments to ensure that students and trainees are aware of RGPAS. This contact will allow the conference

and educational opportunities are afforded to students and trainees. In addition, student and trainee representation on the Management Committee will be enabled and supported.

### **Student and trainee representatives**

The board of trustees will include two posts for undergraduate medical students, and one post for a GP in training. These representatives will represent the views of their peers to the board.

### **RGPAS representation**

One member of the board of trustees will have specific responsibility to represent the Association at national rural primary care meetings and workshops. This role can be shared with other Trustees and may be combined with one of the other constituted board roles.