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THE
CONSTITUTION
of the
**NATIONAL WOMEN
CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS**

As Finally Passed at a Special General Meeting
of Representatives of
the Local Women Citizens' Associations on
8th November, 1918

Revised at the Annual General Meeting
26th May, 1936.

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PREAMBLE.

This organisation arose as a result of a meeting in the Caxton Hall, London, in July, 1917, when it had become apparent that the Parliamentary Franchise would in the near future be accorded to the women of the United Kingdom. Fifty women's societies responded to the invitation of the President of the National Council of Women to consult together for the initiation of some co-operative scheme of work among women on the use and responsibility of the women's vote.

The plan adopted was the election of a Provisional Committee by those societies, which should proceed with the formation of local Women Citizens' Associations. In July, 1918, a number of new Associations met and formulated the following Constitution, which should establish them as self-governing local bodies and bind them together as a national system working through a Central Executive elected by representatives of the Associations.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

Name.

This organisation shall be called the National Women Citizens' Associations.

Objects.

To bring together on non-party, non-sectarian and democratic lines women's societies and individual women, in order to foster a sense of citizenship in women; to encourage the study of political, social and economic questions; and to secure the adequate representation of women in local administration and in the affairs of the nation and of the Empire.

ARTICLE II.

General Organisation.

1. The method of organisation shall be to establish local self-governing Women Citizens' Associations throughout the country, linked together by a Central Committee elected by these Associations at the Annual General Meeting.

2. The duty of the Central Committee shall be to promote the formation of Local Women Citizens' Associations and to assist in their work and development.

3. In addition to the Central Committee, a certain number of Honorary Vice-Presidents shall be elected biennially; the number shall not exceed 10 except by special vote at the Annual General Meeting. Among these there shall be included women particularly interested in the Women Citizens Movement and women well known as workers connected with the different political parties.

The intention is to secure a full expression of opinion from all political directions and to present to the Associations, without bias towards any particular party, the problems of public and parliamentary activities as they affect the whole community.

4. The Hon. Vice-Presidents have the right of attending the Annual General Meeting and the Council Meetings, with the right of voting. They may be invited to attend the Central Committee Meetings, but without a vote.

ARTICLE III.

Central Committee.

1. The Central Committee shall consist of the President, the Hon. Treasurer and 18 other members. These officers and members shall be elected annually by delegates at the Annual General Meeting.

2. The President shall be eligible for re-election after her first year of office but she shall not hold office for more than two years in succession.

3. At least half the members of the Central Committee must be members of provincial Women Citizens' Associations.

4. Each Branch Association shall have the right of making 20 nominations for the members of the Central Committee, viz. President, Hon. Treasurer, and 18 other members. The consent of each nominee must have been previously obtained, and the nominations must be sent in at least one month before the Annual General Meeting.

For the information of the Branch Associations, a brief statement of qualifications of new candidates should be sent in with the nomination.

5. Each Branch Association shall have the right of making one nomination for the Hon. Vice-Presidents.

6. The Committee shall have power to co-opt annually not more than six additional members drawn from the Associations to serve for the current year.

ARTICLE IV.

Local Women Citizens' Associations.

(a) It shall be the duty of each local Women Citizens' Association while in relation with the National Women Citizens' Associations to carry on its work in harmony with the objects of the Women Citizens' Associations. Any other object not inconsistent with these objects may be added by any Women Citizens' Association.

(b) In respect of membership, meetings, elections of the local office bearers and committee and financial arrangements other than those of the Central Committee, each local Association shall frame its own rules, provided that these shall be on democratic lines. If difficulties should arise within a Women Citizens' Association, the Central Committee shall be under no obligation to intervene in regard to internal matters, but may, if it see fit, respond to any request for counsel.

ARTICLE V.

Relation of Branch Associations, Constituent Societies and Associate Members to Central Committee.

1. Branch Associations.

From the 3 methods following selected for the collection of affiliation fees each association shall adopt the one suited to its conditions and such adoption shall be for the term of 3 years.

Methods:

- "The Branch Associations shall pay to the Honorary Treasurer of the N.W.C.A. a yearly subscription amounting to 6d. per head of their total membership."
- "The Association shall contribute a capitation fee of 6d. for the first third of its members and 3d. for each subsequent member, and raise an extra donation whenever possible."
- "The Association shall contribute 3d. per head plus 2½% of nett receipts from every special effort organised by the local W.C.A. for any funds other than those of its own association provided that a sum of at least £1 be forwarded to Headquarters annually in addition to the 3d. capitation fee."

2. Probationary Associations.

"Probationary Associations shall be allowed to join for a fee of one guinea per annum for the first 3 years entitling them to the full privileges of Branch Associations."

3. Constituent Societies.

"Outside organisations may (subject to the approval of the Central Committee) join as Constituent Societies for a fee of 7/6 per annum, entitling them to send a delegate with a vote to the Annual and Council Meetings and to send forward one resolution for consideration for the agenda of the Annual Meeting."

4. Associate Members.

"Women may be invited to join the N.W.C.A. as Associate Members paying a minimum subscription of 10/6 which shall entitle them to a vote at the Annual and Council Meetings, and to proposal of a resolution to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting at the discretion of the Central Committee."

ARTICLE VI.

The Council.

1. The Council of the N.W.C.A. consists of representatives of each Branch Association together with the officers and members of the Central Committee; its basis of representation is the same as that of the Annual General Meeting.

Its purpose is to keep the Central Committee and Branches in close relationship throughout the year, and to afford an opportunity for discussing important public questions as they arise.

2. The Council shall have no Executive control, nor can it over-rule any decision of the Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE VII.

Meetings.

1. The National Women Citizens' Associations shall hold at least one General Meeting each year, which shall be a meeting of representatives of local Associations.

2. The business taken at such Annual General Meeting shall be:—
First.—An Annual Report submitted by the Committee, which shall include a duly audited financial statement.

Second.—The Election of the Central Committee.

Third.—The considerations of resolutions submitted by local Associations or by the Central Committee.

3. The basis of representation shall be: Each Association numbering 100 or less members shall have two delegates; a third delegate for any number between 100 and 200; and a fourth delegate for any number between 200 and 300; four delegates to be the maximum representation of any Association, and two the minimum to which they are entitled. Any one delegate may carry the full voting powers ascribed to the delegation.

4. Conferences may be called throughout the year at the discretion of the Central Committee or by request of not fewer than six local Associations.

5. The notice summoning the Annual General Meeting shall be issued not less than six weeks before the meeting and shall be accompanied by an Agenda of the business.

A final Agenda shall be issued a week or ten days before the Annual General Meeting, and may contain new resolutions of an urgent character, if the Central Committee so decide.

6. The Council shall hold not less than two meetings during the year, and any further meeting at their own discretion.

7. The President shall preside at the Annual General Meeting, at Council Meetings and at any Conference called during the year.

ARTICLE VIII.

Standing Orders.

1. At the first meeting of the Central Committee after its election, the members shall elect by vote, a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committee. If at subsequent meetings the Chairman or Vice-Chairman is not present, the Committee shall choose a Chairman for that sitting.

2. The Standing Orders for the conduct of meetings of Committee are those which were adopted at the Special General Meeting held on November 8th, 1918.

3. No alteration shall be made in the Standing Orders except at the Annual General Meeting upon due notice.

ARTICLE IX.

Alterations to Constitution.

No alteration shall be made in this Constitution except at a General Meeting of which due notice shall have been given, and upon a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.