

# **Association of Polytheist Traditions Constitution**

## **1. Our AIMS**

1.1 The aims and purposes of the Association of Polytheist Traditions shall be:

To provide a cooperative, non-discriminatory and non-hierarchical resource and forum for polytheists; and to advance public knowledge and understanding of the teachings, beliefs, traditions and practices of the religions and philosophies of polytheists and their communities in Britain and elsewhere in the world,

with the following specific objectives:

- 1.1.1 establishment of places for and means of communication, discussion and networking among polytheists
  - 1.1.2 development and provision of resources and information for polytheists, and for the wider community about polytheist religions, including their distinctive features and common ground
  - 1.1.3 development and furthering of knowledge about polytheisms through primary research into polytheist understandings and practices, past and present
  - 1.1.4 establishment and maintenance of cooperative working with pagan and interfaith, and other religious, organisations to achieve shared aims
  - 1.1.5 presentation of polytheist interests to or within other social and spiritual institutions and organisations as appropriate
  - 1.1.6 ensuring that structures and representations of APT are and remain accountable to the membership, and that the diverse traditions of today's polytheism within APT receive equal and fair treatment and representation within the organisation so that no single tradition may predominate.
- 1.2 In furtherance of the above aims and objectives APT shall have powers including the following:-

- 1.2.1 to establish and provide representative and accountable forums for debate and discussion of polytheism
- 1.2.2 to produce and publish written and other materials to present polytheist understandings and interests publicly; and to contribute to materials produced elsewhere as appropriate
- 1.2.3 to establish communication networks including representatives or spokespersons of polytheist traditions, APT, other pagan organisations or traditions, and other organs of today's society such as media, legal, governmental and educational institutions; and to participate in existing networks as appropriate
- 1.2.4 to establish opportunities for research and debate of polytheist ideas and practices: e.g. sponsorship of primary-sources research and organisation of conferences
- 1.2.5 to provide an information service and maintain a list of speakers and persons practising different polytheist faiths and philosophies and able to present these to or within public bodies, educational bodies, and other interested groups and parties.

## **2. Membership**

2.1 Becoming a member of APT.

- 2.1.1 To become a full member of APT you must be 18 or over, have read the aims of the Association, define yourself as polytheist according to the understanding attached this Constitution as Appendix 3, and sign an oath to endorse and honour those aims.

Full members have the right to attend the AGM, and any EGM or SGM called, to stand for positions on the committee, to nominate, second and vote for candidates in APT elections to the committee, to propose, second and vote on motions for the consideration of the APT membership, to receive communications from APT in electronic or printed form, to attend events organised by APT at a reduced fee and to play a full part in the workings of APT.

- 2.1.2 To become an associate member of APT you must be 18 or over, be interested in learning about polytheism, have read the aims of the Association and agree to endorse and honour those aims. You need to be aware that associate members do not have voting rights.

Associate members have the right to attend the AGM and any EGM or SGM called, to receive communications from APT in electronic or printed form, to attend events organised by APT at a reduced fee and to be notified of the workings of APT.

- 2.2 There are currently two types of membership available.

- 2.2.1 Full members with voting rights and full access to services etc and

- 2.2.2 Associate members with no voting rights who otherwise have full access to services etc.

- 2.2.3 Both memberships currently have the same fee.

- 2.2.4 There shall be NO HONORARY MEMBERS WITH VOTING RIGHTS, nor any other membership giving voting rights without paid, full membership at any time either now or in the future.

- 2.2.5 To change membership rule 2.2.4. requires the agreement of 100% of the membership.

- 2.3 The statements and oaths are to be found at appendix 1 (full membership) and appendix 2 (associate membership)

- 2.4 The Membership Year shall commence on 01 June and expire on 31 May.

- 2.4.1 The membership fee shall be the same for both full and associate members for a full membership year. This Fee shall include the subscription to the Association's periodical newsletter, inclusive of postage and packaging, and shall be set by the Committee each year at an appropriate time.

- 2.4.2 No reduction or remission of membership fees shall be made in respect of persons leaving, resigning or being suspended or expelled from the Association at any time.

- 2.4.3 New members: A new member (i.e. not an existing member renewing their subscription) who joins between either 01 February or the AGM (whichever is earlier) and 31 May shall, upon payment of the membership fee, have an initial membership period which runs until 31 May of the subsequent calendar year.

### **3. Finance**

- 3.1 Elected members of the Committee have their signatures registered with the bank to enable them to sign cheques.

- 3.2 The treasurer shall hold a chequebook, with one of the other signatories also holding a chequebook.

- 3.3 Only one signature is required for 'maintenance' payments with the Committee deciding what constitutes maintenance. A list shall be kept by the Committee members of the organisations or individuals coming under this heading.
- 3.4 Only one signature is required for bills under £50, whether maintenance or not. All other cheques require two signatures.
- 3.5 The Treasurer shall provide a monthly account of incomings and outgoings to each Committee member no later than 5 weeks after the previous monthly statement of account.
- 3.6 The Committee shall appoint an independent auditor each year to examine the annual accounts. This person is to be competent to do the job and shall not be a serving member of the Committee or a known relative or close friend of the treasurer.
- 3.7 Audited annual accounts are to be presented to the Committee no later than 6 weeks before the AGM, and the auditor's comments (if any), sent to members with the AGM agenda and any comments by the Committee.
- 3.8 The annual accounts are an obligatory item on the AGM agenda, and are presented by the treasurer unless there is good reason preventing the treasurer from attending.
- 3.9 If the bank account is likely to become overdrawn, the Committee shall be alerted within 2 days of the Treasurer becoming aware of this, or as soon as possible.

#### **4. The Committee**

- 4.1 APT shall be led by the people filling the posts of Helm and Speaker, equally.
- 4.2 Initially, there shall be no more than 10 members of the Committee, including co-opted members. Two further seats may be added when the membership exceeds 500. No further seats may be added. This rule may only be altered by a vote of two thirds of all members of the APT.

#### **4.3 Job Descriptions:**

- 4.3.1 HELM: the Helm shall have the overall management of the inward facing activities of the APT, including such internal operation and structures required for the organisation of the APT, and the APT officers involved in these activities.
- 4.3.2 SPEAKER: the Speaker shall have the overall management of the outward facing activities of the APT, including interaction with other bodies, organisations and the media, and the APT officers involved in these activities.
- 4.3.3 SECRETARY: the Secretary shall be the recorder, memory and archivist of the APT and be responsible for the creation and maintenance of its records in a legible form and commonly accessible format, and the provision of information from them as directed by the Committee.
- 4.3.4 TREASURER: the Treasurer shall keep the finances of APT in accordance with the rules of this constitution and under the direction of the Committee and in accordance with current legislation.
- 4.3.5 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: the Membership Secretary shall maintain the records of members of APT in a secure fashion and in accordance with current legislation, in such a way as to enable the relevant rules in this constitution to be carried out and to facilitate access to these records for the proper purposes of the APT.

#### **4.4 Election of the Committee:**

- 4.4.1 Five posts are reserved for specific election: Helm, Speaker, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Any candidate may stand for election to one of these posts, or, alternatively, as a candidate for non-specified membership of the Committee. The candidate achieving the most votes in each individual election for a specified post shall be elected to that post. The remaining five seats on the

committee shall be filled from the five candidates standing for non-specified places who achieve the most votes in that category. This is the first selection process.

- 4.4.2 If any places (specified or non-specified) remain vacant, they shall be filled by those candidates not elected through the first selection process, in order of greatest number of votes gained, either until all places on the Committee are filled, or until there are no remaining candidates. This shall be the second selection process.
  - 4.4.3 If there are any remaining places on the Committee, these may be filled by co-opting people onto the Committee, at the discretion of the elected members of the Committee.
  - 4.4.4 If not filled by specific election of candidates to the office, the positions of Helm, Speaker, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary shall be filled by those elected to the Committee. If it is not possible to fill the posts of Secretary, Treasurer or Membership Secretary, and the numbers on the Committee permit it, these posts may be filled by co-option. If it is impossible to elect a suitably qualified person to the post of Treasurer, the Committee may co-opt up to three people they consider suitable to handle the various tasks involved. At least one of these people (whichever one the Committee agrees on for any given meeting) shall attend Committee meetings to discuss financial matters.
  - 4.4.5 Candidates for Committee posts must obtain a nominator and a seconder from among the membership of APT. These nominations (and a candidate's statement of no more than 200 words) shall be sought by the Secretary 3 months before the AGM for a period of one month and may be sent by the candidate directly to the Secretary, and the names of the nominator and seconder and their email or postal addresses as applicable.
  - 4.4.6 These nominations may be sent by email or post: if by email, then using the candidate's normal email address, which has been made known to the APT. If any of these people (the candidate, nominator or seconder), does not have an email address, written confirmation of support for the candidate standing for the post must be sent to the Secretary within the time limit for submitting the nomination. The Secretary shall then seek confirmation of those persons' current membership from the Membership Secretary.
  - 4.4.7 Postal voting shall commence one month prior to the AGM and close no later than 3 days before the AGM. Postal votes shall be opened at the AGM and added to votes cast in person at the AGM, and the results of the elections announced at the AGM.
  - 4.4.8 Those seeking election should make every attempt to attend the AGM or otherwise inform the Secretary if they have an interest in a particular post on the Committee, should they be elected. This information must be passed on to the newly elected Helm as soon as the results of the elections have been announced.
- 4.5 Co-opted members have the same rights and duties as other members of the Committee, including voting rights.
  - 4.6 Where voting is tied, either the committee will defer the business for further consideration or, if the majority of those present prefer, make the casting vote by tossing a coin.

## **5. Meetings**

### **5.1 Committee Meetings**

- 5.1.1 The quorum for a meeting shall be 3 if the Committee is 7 or less, or 4 if 8 or more, and must include two out of the following five: Helm, Speaker, Secretary, Membership Secretary or Treasurer. Each member of the Committee must attend

at least 4 meetings out of the 6 and shall be dismissed from the Committee at the occasion of a breach of this rule unless the Committee finds their reasons for not attending the meetings acceptable. This shall not disbar them from standing for the committee again, but they shall be required to make explanation for their failure in their candidate's statement.

- 5.1.2 The Committee shall meet at least 6 times a year to dispose of all outstanding business, and at least two of those shall be face to face. One shall be immediately after the AGM if possible.

Immediately after the election of the Committee, an extra meeting shall take place within the AGM to allocate the roles of Helm, Speaker, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary if no-one has been elected through specific election, or to make other arrangements for the work of the APT to continue uninterrupted until the first Committee meeting can be held.

Meetings shall be held with due consideration of the distance each member has to travel, and a venue sought which is accessible by public transport and to those with disabilities, if at all possible.

- 5.1.3 An agenda for each Committee meeting shall be compiled beforehand by the Secretary and given to Committee members (after agreement with the Helm and Speaker) no later than one week before the meeting (except where the meeting takes place immediately after, or within one week of, the AGM). The Secretary shall enable accurate and adequate minutes of each meeting to be taken, agreed following the meeting with those present, and made available to members in electronic format or in hard copy on request. All committee members shall be able to ask for items to be placed upon the agenda before it is finalised. AOB shall be reserved for items arising after the finalisation of the agenda.

## **5.2 Annual General meeting**

- 5.2.1 The quorum for an AGM shall be 9 full members, of whom at least 3 should be members of the outgoing Committee.

### **5.2.2 Timetable**

- 5.2.2.1 The AGM date, time and potential or actual venue shall be announced to the membership as early as possible, but no later than 3 months in advance.
- 5.2.2.2 Nominations for committee posts shall be submitted 3 months before the AGM for a period of one month, in accordance with Rule 4.4.5. above, and voted on in accordance with Rule 4.4.6.
- 5.2.2.3 Motions for rule changes shall be submitted to the Secretary no later than two months prior to the AGM. These shall name a proposer and seconder to the motion. Motions can be submitted by email by the proposer, using the proposer's normal email address, which has been made known to the APT.
- 5.2.2.4 The agenda for the AGM shall be made available to all members no later than one month in advance.
- 5.2.2.5 Postal votes for elections to committee posts shall be brought to the AGM by the Membership Secretary or his/her representative in accordance with rule 12.2.7 and the results of the elections announced in accordance with Rule 4.4.7.
- 5.2.2.6 The Annual General Meeting shall be held at a venue which is on major transport links.

### **5.2.3 Standing items for the Agenda:**

- 5.2.3.1 presentation and approval of accounts by the Treasurer

- 5.2.3.2 appointment of tellers
- 5.2.3.3 election of the Committee
- 5.2.3.4 proposals for rule changes (to be submitted to the Secretary no later than two months prior to the meeting).

#### **5.2.4 Conduct of Business**

- 5.2.4.1 A chair shall be selected from among the attendees and the chair shall arrange for two people (preferably not standing for election) to count the votes.
- 5.2.4.2 Standing business shall be conducted in the order of 5.2.3 above and in accordance with Standing Orders (see Rule 12.1).
- 5.2.4.3 Motions to change the rules governing the APT must be moved in person by the named proposer, or they fall.
- 5.2.4.4 Business arising during the meeting shall be taken at the discretion of those present.
- 5.2.4.5 After the election, if anyone standing for the Committee was not present at the meeting, the ballot papers shall be retained for 30 days in the event of an appeal.

#### **5.3 Extraordinary General Meeting**

- 5.3.1 An EGM may be called on the authority of the Committee, which preferably should be unanimous on the need for it, at any time to consider urgent matters directly relating to the continuing organisation of APT, but only where these cannot reasonably wait until the next AGM and fall outside the provisions of 5.4.
- 5.3.2 Where the number of Committee members has been or is about to be reduced below the level of functionality (e.g. the Committee will not be able to meet the constitutional requirements for a quorum, or there will be fewer than three Committee members with voting rights), those remaining on the Committee must immediately arrange an EGM for the election of more Committee members. In such a case, nominations and statements shall be sought by the Committee at the time of notification of the EGM for a period of seven days.
- 5.3.3 The Committee shall provide notification of the date and venue, which shall be at a venue which is on major transport links, one month before the EGM unless circumstances demand greater urgency in which case notification must not be later than 15 days before the EGM.
  - 5.3.3.1 The quorum for an EGM shall be the same as the quorum for the AGM, unless the EGM is required to deal with the consequences of an inquorate AGM, in which case the Committee may set a lower quorum. Such a reduction of the quorum, which shall not be to fewer than 5 members, must be agreed by at least two-thirds of the Committee. Should the quorum be reduced, the membership must be informed at the time of notification of the EGM.
- 5.3.4 Where an EGM is called to hold elections after an inquorate AGM, nominations of candidates which fulfilled the requirements of validity for the AGM shall be carried forward as valid nominations for the elections at the EGM.
- 5.3.5 The meeting shall be chaired by the Helm, or by another person elected by the meeting.
- 5.3.6 Should circumstances arise where there is no Committee, for whatever reason, it shall fall to the most recently appointed of the following, in this order, to arrange for an EGM to hold elections in accordance with the preceding rules, or, should the EGM be inquorate, arrange for the winding up of APT in accordance with the provisions of rule 12.3.3:

1. Helm
2. Speaker
3. Secretary

Should none of those most recently holding these offices be available, able or willing to undertake this responsibility, then the Founder Members of the organisation shall appoint someone. Should the Founder Members find themselves unable to agree on a person to do this, the responsibility shall then fall on the Founder Member with the lowest membership number, and so on, until a Founder Member is available, able and willing to undertake this. Where there are no Founder Members remaining in membership, it shall fall to the member with greatest seniority (i.e. length of membership and lowest member number), and so on, until someone is available, able and willing to undertake this.

#### **5.4 Special General Meeting**

- 5.4.1 An SGM may be raised to move a vote of no confidence against a specific officer on the Committee, or to debate one specific item of urgent business. Urgent business shall be defined as business relevant to the aims of APT and which seriously affects most of its members, and which has a deadline for response before the next AGM.
- 5.4.2 An SGM shall be held if 25 members petition the Secretary, specifying which officer or what motion pertaining to business the SGM shall relate to. No more than one SGM may be held in any 12 months.
- 5.4.3 The Secretary shall have 15 days to satisfy him/herself that the petition is valid.
- 5.4.4 The Secretary shall arrange for the SGM to be held within 60 days of the petition, at a weekend which is not a bank holiday weekend, and at a venue which is on major transport links. Members shall be notified of the SGM within 30 days of the petition being received, and of the date and time and potential venue. The venue shall be confirmed no later than 15 days prior to the meeting.
- 5.4.5 The quorum of the SGM shall be 25 members, of whom at least 15 are signatories to the petition, and 3 must be existing Committee members.
- 5.4.6 A Chair shall be elected by those present at the meeting and business shall be conducted in accordance with standing orders. If the vote of no confidence is carried, that officer ceases to be on the Committee with immediate effect, and the Committee shall fill the job from within its ranks or by co-option.
- 5.4.7 If the officer subject to a petition be the Secretary, the Committee shall be empowered to suspend the Secretary and appoint a substitute for the purposes of 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4.

### **6. Disciplinary code**

#### **6.1 Scope**

All members of the APT without exception shall be subject to the provisions of the Constitution and any rules made thereunder.

#### **6.2 Offences**

Any APT member can be subject to disciplinary action if they deliberately or accidentally:

- 6.2.1 act in any way contrary to the aims of APT, or
- 6.2.2 act in any way that interferes with the APT in the pursuit of its aims, activities, business, or in the running of its meetings
- 6.2.3 act in any way that could bring the APT into disrepute;

6.2.4 act in contravention of any properly enacted APT provision, rule, regulation or bye-law currently in force.

### **6.3 Misconduct, neglect and incompetence**

6.3.1 Any APT officer may be subject to disciplinary action if they:

- 6.3.1.1 deliberately or accidentally fail to carry out their duties in an appropriate manner and in accordance with the provisions of their job descriptions or the Constitution;
- 6.3.1.2 deliberately or accidentally act in excess of the powers and authorities delegated to that officer;
- 6.3.1.3 deliberately refuse to carry out legitimate instructions issued through the appropriate APT channels;
- 6.3.1.4 fail repeatedly to attend sufficient of the required meetings necessary for proper execution of their officer role;
- 6.3.1.5 carry out their duties in a manner involving partiality or favouritism.

6.3.2 If any member of the Committee is found guilty of a serious breach of conduct, they shall be disbarred from standing for office for a period determined by the disciplinary decision.

### **6.4 Exceptions to misconduct**

No APT officer may be charged with misconduct for refusing to execute instructions which are contrary to, or fall outside of, the provisions of the officer's job description or Constitution, which are illegal, or which are manifestly impossible or contrary to their health.

### **6.5 Assumption and proof**

6.5.1 All APT members and officers shall be considered innocent until found guilty of any charge brought against them under the provisions of this disciplinary procedure.

6.5.2 The level of proof required shall be the balance of probabilities.

### **6.6 Gravity and malicious prosecution**

This disciplinary procedure shall not be used in pursuit of trivial complaints or malicious or vindictive persecution. To do so wastes valuable APT resources and itself constitutes an offence through interference.

### **6.7 Terms**

Hereinafter, the term 'complainant' shall apply to the APT member bringing a charge, and the term 'defendant' shall apply to the member or officer so charged. The term 'liaising officer' shall apply to an APT Committee member who is neither 'defendant' nor 'complainant', selected from the following in order of preference according to their lack of personal involvement in the case:

- (a) Helm
- (b) Speaker
- (c) Membership Secretary

### **6.8 Disciplinary Procedure**

The complainant shall submit to the secretary a written charge for consideration within 30 days of the alleged offence, or of the discovery of the alleged offence (unless the Secretary is the subject of the complaint, in which case the charge shall be submitted to a Liaising Officer under 6.7). In the first instance the charge shall be submitted for consideration to the liaising officer to consider whether or not the disciplinary procedure should be invoked. If the liaising officer decides to proceed the disciplinary procedure shall be as follows:



### **6.8.1 Appointment of Disciplinary Panel**

6.8.1.1 The liaising officer shall appoint a Disciplinary Panel to process the complaint.

6.8.1.2 The Disciplinary Panel may be a standing Panel already in existence or one appointed specially.

6.8.1.3 No person who is the subject of, or who is initiating, a disciplinary action may serve on the Disciplinary Panel considering that action.

6.8.1.4 The Disciplinary Panel shall consist of three members of the APT Committee.

6.8.1.5 The Liaising Officer may serve upon the Disciplinary Panel as a member.

### **6.8.2 Suspension**

Notwithstanding the provisions of assumption and proof, the Disciplinary Panel shall have the right to consider the seriousness of the charges brought against any member or officer and determine whether or not that person be suspended from their duties, rights or privileges pending further investigation and disciplinary action.

### **6.8.3 Notification of the defendant**

The defendant shall be informed of the charge within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint. If the Disciplinary Panel has seen fit to suspend the defendant then the Defendant shall also be so notified at this time.

### **6.8.4 Submission of defence**

The Defendant shall be given at least 10 days to provide a written reply to the Disciplinary Panel in answer to the charge. A longer time may be specified at the discretion of the Disciplinary Panel.

### **6.8.5 Extra Evidence**

If the Disciplinary Panel considers it necessary, they may at their sole discretion call for statements from witnesses and gather other sources of evidence as they see fit in order to ensure a complete and fair consideration of the case

### **6.8.6 Hearing**

At their sole discretion, the Disciplinary Panel may call for a hearing for the defendant, the complainant, and any relevant material witnesses to give evidence in person to the Disciplinary Panel. At any such disciplinary hearing, both the defendant and the complainant shall each have the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a single representative or supporter who may question evidence relevant to the charges to be considered. No other persons have the right to attend. The Disciplinary Panel shall exercise discretion as to whether any other persons shall be permitted to attend.

### **6.8.7 Oaths**

All APT members giving written or spoken evidence in a disciplinary case, whether as defendant, complainant, or witness, shall do so under an oath of truth that is acceptable to both the member concerned and to the Disciplinary Panel.

### **6.8.8 Verdict**

The Disciplinary Panel shall decide the outcome of the case within 5 days of all the available evidence being acquired and all the arguments being heard. They have the right to choose to do this in closed session.

### **6.8.9 Charge proven**

If the Disciplinary Panel finds the charge proven, they shall impose a penalty commensurate to the offence, taking into account whether or not the offence was deliberate or accidental.

#### **6.8.10 Charge not proven**

If the Disciplinary Panel finds the charge not proven, any suspension of the defendant shall be lifted unless the Panel finds there is another charge to answer. The Disciplinary Panel shall also have the right and duty to decide whether or not the original charge was a malicious prosecution and, if they so find, to impose a penalty commensurate to that offence on the original complainant.

#### **6.8.11 Penalties**

Penalties imposed by the Disciplinary Panel may include:

- 6.8.11.1 Suspension of a member's rights to attend APT meetings, functions or events for a predetermined time or until conditions determined by the Disciplinary Panel have been fulfilled;
- 6.8.11.2 Suspension of a member's APT voting rights for a predetermined time or until conditions determined by the Disciplinary Panel have been fulfilled;
- 6.8.11.3 Expulsion of the member from the APT for life;
- 6.8.11.4 Removal of the APT officer from the post that they occupied;
- 6.8.11.5 Debarment from holding specific officer posts, or all officer posts, either for a predetermined time, or until conditions determined by the Disciplinary Panel have been fulfilled, or for life;
- 6.8.11.6 The issue of a private or public censure of the member by the Disciplinary Panel.

#### **6.8.12 Records**

The Disciplinary Panel has a duty to record their proceedings accurately. The Defendant and Complainant may be allowed access to these at reasonable times during consideration of the case.

#### **6.8.13 Appeals**

All defendants and complainants shall have the right to appeal against the decision of a Disciplinary Panel. They must do so in writing within 5 days of being notified of the verdict and must do so under oath of truth. The only valid grounds for appeal are:

- 6.8.13.1 That the Disciplinary Procedure was not conducted in accordance with these rules;
- 6.8.13.2 That the Disciplinary Panel was unaware of, or failed to take into account significant facts pertaining to the complaint which were already in its possession, or, that significant facts have come to light since the hearing or other decision. Such facts are to be included in the written appeal;
- 6.8.13.3 That a penalty imposed was not commensurate with the offence.

#### **6.8.14 Appointment of Appeals Panel**

- 6.8.14.1 The Liaising Officer shall appoint an Appeals Panel to process the appeal.
- 6.8.14.2 The Appeals Panel may be a standing Panel already in existence or one appointed specially.
- 6.8.14.3 No person who is the subject of, or who is initiating, a disciplinary action may serve on the Appeals Panel considering that action.
- 6.8.14.4 The Appeals Panel shall consist solely of one member of the APT Committee. That member shall not also be a member of the Disciplinary Panel who originally considered the case.
- 6.8.14.5 The Liaising Officer may serve as Appeals Panel member provided they are eligible.

#### **6.8.15 Appeals Process**

The Appeals Panel shall consider in camera the written application with evidence or grounds for appeal together with the records of the case and come to a decision within 5 days

#### **6.8.16 Appeal verdict**

The Appeals Panel shall have the power to overturn or maintain the verdict of the Disciplinary Panel and the power to quash, reduce, maintain or increase any penalty.

#### **6.9 Reimbursement**

An APT member who has had privileges of membership suspended in whole or part as the result of disciplinary action shall not be eligible for any refund of fees or subscription paid by or on behalf of that member.

### **7. Interpretation**

In any case of doubt as to the meaning of any Rule or its applicability to a particular matter, the Committee shall have the power to decide.

### **8. Amendment of Constitution**

No new Rules shall be made nor shall any Rule be amended or deleted unless notice of the proposed change is given to members two months prior to an AGM and the change is agreed by at least two thirds of the members present and voting at an Annual General Meeting.

### **9. Duration of the organisation**

9.1 If there are fewer than 400 members by 2 April 2010, the organisation lapses.

9.2 This clause is not subject to the normal rules governing constitutional change, and can only be changed by the agreement of two thirds of the membership or 200 members, whichever is the larger.

### **10. Surrender of Books etc.**

All members of the Committee who under this Constitution have the custody of any books, documents, records, property or monies belonging to the organisation shall, on request, surrender them to the Committee. They shall also at any time produce them for inspection by the Helm, Speaker or Secretary.

### **General**

11. The Committee shall have the power to deal with any matter not provided for in these Rules.

### **12. Standing Orders**

#### **12.1 Conduct of Meetings**

12.1.1 A Chair shall be elected for each meeting and shall not be a post reserved to any one individual.

12.1.2 The Chair shall order the meeting in order to get through the agenda within a reasonable timeframe, allowing for the comfort and travelling convenience of those present and the work to be done.

12.1.3 The Chair shall arrange for contributions to be made from those who wish to speak in an orderly manner, so that, as far as possible within the time available, all opinions shall be heard on each item on the agenda, but that people are not permitted to be excessive in their contributions to the debate.

- 12.1.4 The Chair shall sum up the feeling of the meeting on any item and propose a solution, taking all views into account. If necessary, a vote shall be taken. If the meeting is unable to decide, or the vote is equally split, it shall be put to the meeting that either the matter shall be deferred to the Committee or a sub-committee for further consideration and return to the meeting or a decision elsewhere, or if the majority of those present prefer, that the matter be decided by the tossing of a coin.
- 12.1.5 The Chair shall ensure that an appropriate record is kept of the meeting and the decisions made, and such record be available to the members electronically, or on request, by hardcopy. The Chair shall agree the record with the record-keeper prior to distribution of the record to the members. If anyone present at the meeting feels the record is inaccurate or incomplete in such a way as to materially misrepresent part of the discussion or a decision, they shall inform the Secretary, who shall agree any change of the minutes with those present prior to distribution of the minutes.

## **12.2 Voting**

- 12.2.1 Voting in all APT elections and on all APT proposals is restricted to paid-up FULL members who have completed the required waiting period.
- 12.2.2 The required waiting period is 10 full months from the date of membership as recorded by the Membership Secretary, or, if the AGM is brought forward to within 10 months of June 1st, the period between June 1st and the AGM.
- 12.2.3 Members must have sent a valid cheque or other money order or have paid in cash in person (do NOT send cash by post) for the full subscription. The subscription must have been received ten months before any AGM, EGM or SGM.
- Cheques or other money orders which subsequently 'bounce' shall invalidate the membership and the nominations etc and any votes cast.
- 12.2.4 If a member attends a meeting in person, they may not also vote by post. Proof of membership shall be required before attendance is allowed at meetings.
- 12.2.5 Counting of Votes
- 12.2.5.1 Each teller shall count the votes cast in person and agree, between them, the number of votes cast for each candidate or for each motion.
- 12.2.5.2 At least two tellers shall be appointed at the AGM by the voting members present. If possible, the tellers should not be candidates for posts in the election to be counted, nor the movers of any motions before the AGM.
- 12.2.5.3 The tellers shall be the only people to open the postal votes and shall add them to the votes cast in person to arrive at a final tally and result, by agreement. If they are unable to agree there shall be a recount until they can agree.
- 12.2.5.4 Candidates for posts shall leave the room while votes for the post they are standing for are counted.
- 12.2.5.5 All counting of votes must be done in public at the meeting. If there is a challenge to the count, the tellers may be replaced by two others in accordance with 12.2.5.2.
- 12.2.6 Electronic communication may be used at the discretion of APT but once downloaded, completed voting forms must be returned by POST and signed by the full members concerned.
- 12.2.7 For postal voting, i.e., for persons without email, double envelopes shall be issued by the Membership Secretary to members for their use to enable secret voting. The voting forms, in their outer envelopes, shall be brought unopened to

the AGM by the Membership Secretary or the Membership Secretary's representative and opened, validated against the current membership list and counted in public by the tellers. Where the member has chosen to use only one envelope, the vote shall still be valid.

- 12.2.8 Voting forms deemed by the tellers to be 'spoilt' shall not be valid and shall not be counted. Voting forms shall be deemed to be spoilt where more votes are cast than should have been cast, or where it is impossible to be certain what vote was made.
- 12.2.9 Nomination forms, proposal forms and voting forms shall be sent to the correspondence address nominated by the member. APT is not responsible if these forms do not arrive.
- 12.2.10 APT accepts no responsibility for lost or late-delivered forms. Only proposals on official forms or photocopies of official forms are acceptable.
- 12.2.11 Timetable for AGMs
  - 12.2.11.1 Electronic communication may be used at the discretion of APT but once downloaded, completed forms must be returned by POST and signed by the full members concerned.
  - 12.2.11.2 Nomination forms for Committee posts will be sent out with membership documents on receipt of subscription or by 1st January of each year.
  - 12.2.11.3 Completed Committee election forms must be received in accordance with Rule 4.4.5. by 31st January of each year. Proof of posting is not proof of delivery. APT accepts no responsibility for lost or late-delivered forms. Only nominations on official forms or photocopies of official forms are acceptable. Copies of these forms can be printed off electronically from the APT website.
  - 12.2.11.4 Motion proposal forms will be sent out with membership documents on receipt of subscription or by 1st January of each year.
  - 12.2.11.5 Completed Motion proposal forms must be received signed by the proposer and (preferably) by the seconder – by 31st January of each year. Proof of posting is not proof of delivery. APT accepts no responsibility for lost or late-delivered forms. Only proposals on official forms or photocopies of official forms are acceptable. Copies of these forms can be printed off electronically from the APT website.
  - 12.2.11.6 An AGM shall take place each April, unless the Committee shall, with good reason, determine otherwise.

### **12.3 Miscellaneous**

- 12.3.1 Each version of the Constitution and membership forms shall be dated using day, month and year, and given a consecutive version number using the format "X.XX", where the "X" before the dot represents a substantial change to the meaning or application of part of the constitution, and the "X" after the dot, a minor change such as an updating or other correction.
- 12.3.2 The Secretary shall retain a record of every version of the constitution and membership forms.
- 12.3.3 Where, under rule 9.2. or 5.3.7 APT is dissolved:
  - 12.3.3.1 The property of the organisation will be offered for sale to the members with a description of the property and on the basis of 'caveat emptor'.
  - 12.3.3.2 The method of sale will be by either by inviting sealed bids, or by ebids, or by auction at the final meeting of the organisation, whichever is agreed by the Committee. The buyer shall make their own arrangements to collect the property or pay for postage.

- 12.3.3.3 If, after selling the property of the organisation, the liquid assets amount to more than £5 per member, the assets shall be divided equally between all members, with a cheque being sent to each. The bank account of the organisation shall then be closed.
- 12.3.3.4 If, after selling the property of the organisation, the liquid assets amount to less than £5 per members, the assets shall be donated to a charity or charities. The charities, and amounts to go to each, shall be decided by the members at the last meeting of the organisation or, if this is not possible due to the timing of the last meeting, be selected by the Committee. The bank account of the organisation shall then be closed.
- 12.3.3.5 Where APT is dissolved in accordance with rule 5.3.7, any duties and responsibilities placed on the Committee by the various parts of rule 12.3.3 shall fall upon the member who has been designated as responsible under the provisions of rule 5.3.7.

**APPENDIX 1 – STATEMENT AND OATH FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP**

**FULL MEMBER**

I have read the aims of the association.

I am a polytheist.

I would like to be considered for full membership of the Association of Polytheist Traditions (APT).

I agree that APT may maintain essential records in either printed or electronic form containing my name and address and other contact details. I understand that reasonable care shall be taken to ensure that these details remain confidential and shall not be sold or otherwise misused.

I understand that voting rights and the rights of nomination etc. of candidates and the proposals etc. of motions shall only be granted after 10 months of membership.

"I pledge before my gods that I shall endorse and honour the aims of APT as they currently stand."

signed ..... date.....

(full legal name in BLOCK CAPITALS).....

preferred name if different from the above.....

Correspondence address (BLOCK CAPITALS)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

POST CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate email address (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2 – STATEMENT AND OATH FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

I have read the aims of the association.

I am interested in learning more about polytheisms.

I would like to be considered for associate membership of the Association of Polytheist Traditions (APT).

I agree that APT may maintain essential records in either printed or electronic form containing my name and address and other contact details. I understand that reasonable care shall be taken to ensure that these details remain confidential and shall not be sold or otherwise misused.

I understand that associate members do not have voting rights.

I agree to endorse and honour the aims of APT as they currently stand.

signed ..... date.....  
(full legal name in BLOCK CAPITALS)

preferred name if different from the above.....

Correspondence address (BLOCK CAPITALS)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

POST CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate email address \_\_\_\_\_



## **APPENDIX 3 – UNDERSTANDING OF POLYTHEISM**

**Polytheism refers to the honouring of 'many deities', each of whom is experienced and acknowledged as an independent, individual personality, not as an aspect or archetype of something else.**

Polytheist belief systems have a number of deities or sacred beings. Some may have jurisdiction or governance over a large area, others may be associated with (e.g.) a particular river or town, or a particular family. Sacred beings may include spirits, wights, ancestors, 'small gods'. Often individuals within polytheistic cultures will form relationships with a small number of specific goddesses, gods, or other beings while acknowledging their kinship to other discrete entities who are important within the culture, cosmology, and landscape.

In polytheistic cultures, deities are experienced as complex personages. Many have particular skills or abilities but are not restricted to these. A goddess is unlikely to be, for instance, simply a 'goddess of grain' or a 'goddess of weaving', although she may have particular interest in these areas, just as a human musician is also a member of a family and a community, visiting shops and participating in political debates.

Most pre-Christian cultures of Europe, and indeed many cultures around the world, have been and in some cases remain polytheistic. Today many people in the 'Western' world are returning to polytheism. Often they will attempt to reconstruct or re-establish a specific pre-Christian belief system, by studying its history and archaeology, ancient writings (which may or may not be viewed as 'sacred texts'), and the cultures which embraced it, to recreate a living spirituality that works within today's world.

Examples of ancient texts include the Odyssey, Sumerian poems, or the Eddas - writings which make reference to deities and other non-human beings, and give insight into the worldviews of those who composed them.

Individual deities may be known by more than one name, just as human people may be known by different names or titles (Doctor, Dad, etc.) to different individual people. For instance, Odhinn has over 100 names in mediaeval texts, and is a master of disguises. He remains distinct from other gods such as Thor or Vidar, just as a cousin who is an actor (taking many parts) is distinct from other relatives or members of the wider community (including other actors).