

Writers' Group Constitution

1. Title

The group will be called The Willesden Green Writers' Group and, hereafter will be referred to as "the group".

2. Objectives

The group aims to provide a practical support network for aspiring writers in the following ways:

2.1 The group will provide a regular meeting place where members can share in and mutually support each other in the process of developing their writing.

2.2 Will provide a meeting place for members where they can give and receive honest feedback on each other's work.

2.3 Will provide members with information and advice on getting their work published and will also disseminate information relevant to creative writers eg: literature events, small press publications, competitions and courses.

2.4 Will provide members with information on techniques and ways in which they might improve their writing ability in order to develop their work to a high professional standard.

2.5 Will provide members with the opportunity to participate in activities such as public readings, seminars and submissions to any group magazines and anthologies.

2.6 The group welcomes all creative writing but will not generally deal with non-fiction such as technical writing, or the writing of textbooks. However, it does include travel writing, and feature writing as well as poetry, fiction and memoirs.

3. Membership

3.1 Members of the group must be 18 years of age or over.

3.2 Fees are £3.00 per session attended and will be collected weekly by the Treasurer.

3.3 The group will keep a data base of members' contact details and will occasionally send details of competitions and other items of information. By joining, the group members will have agreed to receive this material either by email or by post.

3.4 Any member who does not attend the group for more than three months without informing the secretary of a planned absence will be deemed to have left the group and their membership will be cancelled.

3.5 Members will be expected to adhere to the group's equal opportunities policy at all times. No one will receive less favourable treatment within the group on the grounds of sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or racial origins, disability, marital status, trade union activity, age, political or religious beliefs. Members may not be disadvantaged within the group by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justified.

3.6 Any Member deemed to be disruptive or not in accord with the group may be expelled by a majority decision of Committee Members. Disruptive members will first receive a verbal, then written warning before expulsion.

3.7 If at least three complaints are received by the executive officers regarding the standard of a member's work and these complaints are upheld by at least one of the executive officers, then that member's membership will be suspended with immediate effect pending the completion of the following complaints procedure.

3.8 Once a complaint is received by an executive officer regarding a member's work they will have their membership suspended. To reapply for full membership, they will be asked to submit a piece of prose up to 500 words or up to three poems. The submissions can be any work of their own, whether already seen by the group or not. These works are to demonstrate how their work has progressed since joining the group and must show evidence of progress.

3.9 The submissions must be sent to info@willesdengreenwriters.com within three weeks of receiving notification of the complaints procedure being taken out. The result will be given within ten days of submitting the work.

3.10 Whilst suspended they may continue to attend the group, but not to read out any of their work.

3.11 The submissions will be distributed to all members and a vote will be offered (those having an outstanding complaint against them are not eligible to vote). A vote will be taken on whether the work produced by the suspended member contributes to the group's overall aim of nurturing improving writers and also whether the suspended member's continuing presence in the group is benefitting them and improving their work.

3.12 If the vote is lost then the suspended member's membership will be cancelled and they will not be able to attend further meetings of the group

3.13 A member whose membership has been cancelled in this way may apply again for membership after six months by repeating the example submissions procedure above.

4. Workshop Structure

Starting Nov 9th 2006, the group will be facilitated by its members. A list of members willing to facilitate the group will be compiled and the secretary will draw up and circulate a monthly rota of facilitators.

4.1 Those members wishing to facilitate the group should pass their names to the committee for ratification.

4.2 A group meeting book will be provided and a separate entry for each meeting will be made by the facilitator, recording the date, the facilitator's name followed by those members attending and their fee payment.

4.3 Besides taking charge of the group for the evening, it is the facilitator's duty to put up the workshop notices in the library before 8pm, to ensure that the meeting book is available, give out any information or leaflets and to hand 'Welcome to the writers workshop' sheets to any new members. Every new member should be handed a copy of the constitution.

4.4 On the night they are in charge, the workshop facilitator is exempt from payment of the workshop fee. Facilitators will not read out their own work when they are in charge of the workshop.

4.5 The Treasurer will collect the weekly takings and will ensure that the cash is deposited in the Writers' Workshop bank account not less than once a month.

4.6 The actual workshop will be free format, creatively guided by the facilitator in any way he or she sees fit. There will normally be readings of work brought in, followed by feedback from the other members. There may be writing exercises and occasionally there may be casting of dramas, improvisations etc. There may be special types of workshop announced in advance. Normally workshops will run from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. on a Thursday but there may be special events from time to time.

4.7 The Writers' Workshop is a not-for-profit organisation. All profit is to be reinvested in publication projects, events and group facilities. No member will receive any finance, except documented and approved expenses incurred with

the prior approval of the committee. All outgoings must be fully authorised in advance by the committee, fully documented with dated receipts and descriptions.

5. Officers

The Committee comprises of:-

Chairperson - Chairs the committee meetings, represents the group externally and manages the other members of the committee.

Secretary – Handles correspondence and produces a rota of facilitators.

Treasurer - Manages the bank account and group finances

6. Election of Committee

6.1 All Committee members shall be elected from and by, the members of the group.

6.2 All Committee members are elected for a period of one year, but may be re-elected to the same office or another office the following year. Voting will take place via email or by post in the two weeks before the AGM. The announcement of results and handover of power (if any) will take place at the AGM.

7. Committee

7.1 The affairs of the group shall be controlled by the committee and by the members of the group. The Committee shall meet at agreed intervals and not less than four times per year.

The duties of the Committee shall be:

7.2 To control the affairs of the group on behalf of the Members

7.3 To keep accurate accounts of the finances of the group through the Treasurer. These should be available for reasonable inspection by Members and should be audited before every Annual General Meeting.

7.4 The group shall maintain a bank current account and the following Officers shall be authorised to sign writers workshop cheques: any two of the Chairperson; Treasurer and Secretary.

7.5 To co-opt additional members of the Committee as the Committee feels this is necessary.

8. General Meetings

8.1 The Annual General Meeting of the group shall be held not later than the end of October each year. 21 clear days written notice shall be given to Members of the Annual General Meeting by circulating a copy of the notice to every member at the weekly meeting or to their home address or by email.

8.2 Members must advise the Secretary in writing of any business to be moved at the Annual General Meeting at least 14 days before a meeting.

8.3 The Secretary shall circulate or give notice of the agenda for the meeting to Members not less than 7 days before the meeting.

8.4 The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be to:

8.4.1 Confirm the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and any General Meetings held since the last Annual General Meeting.

8.4.2 Receive the audited accounts for the year from the Treasurer.

8.4.3 Receive the annual report of the Committee from the Secretary.

8.4.4 Elect the Officers of the group (i.e. Chairperson; Secretary; and Treasurer).

8.4.5 Review group fees and agree them for the forthcoming year.

8.4.6 Transact such other business received in writing by the Secretary from Members 14 days prior to the meeting and included on the agenda.

8.5 Special General Meetings may be convened by the Committee or on receipt by the Secretary of a request in writing from not less than four Members of the group. At least 21 days notice of the meeting shall be given.

8.6 Nomination of candidates for election of Officers shall be made in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days in advance of the Annual General Meeting date.

8.7 At all General Meetings, the chair will be taken by the Chairperson or, in their absence, by a deputy appointed by the committee or by Members attending the meeting.

8.8 Decisions made at a General Meeting shall be by a simple majority of votes from those Members attending the meeting. In the event of equal votes, the Chairperson shall be entitled to an additional casting vote.

8.9 A quorum for a General Meeting shall be ten Members including the Chairperson; Secretary and Treasurer.

8.10 Each Member of the group shall be entitled to one vote at General Meetings.

9. Alterations to the Constitution

Any proposed alterations to the group Constitution may only be considered at an Annual or Special General Meeting, convened with the required written notice of the proposal. Any alteration or amendment must be proposed by a Member of the group and seconded by another Member. Such alterations shall be passed if supported by not less than two-thirds of those Members present at the meeting, assuming that a quorum has been achieved.

10. Acceptance of the Constitution

Members are expected to abide by the rules as set out in this constitution. Anyone who persistently refuses to abide by these rules will have his or her membership cancelled.

11. Dissolution

11.1 If at any General Meeting of the group, a resolution be passed calling for the dissolution of the Club, the Secretary shall immediately convene a Special General Meeting of the group to be held not less than one month thereafter to discuss and vote on the resolution.

11.2 If at that Special General Meeting, the resolution is carried by at least two-thirds of the Members present at the meeting, the General Committee shall thereupon, or at such date as shall have been specified in the resolution, proceed to realise the assets of the group and discharge all debts and liabilities of the group.

Signed:..... **Chair**
Date:.....
Signed:.....
Date:.....