

The Constitution of the Peterhouse Politics Society

I. Aims.

§ 1. The purpose of the Peterhouse Politics Society (PPS) consists in promoting the awareness and discussion of political issues among the students, fellows, and staff of Peterhouse. Although the Society is college-based, it is open to all members and staff of the University of Cambridge as well as to the general public.

§ 2. The Society is emphatically non-party political, aiming to stimulate reflection and debate on a wide range of political standpoints and persuasions.

§ 3. The Society's aims are primarily, although not exclusively, to be achieved through the organisation of events held at Peterhouse which involve the hosting of a guest prominent in the worlds of politics, journalism, or academia, who will speak on a topic of his/her choice, followed by questions and discussion.

II. Membership.

§ 4. There is no official membership of the Society.

§ 5. With the possible exception of the Society's Annual Dinner, participation in events organised by the Society shall be free of charge.

III. Administration.

A. The Committee.

§ 6. The Committee is the primary administrative body of the Society. It is under the immediate direction of a President and the general oversight of a Senior Treasurer. While the President forms part of the Committee, the Senior Treasurer does not.

§ 7. Hence, unless otherwise specified or qualified by the wording of any paragraph of this Constitution, the term 'Committee' shall be taken to refer to all its members, including the President.

§ 8. The purpose of the Committee is to work together with the President in order to ensure the effective management of the Society in accordance with the principles set out in this Constitution, to help the President in his/her work as the Society's chief officer, and to prevent a disproportionate amount of the administrative burden falling on him/her.

§ 9. The Committee shall have at least one plenary session each academic year specifically for the purpose of discussing the business of the Society.

§ 10. Membership of the Committee is open to all junior members of Peterhouse who are *in statu pupillari* during the relevant academic year(s). The definition of *in statu pupillari* is taken according to Statute K (3. (h)) of the *Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge* (p. 67).

§ 11. There shall be no less than five and no more than ten committee members including the President. In order to ensure that the Committee contains an adequate number of members during any given academic year, an outgoing Committee will take care to appoint new members before the next President's term of office.

§ 12. There shall always be at least one committee member who is also a member of the Peterhouse Middle Combination Room (MCR) during his/her term in office.

§ 13. The number of committee members (within the bounds provided in § 11), the titles of their respective roles, as well as their substantive functions are determined at the discretion of the President dependent upon the requirements of the time.

§ 14. New members of the Committee are ultimately appointed at the discretion of the President. Nonetheless, the President has the responsibility, in consultation with his Committee, to hold interviews and/or review written applications in order to judge the suitability of the candidates.

§ 15. With the exception of the President, no committee member, once appointed, forfeits his/her position automatically at the end of the academic year, provided that he/she remains a junior member of Peterhouse and *in statu pupillari*, unless officially choosing to relinquish the post or being dismissed from it by the President.

§ 16. Any committee member who is deemed by the Committee or President to be failing in his/her role can be dismissed at the initiative of the President. The latter will convene a committee meeting during which a vote shall be taken concerning the issue. At least a simple majority among the Committee is required for dismissal, with the committee member in question being given the right to vote. When the said committee member, despite being in full awareness of these proceedings, is nevertheless absent from this meeting, his/her potential vote will not count in the calculation of a simple majority. The President shall officially inform the Committee, the Senior Treasurer, as well as the person he/she had sought to dismiss of the outcome of this vote.

§ 17. Committee positions have no personal monetary obligations attached to them.

B. The President.

§ 18. The President is the chief administrative officer of the Society, leading the Committee for the purpose of fulfilling the aims of the Society. As such, he/she is given a range of discretionary powers within the bounds set by this Constitution.

§ 19. The President shall regularly inform the Committee concerning his work on behalf of the Society.

§ 20. The President is elected by a simple-majority vote in a secret ballot involving all members of an outgoing Committee (saving the provision of § 21) on the non-binding advice of the Senior Treasurer. However, for the election to stand, the Senior Treasurer has to accept expressly the choice of the Committee within the 14 days commencing on the day after the election. If the Senior Treasurer withholds consent, re-elections will be held until a suitable candidate is found.

§ 21. In case that a serving committee member, including the President, stands for (re)election to the presidency, he/she will be ineligible to participate in this vote and in the review of candidates outlined in § 25.

§ 22. A member of the Committee shall inform the Senior Treasurer concerning the election results within three days of election day and thus give the Senior Treasurer opportunity either to accept or to refuse the candidate-elect.

§ 23. Ordinarily, the President's term of office shall consist of one year, commencing on 1st July and ending on 30th June. Hence, in accordance with § 20, the election of the President must be held on or before 16th June. If the Committee and Senior Treasurer cannot agree on a candidate for the presidency before July 1st, the President's term of office shall commence the day on which the Senior Treasurer consents to the former's election.

§ 24. As any other member of the Committee, the President has to be a junior member of Peterhouse and *in statu pupillari* during his/her term in office.

§ 25. Saving the provisions of § 21, it is the responsibility of the outgoing President, in consultation with his Committee, to hold interviews and/or review written applications in order to judge the suitability of the candidate(s) running for the position of President.

§ 26. If a serving committee member expresses the will to run for President, the election will remain internal to the Committee, with no external candidate being admitted. Only if no candidate can be found among the Committee, shall the position be advertised to the student body of Peterhouse as a whole, that is, both to the Junior and to the Middle Combination Room (JCR & MCR).

§ 27. The President's term is not renewed unless re-elected according to the principles of §§ 20-29. Any President can serve for a maximum number of two consecutive terms.

§ 28. If the Committee or Senior Treasurer is dissatisfied with the work of the President, the latter can be removed mid-term through a constructive vote of no confidence. A prospective candidate has to be officially proposed by at least two committee members (other than the candidate him-/herself) or the Senior Treasurer and endorsed by a simple majority of the Committee in accordance with the principles of §§ 20-29 unless otherwise specified by this paragraph. If the vote is successful, the candidate-elect will become the new President as soon as the Senior Treasurer has

consented to the election. The former President may remain a member of the Committee should he/she choose to do so.

§ 29. If the President decides to resign mid-term, he/she must give adequate notice, officially informing both the Committee and the Senior Treasurer of his/her intention. As soon as possible, the Committee shall organise presidential elections in accordance with the principles of §§ 20-29 unless otherwise specified by this paragraph. The incumbent President shall continue to exercise this role with due diligence until a new candidate has been elected. As in the case of a vote of no confidence, the candidate-elect will become the new President as soon as the Senior Treasurer has consented to the election, while the former President may remain a member of the Committee should he/she so desire.

C. The Senior Treasurer.

§ 30. The Senior Treasurer is a member of the Governing Body of Peterhouse, representing the Society and its interests to that body.

§ 31. The Senior Treasurer oversees the work of the President and Committee and supports them chiefly in an advisory capacity.

§ 32. An important function of the Senior Treasurer is to entertain guest speakers of the Society, principally by taking them to dinner at the College's High Table if they so desire, and indeed if the given event lends itself to such hospitality.

§ 33. The Senior Treasurer is appointed by the Governing Body of Peterhouse.

§ 34. In case there is a breakdown in the relationship between the Committee and the Senior Treasurer, the Committee may request the Master of Peterhouse to propose that the Governing Body appoint an alternative Senior Treasurer for the Society. Such a request has to secure a two-thirds majority in a vote held by the Committee and have the approval of the President.

IV. Honorary President.

§ 35. The Society shall have an Honorary President prominent in the sphere of politics.

§ 36. An individual becomes Honorary President of the Society at the invitation of the President, acting on the binding advice of the Committee, who will have endorsed a prospective candidate by a simple-majority vote.

§ 37. At the time of the promulgation of this Constitution, the Society's Honorary President was Sir Christopher Meyer.

V. Events.

§ 38. It is the duty of the President to invite the Society's guest speakers.

§ 39. The Society's guests speak *pro bono*. In acknowledgement of their service to the Society and in order to make speaking at the Society an attractive prospect, guests shall receive hospitality of a high standard.

§ 40. In accordance with the purpose of the Society, all events organised by the Society must take place on the premises of Peterhouse unless they are co-hosted with another society.

§ 41. In the Easter Term of each academic year, the Society shall host its Annual Dinner.

§ 42. Although the Annual Dinner does not have to be free of charge, the Society shall subsidise the price of tickets as much as possible.

VI. Funding.

§ 43. The Society shall endeavour to secure an appropriate amount of funding required for its activities from the Governing Body of Peterhouse and from Peterhouse Amalgamated Clubs (AMALS).

VII. Publicity.

§ 44. The Society shall ensure that it provides an adequate amount of publicity for its events.

§ 45. The Society shall be represented at the annual Cambridge University Student Union (CUSU) Freshers' Fair.

§ 46. The Society shall produce term cards detailing the events organised by the Society; these are to be distributed amongst the Junior and Senior Members of Peterhouse.

VIII. Records.

§ 47. It is the responsibility of the President to keep the Society's Record Book(s) up to date. Entries in the latter include: the names of the members of the Committee, of the President, and of the Senior Treasurer; the respective roles of committee members; a brief description of events organised; and, if possible, attendance registers of events.

§ 48. The President shall keep the records of the Society safe and pass them to his/her successor at the expiry of his/her term in office.

§ 49. The Society shall maintain an official website as well as an article on Wikipedia, ensuring that both are kept up to date.

IX. Constitutional.

§ 50. This Constitution largely formalises the customs and practices of the Society as they developed from its experiences over the course of more than a decade. Granted that its provisions are binding, they do not presume to be exhaustive, it being probable and desirable that some aspects of administration - particularly those not of fundamental or constitutional significance to the Society and thus not regulated by this Constitution - will continue to be decided by the President and Committee on an *ad hoc* basis, in the spirit of the principles of this Constitution while reflecting the contingencies of the day.

§ 51. Ordinarily, the definitive interpretation of the articles of this Constitution is provided by the unanimous agreement of members of the Committee. If such a scenario arises that there is less than unanimous agreement among the members of the Committee either concerning the interpretation of any part of this Constitution or concerning an issue of fundamental and constitutional significance for the Society which this Constitution has regulated insufficiently, recourse is to be had to the Senior Treasurer whose judgement shall be binding in both instances.

§ 52. No part of this Constitution can be altered, augmented, or deleted except by a two-thirds majority vote of the Committee and the explicit assent of the Senior Treasurer.

§ 53. It is the duty of the Committee, President, and Senior Treasurer to familiarise themselves with this Constitution.

§ 54. This Constitution was promulgated unanimously on 1 March 2014 by the then President, Committee, and Senior Treasurer of the Society:

President: Mr Cornelius Riethdorf

Vice President and Secretary: Miss Sarah Rhodes

Senior Committee Member: Mr Alexander Davis

Treasurer: Mr Oliver Wettern

Webmaster: Mr Joshua Lewis

General Committee Member: Mr Thomas Clark

Senior Treasurer: The Rev'd Dr Stephen Hampton