

The AFSA Constitution

1. Our Vision

The Asian Fire Service Association will work with the National Fire and Rescue Service and supporting agencies to enhance equality and diversity, and associated values.

2. Our Objectives

The objectives of the Asian Fire Service Association (herein known as AFSA) are to promote good race relations and equality of opportunity, improve community safety, and support community cohesion activity, within the fire services of the UK and associated partners.

In pursuance of our objectives, we will:

1. Provide support and informal mentoring of members of AFSA.
2. Work in partnership with the fire services of the UK and associated partners to improve community safety, especially within socially excluded communities.
3. Support and facilitate inter-faith working and improve community interaction and cohesion.
4. Influence the direction of policies and procedures nationally, regionally and locally, in line with equality principles and anti-discriminatory practices.
5. Assist the fire and rescue service in the development of new and existing policies that support our objectives
6. Work in partnership with other stakeholder and support groups where relevant to share best practice and progress joint objectives.
7. Establish AFSA as a key national stakeholder within the Fire and Rescue service by establishing strong working relationships with key organisations, partners and individuals whose aims are compatible with, or supportive of, AFSA.
8. Provide a forum for networking and act as a social group that celebrates the diversity of our members
9. Engage in charitable activities, locally and internationally, as appropriate.

3. Our Values

AFSA is committed to the values of the Fire and Rescue Service. These values are a way of recognising the standard at which we operate, the ethos behind the Association, and provides the foundation for every member in every situation.

The following list of our values displays the spirit in which all members pursue our vision and objectives, to ensure that the service we provide is effective, equitable and positively supports the communities we serve.

We value:

1. Service to the community
2. Our People
3. Diverse communities
4. Continuous improvement

4. Our Constitution – how we will operate

4.1 Name and Address

The name of the organisation is the Asian Fire Service Association. For contact details refer to appendix.

4.2 Membership

Membership will be made available at four levels:

1. Full membership: for currently employed staff within the national Fire and Rescue Service and associated partners
2. Associate membership: for non fire service partners and external bodies
3. Corporate members: for Fire and Rescue Service in the UK and may be extended internationally on application and if supported by the executive committee.
4. Honorary members: appointed by the EC by a majority vote.

4.3 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) shall consist of the posts listed below.

1. Chair
2. Vice Chair(s)
3. General Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. National Advisor(s) to EC

Other Committee posts:

1. Minute Secretary
2. Membership Secretary
3. Sponsorship Co-ordinator
4. Cultural Events Co-ordinator
5. Charities Co-ordinator
6. Elected regional chairs
7. Independent Advisor(s)
8. Media and Communications Co-ordinator
9. Vice-Treasurer

The members of the Executive Committee shall hold office until the conclusion of the AFSA AGM and must be full members of the Association. All EC members will hold office for 3 years from the date of the AGM unless they resign or are dismissed from office in accordance with the constitution.

In addition to the EC Members, the EC may co-opt up to further 4 members who shall serve until the conclusion of the next AGM, provided that the number of co-opted members shall not exceed half of total membership of the EC at the time of co-option.

Any temporary vacancy occurring in the EC may be filled by the EC by appointment of a member to hold office until conclusion of the next AGM, where they would be eligible to stand for election to the EC.

All EC members are expected to attend at least 50% of meetings in a 12 month period.

4.4 Executive Committee Responsibilities

The AFSA EC shall:

1. Delegate the approval or rejection of Membership Applications to membership committee. Appeals will be to the full EC of AFSA.
2. Terminate membership of any Member, Associate Member, Corporate Associate organisation and Honorary Life Member. (please see When Membership May Cease)
3. Establish links, partnerships and contact with other Fire and Rescue Services, Emergency Services and community support networks in the UK and in other countries.
4. Represent, champion and promote the interests of its members by actively engaging with the national fire service and associated agencies.
5. Develop and implement a Business Strategy, Business Plan and an Equality Impact Assessment of these.
6. Implement a Communication Strategy to communicate with AFSA members and associated agencies.
7. Implement an effective support, advice and mentoring network for its Members.
8. Negotiate membership benefits.
9. Coordinate and publish records of AFSA activities.
10. Maintain confidential membership records.
11. Maintain accounts of all monies and funds maintained by AFSA to implement its activities, and report its Financial Management on a Quarterly basis as well as the maintenance and publishing of a Balance Sheet and an Annual Statement of Accounts at the AGM, made available to all members and associate organisations.
12. Ensure compliance with legal accounting requirements.
13. Relinquish all records and property of the Association on relinquishing office.
14. Delegate responsibility for budgeting and decision making as required to maintain an effective organisation.

4.5 Voting and Decisions

Where a disagreement occurs as to what type of majority is required during a committee meeting for a decision then it will be deferred to Unanimous.

Depending on the type of decision one of the three types of votes may take place:

- Simple majority (50% + 1 of those who have voted) - for day to day matters (e.g. deciding calendar of events)
- Special majority (75% of those who have voted) e.g. for changes to the constitution.
- Unanimous (of those present, but where matter of disqualification all EC members must vote) - e.g. for dissolution of AFSA.

In the case of equality of votes the Chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote. The General Secretary shall ensure that all votes are recorded in the minutes.

The Executive Committee may call or organise sub-committees for the purpose of carrying out an inquiry, supervising, or performing any function or duty which in the opinion of the Executive Committee would be more effectively undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee provided, that all acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees shall be fully and promptly reported to the Executive Committee.

In the event of an emergency decision required where it would not be possible to convene an EC meeting within the required deadline, the Chair is authorised to make a decision on behalf of the EC. In such an event, the Chair must inform the EC and convene an EC meeting at the earliest opportunity to endorse or sanction the decision taken.

4.5 Subscription Fees

Corporate membership will carry an annual subscription fee of £1000. This may be amended by the EC as appropriate. This fee may not be altered until 2011.

At the AGM the membership may set fees by a unanimous majority for any of the four levels of membership.

A Retail Price Index (RPI) increase will apply to memberships fees after the three years automatically and will only require a majority vote of the EC. All subscription increases greater than the RPI will require approval of the AGM by unanimous majority.

4.6 When Membership may cease

Any member may leave AFSA at any time. Subscription will generally be refundable.

The Executive Committee may terminate the membership of any individual (including EC member) by Special Majority vote and for serious or substantial reasons including, but not only for: -

- Being member of an organisation whose aims are in conflict with those of AFSA.
- Gross misconduct such as being convicted of a criminal or civil offence.
- Actions that negatively affect AFSA in carrying out its aims and objectives.
- Misrepresenting AFSA's aims and objectives.
- Behaviours at AFSA events that are not consistent with AFSA values or contradictory to the constitution.

The individual concerned will be given the opportunity to represent her/his views and opinions to the Executive Committee before a final decision is made. The individual concerned may have an individual attend (not necessarily another member of AFSA) to represent them for this purpose. All appeals will be heard by an appeals sub committee. The final appeal will be to the full committee. An appeal against the decision of an AFSA committee will only be heard on the lodging of a refundable deposit of £200. The deposit will be forfeited if the appeal fails.

The EC may disqualify an EC member by Simple Majority from their position on the EC (but will continue to be members) for reasons including, but not only, for: -

- Acting outside prescribed roles and responsibilities of the position held.
- Acting without proper authorisation of the EC.
- Not executing their prescribed roles and responsibilities.
- Not carrying actions as directed by EC.
- Misrepresenting AFSA's aims and objectives.
- Poor attendance at EC meetings without due reason.

Where the EC considers the actions taken by the EC member (as above) are not severe enough for membership to be terminated, they may consider termination of the EC's member's position on the EC as appropriate.

4.7 National AFSA Meetings

Meetings consist of:

4.7.1 Annual General Meeting

- Shall be held annually (as determined by the EC).
- Any Fire and Rescue Service person may attend but only persons who have been registered AFSA members for over 6 months may vote.
- 3 EC members and at least 50% of regions must also be represented in person or by proxy of the membership for the AGM to be quorate.
- Nominations for EC posts shall be received at least 21 days ahead of the AGM. The election for the posts will be held at the AGM, by simple majority. The current Chair will chair the meeting and direct and administer the elections, with one independent verifier (to be appointed by the EC). Where applicable, the current Chair will hand over to the new Chair to handle the rest of the meeting.
- Annual statement of accounts shall be agreed by special majority.
- The bank name shall be agreed by majority vote.
- The Chair shall present the Annual Report to note.
- At the AGM, the Agenda shall include: election of EC Members, the appointment of an independent Auditor for the Annual statement of Accounts, the review of the events / work implemented by AFSA, the review and any amendments to the Constitution, the Standing Orders and the Rules of AFSA.
- All Associate, Corporate and Honorary Members are welcome at the AGM. Only full members are entitled to vote.

4.7.2 Members Meeting

- Shall be held quarterly and/or as and when necessary.
- Any person may attend and speak but only committee members may vote and add items to agenda
- 3 EC members and at least 3 members will be a quorum.

4.7.3 Executive Committee Meeting

- Shall be held every two months, and as and when necessary.
- 3 EC members will be a quorum; this quorum must include at least the Chair or General Secretary, Vice Chair.

4.7.4 Special General Meeting

The EC may call a Special General Meeting at any time. At least 5 full members, eligible to vote can request such a meeting in writing stating the issue to be considered. The Chair shall call such a meeting within at least 21 days, with notice given to all Members. The notice shall state the issue to be addressed.

For the meeting to be quorate then rules for AGM apply.

Meetings will be chaired by the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair may chair the meeting. The General Secretary will keep a record of the agenda and minutes of meetings and in particular shall note the decisions taken at meetings, ensuring that there the quorum has been satisfied.

For the AGM or any meeting requiring a special majority vote at least 21 days notice must be given of the meeting with the details of the decision required circulated in the agenda at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

4.8 Proceedings of the EC

The EC and all other AFSA committees shall keep minutes of all proceedings and submit to the General Secretary all agendas, minutes, action plans and resolutions. The General Secretary shall keep the record of all these minutes and promulgate these minutes on the AFSA web site or on request to members of AFSA by e-mail on a quarterly basis in the case of General Meetings and on request from any member for Committee meetings.

The EC shall have the authority, under this Constitution, to agree, adopt, implement, review and issue Standing Orders and/or Rules of AFSA. All Standing Orders and/or Rules of AFSA shall be subject to review by the Membership at the AGM and shall be consistent with the provisions of this Constitution.

4.9 Resources and Accounts

The EC shall comply with their obligations under appropriate financial procedures. Purchase of any resources from the funds belonging to AFSA shall be applied only in furthering the Vision and Objectives of AFSA.

The EC shall retain an inventory of resources belonging to AFSA and shall maintain all accounting records for the Association.

The Executive Committee shall prepare an annual statement of accounts and arrange for the auditing or independent examination of the statements of accounts for the Association.

At the first EC meeting after the AGM the EC will agree rules of delegation that will provide Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer clear guidance as to what levels of expenditure they can approve outside of EC meetings and also what they can delegate to other AFSA officers. A record of the terms of delegation will be kept by the General Secretary and published on the AFSA web site.

4.10 Receipts and Expenditure

The funds of AFSA, including all donations, contributions and bequests shall be paid into an account operated by the EC in the name of the Association at such bank or building society, as the Executive Committee shall, from time to time decide. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by at least two out of three members of the Executive Committee, including the Chair and the Treasurer.

To claim any expenses for expense incurred as a result of carrying out business on behalf of AFSA – such expense must first be agreed by the delegated officer or chair. Following the expenditure receipts must be produced to support the claim as per expenses forms.

All moneys and funds raised by or on behalf of AFSA shall be used to progress and support the Vision and Aims of AFSA and for no other purpose, provided that it does not prevent:

1. The repayment to AFSA members or the EC or any Co-opted or Committee appointees any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses
2. AFSA will provide Indemnity Insurance to cover the liability of the EC or any of its members in carrying out its business but AFSA will not provide cover for any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust under the rule of law, of which they may be guilty in relation to AFSA; providing that no such Insurance shall not extend to any claim arising from any act or omission the EC or any Members of the EC knew to be a breach of trust or breach of duty committed in disregard of this Constitution.

4.11 Alterations to the Constitution

The Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed at the AGM, with no less than 2/3 of the eligible Membership present. Changes shall be agreed at a subsequent General Meeting convened for the purpose. The notice of this GM, promulgated by the General Secretary, must set out the resolution and the changes proposed. Once agreed, official notice must be communicated by the General Secretary to the EC and the Membership within 21 days of the General Meeting to agree the changes.

Voting on the changes shall be by all eligible Members of AFSA.

4.12 Dissolution

If the Executive Committee should decide that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve AFSA it shall call a members meeting to agree the dissolution by special majority vote.

Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such charitable institution or institutions having objectives similar to the objectives of AFSA as the EC may determine.

4.13 Dissolution

Any statements made on behalf of AFSA to an outside organisation or at a public meeting must first be cleared by the Chair.

Information produced by AFSA for internal purposes shall not be circulated outside the AFSA membership unless authorisation from the Chair is first obtained, or by the Executive Committee.

Personal data of members of AFSA will be kept secure at all times, and will not be disclosed to any other persons other than for any official business, such as administering membership.

4.14 This constitution has been adopted by the AFSA membership on Friday 11th September 2009 and is signed by: –

Chair of AFSA 11th September 2009

General Secretary of AFSA 11th September 2009

Appendix

AFSA Contact details:

AFSA's registered address is:

Nina Kang
General Secretary
Asian Fire Service Association

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Derby
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