



Costume
THE
Society

The Costume Society

Role Description for The Secretary (Honorary Officer and Trustee)

1. The Society

The Costume Society is a membership organisation and Registered Charity whose aim is to promote the study and preservation of historic dress from all periods of time and from across the world.

It values engagement with dress histories by a wide audience of interested individuals and organisations including (but not exhaustively) academics, curators and archivists, designers and makers, collectors and dealers, conservators, re-enactors and performers and those with a passionate interest in the history of clothes.

The society provides its members with events, visits and activities, an annual conference, a peer-reviewed Journal ('Costume' - published twice a year) and a Members' newsletter ('The Thread' - published every six months)

It communicates to members and non-members through its website, social media platforms and Blog.

The society makes Grants for conservation of costume items in Accredited UK Museums, Research expenses, Museum Work Experience and Awards for excellence in design and making with the Patterns of Fashion and Patterns for Performance Awards and subsidized places for students at its annual conference. These are made possible by the generous bequests of former members.

The activity of the society is delivered through a series of sub-committees which focus on Publications ('Costume'); Programme (Events, Study days and the Conference); Grants and Awards and Communications (Website, Magazine, Ambassador network, Blog and social media).

Representatives of these sub-Committees (Officers) attend the Executive Committee alongside the Membership Secretary, the Honorary Officers (Chair, Vice Chair communications, Vice Chair Grants and Awards, Treasurer and Secretary) and the Elected Officers.

2. The Role of the Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the management of the meetings for the Society (Executive Committee Meetings, Trustee Meetings and the Annual General Meeting) and holding the contact details for the Committee Members, ensuring that they are kept up to date and managed in line with GDPR.

The Secretary also manages the relationship between the Society and The Charity Commission for England and Wales. **The Secretary is responsible for the timely submission of the Society's annual return to the Charity Commission for England and Wales**

2.1 Meetings (in general)

The Secretary's role involves considering whether the matters being placed before the meeting are appropriate for that meeting.

The Secretary should check the governing document (Constitution) to see what issues must be covered for each type of meeting. (For example, the approval of its financial statements, the re-election of officers, and the appointment or re-appointment of auditors may have to be conducted at an AGM).

Items should be clearly identified as either for discussion or whether a decision needs to be taken.

The Secretary should check that all relevant papers and/or other supporting material are made available to the charity trustees, Officers and/or Members in good time.

The papers placed before the meeting should:

- comply with any applicable rules or regulations of the charity on the presentation of papers, and
- be received by the Secretary and distributed by them in good time

All supporting documentation should be clearly marked to show:

- the nature and date of the meeting
- the agenda item to which it relates

2.2 Meetings (specifically)

2.2.1 Executive Committee Meetings

Executive Committee Meetings are held three times a year (normally January, May and September) and are either digital or in person (usually at a venue in central London). These meetings bring together the Honorary Officers (Chair, Vice-Chairs, Treasurer and Secretary); The Elected Officers (four members of the Society elected by the AGM for a term of 3 years to represent them at the Executive); The Membership Secretary; The Editors of the Journal and representatives of the Communications, Programme and Grants and Awards Sub-Committees.

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Establishing the date of the meeting and booking the venue (if the meeting is in person) or confirming the online meeting with the officer who holds the society's digital meeting account.
- Sending out and collating the call for standing reports from the attending officers (these are uploaded onto the Committee section of the Society's website)
- Establishing if there are any further reports/papers required in order for the Executive Committee to discharge the business of the meeting and circulating these with the agenda
- Drafting the agenda and agreeing this with the Chair and any appropriate officers
- Circulating the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting to all attendees
- Recording any apologies for absence
- Ensuring that the meeting is quorate
- Ensuring that the Chair does not miss anything from the agenda
- Ensuring that the meeting is recorded in accurate minutes and that these are circulated to all attendees and also uploaded to the website

2.2.2 Trustee Meetings

Trustee meetings involve the Trustees of the Society who are the 'voting members' of the Executive Committee. These are the Honorary Officers (Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer) and the Elected Officers (four members elected for a term of three years by the Membership at the AGM) and are called when discussions or decisions need to be taken either outside of the normal cycle of Executive Committee meetings.

Examples of why these meetings may be held include:

- Discussions regarding the future direction of the Society which may affect Officer roles and should be a matter of confidence
- The need to approve significant financial outlay when the expenditure would fall outside of the normal executive committee cycle
- Approval of the draft accounts in advance of them being sent to the independent accountants
- Matters of performance management

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Establishing the date of the meeting and booking the venue (if the meeting is in person) or confirming the online meeting with the officer who holds the society's digital meeting account.
- Drafting the agenda and agreeing this with the Chair and any appropriate officers
- Preparing reports/papers required in order for the Trustees to discharge the business.
- Circulating the agenda and any associated reports/documents
- Recording any apologies for absence
- Ensuring that the meeting is quorate
- Ensuring that the Chair does not miss anything from the agenda
- Ensuring that the meeting is recorded in accurate minutes and that these are circulated to all attendees.

2.2.3 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The Society is open to all Members to attend.

It is the platform for the Society to present its Accounts for scrutiny and approval by the membership; to elect new or ratify existing officers in their posts/roles, to elect any new Elected Officers (depending on the cycle of existing terms of office) and to receive reports on the activities of the Society and discuss its future plans.

The meeting is usually held in person with members also being able to vote by email or post having received the notice, reports and accounts in advance.

The conclusion of the AGM allows the Society to make its annual return of information to the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Establishing the date of the meeting and ensuring that the proposed venue is suitable and booked.

- Drafting the agenda and agreeing this with the Chair and any appropriate officers
- Sending out and collating the call for standing reports from the officers of the Executive Committee.
- Working with the Treasurer to ensure that the Accounts are available in advance of the meeting.
- Establishing if there are any further reports/papers required in order for Chair to discharge the business of the meeting.
- Establishing whether there are any vacancies in Honorary Officer, Elected Officer or Officer roles. If not then the current post-holders should be proposed for re-election (unless they are The Chair or Elected Officer in their current period of office)
- Ensuring that any vacancies for Honorary Officer, Elected Officer or Officer roles have been advertised and that any candidates are proposed for election by the membership.
- Managing the nomination process for Elected Officers
- Ensuring that the agenda, accounts, ratification documents, reports and minutes of the previous meeting are circulated to all attendees in advance of the meeting
- Managing member votes received by post and/or email as 'proxy votes'
- Recording any apologies for absence
- Ensuring that the meeting is quorate
- Ensuring that the Chair does not miss anything from the agenda
- Ensuring that the meeting is recorded in accurate minutes and that these are circulated to all attendees in advance of the next AGM and also uploaded to the website

2.2.4 Extraordinary or Special General Meeting

An Extraordinary or Special General Meeting (EGM)

The Executive Committee may call a special general meeting of the Charity at any time. If at least 20 members request such a meeting in writing stating the business to be considered the secretary shall call such a meeting. At least 21 days' notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed.

Guidance for the running of meetings from the Charity Commission for England and Wales

1. Establishing a timetable for Meetings

It is advisable to set up a timetable for organising the meeting. Working back from the date the meeting is to be held, the Secretary may need to identify:

- the date notices have to be sent out
- the date documents to be circulated with the notice have to be received
- the date and time of any pre or related meeting, for instance prior to laying the report and accounts before an AGM the charity trustees will need to meet and approve them, and
- where the election of officers is to take place, the date by which nominations have to be received

2. Venue

Wherever practicable, it needs to be accessible by all those entitled to attend, and consideration must be given to the facilities that will be required.

3. Notice

The governing document of a charity may (subject to any statutory requirements) provide one or more ways of 'giving notice' for different types of meetings. If it does not, the charity trustees may by rules or their practice have established procedures for the giving of notice. But they may, in any case, rely on the powers in s. 332(1) of the 2011 Act. This allows for the notice of any meeting to be posted (or delivered by hand) to the address given to the charity by the charity trustees or members. Notices sent by post are considered to have been delivered when the letter containing them would have been delivered in the ordinary course of post. Notices etc can also e-mailed if an email address has been supplied by a trustee or member, provided the recipient has indicated a willingness to receive notices by one or other of these methods. The day when notice is received or expected to be received (for example, in the ordinary course of post) is the date of service.

Section 332(4) of the 2011 Act removes the need to send notice of meetings to charity trustees or members etc whose address is outside the UK. However, the commission recommend that the notice is sent to all members.

It is important to note that where a period of notice refers to clear days, this excludes, as a minimum, the day of service and the day of the meeting itself. The period between the sending of the notice and the day of service needs to be calculated in accordance with the guidance above. Because the method of calculating the period of notice can appear complex, the commission recommend that trustees state clearly what their practice is. It may be helpful to include this information in the notice itself.

4. On the day of the meeting

The Secretary will need to make sure that:

- there are spare copies of all documents needed for the meeting
- arrangements for any vote or poll which may be needed are in place
- the meeting is properly convened
- there is a quorum (and if required, that it is present throughout the meeting)

- apologies for absence are noted
- all decisions made at the meeting are minuted (if the result of a discussion is unclear, clarify decisions with the Chair during the meeting to ensure the minutes are accurate)

If it appears that a matter has been overlooked, the Secretary should draw this to the attention of the Chair.

It should be remembered that decisions reached at a trustee or members' meeting are collective decisions and the decision is binding upon all charity trustees and members. It is for this reason that all charity trustees/members are encouraged to participate in all debates.