

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S RURAL INSTITUTES

FEDERATION CONSTITUTION

Federation name:

Registered charity no. (OSCR)

AIMS

The aims of the federation shall be:

a) to advance the education and training of women who are members who live and work in the country or are interested in

- country life
- home skills
- family welfare
- citizenship

b) to promote the preservation and development of Scotland's traditions, rural heritage and culture.

1. STRUCTURE

1.1 A federation consists of four or more institutes and all members of those institutes.

1.2 A federation may be divided into groups for more efficient working, but no alteration may be made in the representation on Central Council. Central Councillors represent the federation as a whole. Groups are accountable through the federation.

2. POWERS AND DUTIES

2.1 Federations shall be responsible for

- organising the formation of new institutes;
- maintaining the efficiency of existing institutes in the federation;
- encouraging and developing institute activities;
- arranging federation meetings and schools, shows, competitions, educational excursions, etc.

2.2 The Federation Executive Committee shall have the power to

- suspend a member within the federation. It shall be open to the member concerned to appeal to Central Council, or to the Central Council Executive Committee, for reinstatement no later than six weeks before the date of either meeting;
- recommend to Central Council the removal of any institute in the federation from the SWRI organisation, such institute to have the right of appeal to the Central Council no later than six weeks before the date of the next meeting.

3. FINANCE

3.1 The federation sets its own annual subscription and should ensure that it covers the Central Council levies according to the number of institute members in the federation.

3.2 No institute shall be deemed part of the federation until the subscription for the current year is paid.

3.3 Federations are responsible for payment of Central Council levies based on the membership of its institutes for the previous year.

3.4 New institutes will be excused ONE payment of federation and Central Council levies (i.e. the whole of the first subscription paid by members of a newly formed institute is retained by the institute).

3.5 Fundraising for the federation funds must be given priority.

3.6 Fundraising for other organisations or charities is not one of the organisation's aims. Any donations for other organisations or charities should be specifically raised and not given from federation funds.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 Federations should have at least two meetings in the year, one of which must be the annual business meeting.

4.2 Additional meetings should be called if requested by the Chairman or the majority of the members.

4.3 Only the elected institute delegates and ex officio members have the power to vote.

4.4 If space allows, vacant places should be made available to institute observers.

5. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

5.1 Each federation will hold an annual business meeting.

5.2 At least six months before the annual business meeting, the following points shall be put to the federation by the Chairman

- each institute is responsible for the election of the new committee;
- every institute member is expected to serve on the committee, if elected;
- it is advisable that no member should serve on the committee, or hold office, for more than three years without a break of one year, unless progressing to higher office;
- the number of positions requiring to be filled;
- tellers must be appointed by the federation to count the votes;
- the tellers should be non members;
- each institute shall receive a nomination form and, thereafter, a voting paper;
- the Chairman and office-bearers of all out-going committees shall hold office until the end of the business meeting at which the new committee is elected. This does not apply to an organising or paid secretary who should attend all meetings of committees and sub committees.

5.3 Agenda for business meeting

- counting by tellers of votes for vacant positions;
- minutes of previous business meeting;
- Secretary's report;
- Treasurer's report and independently examined accounts;
- discussion of reports;
- adoption of reports (to be moved and seconded);
- Chairman's address, including votes of thanks;
- announcement of names of new committee;
- any correspondence or ordinary business, that may have arisen, shall be dealt with.

5.4 Election of office-bearers

a. At the annual business meeting, office-bearers are elected by ballot vote: Chairman, Vice-Chairman/men, Secretary, Treasurer (*the offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined*).

b. Each federation may decide on the most appropriate term of office for its office-bearers.

c. Voting Procedure

To vote, each institute shall

- put a cross (X) opposite the names of those chosen for election from those who are shown as eligible on the voting paper;
- bring or send this marked voting paper to the secretary in a sealed envelope in sufficient time for it to be included in the election. (*Care must be taken not to give too many votes – thus, if the committee consists of nine members, not more than nine crosses may be put on the voting paper and not more than one vote may be given to the same person.*) A voting paper is disqualified if too many votes are recorded on it, or if it is signed.

The federation shall

- put all voting papers, duly marked, in a ballot box provided for the purpose and give to the teller;
- appoint the members receiving the greatest number of votes to the new committee;
- treat the number of votes cast for each member as confidential;

The tellers shall

- disqualify a list if too many votes are recorded on it, or if it is signed;
- treat the number of votes cast for each member as confidential;

- ensure that the voting papers are put in a sealed envelope and handed to the Federation Secretary, who should retain them for three months.

6. COMMITTEES

6.1 The Federation Committee shall

- fix its own time and place for meetings;
- be elected by the institutes;
- consist of such representation from the institutes as may be decided by the federation. It is desirable that these representatives be members of their institute committee. Federation office-bearers and Central Councillors shall be ex-officio members of the committee with voting powers;
- have power to co-opt members, who shall not have voting powers, except on sub-committees.

6.2 Federations may find it convenient to have an Executive Committee, consisting of the federation office-bearers, including the Federation Chairman, Vice-Chairman/men, Central Councillors and such other members as desired.

6.3 A proportion of the committee members, at the discretion of the federation, shall retire in rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for a set period decided by each federation.

7. SUB COMMITTEES

The committee has the power to appoint sub-committees. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman/men, Secretary and Treasurer shall be ex-officio members, with voting powers, on all sub-committees.

8. QUORUM

A majority of the committee constitutes a quorum.

9. HANDCRAFTS AND HOUSEWIVES GUILDS

9.1 Handcrafts Guilds may be formed to encourage interest in arts and crafts, with a view to maintaining the best traditions of handwork among members.

9.2 Housewives Guilds may be formed to encourage interest in home skills.

9.3 The respective guilds arrange tests, classes, schools, etc.

9.4 The Handcrafts and Housewives Guild subscription shall be not more than the amount determined by Central Council.

10. CENTRAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

10.1 Federations shall elect Central Councillors for three years in proportion to the number of members in the federation, as follows

up to 400 members	1 Central Councillor
401 to 1000 members	2 Central Councillors
1001 to 1500 members	3 Central Councillors
1501 and over	4 Central Councillors

10.2 At the Central Council meeting, each federation will have one vote only, cast by the Central Councillor appointed by the federation to do so.

10.3 Every third year, each federation shall ask its institutes for nominations to Central Council.

10.4 The list of nominations thus received shall be circulated to the institutes, who shall instruct their delegates how to vote.

10.5 The election shall be by ballot, and the names forwarded to the General Secretary by 10 December to enable the complete list of names to be sent to federations in the following January.

10.6 Any federation submitting names after 10 December will not be represented on Central Council. It shall be open to the federation concerned to appeal to the first Central Council meeting of the new triennium.

10.7 Federation employees are not eligible for election to Central Council.

10.8 Each federation shall have power to send two observers to the annual meeting of Central Council. A Federation Chairman, who is not a Central Councillor, shall automatically be one of the two observers allowed to attend. Where a federation does not wish to send observers, the vacant places will be made available to additional observers from other federations through the use of a ballot.

10.9 Voting Procedure for Central Councillors

a. To vote, each institute shall

- put a cross (X) opposite the names of those chosen for election from those who are eligible;
- bring or send this marked paper to the federation meeting. (*Care must be taken not to give too many votes – thus, if the federation has two Central Councillors, not more than two crosses may be put on the voting paper and not more than one vote may be given to the same person.*)

b. The federation shall

- appoint tellers, who are not members;
- ensure that voting papers are put in a ballot box provided for the purpose;
- appoint the members receiving the greatest number of votes as Central Councillors;
- treat the number of votes given to each member as confidential.

c. The tellers shall

- disqualify a voting paper if too many votes are recorded on it, or if it is signed;
- confidentially notify the federation secretary of the number of votes given to each member;
- ensure that the voting papers are put in a sealed envelope and handed to the Federation Secretary, who should retain them for three months.

d. Federations shall have the power to send a proxy to a meeting of Central Council in place of an elected member, should the latter be unable to attend, such proxy to be elected by ballot vote at the same time as the Central Councillor.

e. Should a vacancy on Central Council occur between triennial elections, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointment of the proxy, and the federation shall then proceed to elect a new proxy.

11

ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICE-BEARERS

11.1 From the list compiled by the General Secretary, federations shall send to Central Council headquarters, by 1 March, nominations for national office-bearers' vacancies on Central Council, having first ascertained that the nominees have consented to stand for election. Nominations for National Chairman and/or Senior Vice Chairman will be requested should the right of progression not have been applied.

11.2 These nominations shall be issued to each federation at least one month before the new Central Council is due to meet.

11.3 Election will be by ballot.

12.

HONORARY STATUS

12.1 Federations may confer the status of Honorary Chairman, in recognition of exceptional service. Honorary membership cannot be conferred at federation level.

12.2 An Honorary Chairman shall

- take no active part in the general organisation of the federation;
- be allowed to take part in SWRI competitions and to vote in elections;
- receive a special invitation to any function organised by the federation;
- be given a place of honour at such functions;
- not be eligible to stand for election at any other level, e.g. institute, Central Council.

12.3 Honorary status should not be conferred on a Chairman who retires in rotation and is willing to stand again for election when eligible. *As an alternative, loyalty certificates and 'Services Rendered' badges are available.*

13. DISQUALIFICATION OF OFFICE-BEARERS

13.1 The supervision and regulation of charities in Scotland is governed by the terms of section 69 of The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. It is a criminal offence under the Act for anyone to be involved in the management or control of a Scottish charity in certain circumstances.

13.2 SWRI requires that an office-bearer will be disqualified from her post in the event of any of the following circumstances:

- has an unspent conviction for dishonesty or an offence under the Act;
- is an undischarged bankrupt;
- removal under either Scottish or English Law or the courts from being a charity trustee;
- disqualified from being a company director;
- having been imprisoned;
- has become of unsound mind, as evidenced by a medical certificate;
- grossly neglects the duties as an office-bearer; or
- acts in such a way as to bring the reputation of the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes into disrepute.

13.3 In any other circumstances, suspension of any institute member is decided by the Federation Executive Committee.

14. CLOSURE OF THE FEDERATION

14.1 If considering closure, Central Council headquarters must be contacted.

14.2 If closure is inevitable and the federation is a charity, consent must be obtained from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to wind up the federation.

14.3 Should the federation cease to function, its funds, after outstanding accounts have been paid, shall become the property of Central Council headquarters together with all assets, i.e. property, trophies, etc., cheque books, cash books, minute books and vouchers.

15. GENERAL

While leaving complete freedom to individual members, it is inadvisable for federations to affiliate, as corporate bodies, to any other organisation.

Signed on behalf of the Federation Committee (Trustees)

Federation Chairman

Federation Treasurer/Secretary

Date: