

CONSTITUTION – DECEMBER 2009

1. Membership is open to baptised Christians who support our five aims:

To understand and embody the spirituality of the Celtic Saints
To share this spirituality with others
To use Cornwall's ancient Christian holy places again in worship
To promote Cornwall as a place of Christian spiritual pilgrimage
To promote use of the Cornish language in prayer and worship

New members are admitted when we meet at the four major festivals of the Celtic Year after a period of preparation arranged by the Tas/Mam a'n Gowethas (T/MaG).¹

2. Members support the Cowethas in presence, in prayer and financially:

In presence - by undertaking to attend our four quarterly meetings and the annual conference.

In prayer – by praying daily for the Cowethas.

Financially – by a minimum quarterly donation by standing order - £5 unwaged, £10 waged (there is a reduction for joint membership).

3. An enquirer who supports our aims but who does not feel ready to take on any commitments can apply to be made a Friend of the Cowethas. Friends are kept aware of Cowethas events and are welcome to attend them, but they cannot attend the annual conference or attend the Cresen Cowethas.² The T/MaG acts as chair of the Cresen Cowethas and the annual conference; he/she can nominate a member to chair meetings in his/her absence.

4. For the good of the Cowethas or its good name, an individual's membership or status as a Friend or Member can be revoked by a vote of the Cresen Cowethas or at the annual conference. The T/MaG is elected every five years at the annual conference which will normally be held in December. He/she can only be removed by a vote at the annual conference on a seconded motion submitted to all members at least two weeks prior to it. A treasurer for the year is elected at each conference who prepares an annual financial summary for approval at the one following.

5. Decisions are made by consensus whenever possible – major ones (such as changes to our constitution or aims) at the December annual conference, lesser ones in the Cresen Cowethas. A two-thirds majority is required for changes to our constitution and aims and the conference quorum is set at a third of membership.

6. The Cowethas may set up a number of local telyow³ each to be led and co-ordinated by a Tas/Mam a'n Teylu⁴ appointed by the Cresen Cowethas or at the annual conference. Teylow can be described as the task groups of Cowethas Peran Sans. A telyu can meet as often as its members like outside main meetings for prayer, fellowship, discussion and to fulfil its specified purpose.

7. The Cowethas is a Christian fellowship - while we may draw guidance and inspiration from Celtic holy places, texts, folklore and myths, our faith is ultimately and sufficiently defined and determined by the Nicene Creed and the Holy Bible.

8. The fellowship may approach Christians of standing in Cornwall or elsewhere to act as its patrons. A copy of the annual Tas/Mam a'n Gowethas report and an agenda will be sent to them in advance of the conference which they, or their representative, are welcome to attend in a non-voting ex-officio capacity. Conference minutes will be circulated to them. They may withdraw their patronage at any time by writing to the Tas/Mam a'n Gowethas.

9. The Cresen Cowethas may offer associate membership to those who do not live in Cornwall and who therefore cannot attend meetings easily, but who are judged to have earned such membership. Associate members must support our aims, be working in some way to further them, and be helping to publicise the ministry of the Cowethas. The associate member is welcome to attend meetings of the Cresen Cowethas when in Cornwall. A membership subscription is not currently required.

10. Branches of Cowethas Perans Sans may be set up with their own constitutions which must be approved by the Cresen Cowethas. Such branches must follow our customs, and support our five aims. Constitutions must include the text found in paragraph seven of our constitution:

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OUR CUSTOMS

We do not want to be accused of being an alternative church or of having a hidden political agenda.

We want members, friends and enquirers to feel safe from unwelcome or undue pressure, and to avoid the divisions and embarrassment that denominationality can cause.

We are an egalitarian fellowship: in the Celtic tradition, ordination did not necessarily confer a higher status in the community; that came from the acknowledgement of the holiness of an individual, whether lay or ordained, male or female.

We feel people should behave appropriately and respectfully at holy sites whether these are pagan or Christian – we want to be sensitive to the feelings of anyone and everyone in the vicinity who may be there or who may unexpectedly turn up.

Consequently, our customs are that:

Cornish flags are not displayed or flown at our gatherings

Clergy should not seek to minister sacraments to CPS friends or members unless they are fellow members of the congregation of a church or chapel they are appointed to minister to.

Clergy titles are not used within the fellowship, nor are robes

We seek to share our beliefs with others, not to impose them on them

People other than designated speakers do not raise their voices above more than a whisper at our gatherings when we are at a Christian or pagan holy place and we do not take photographs

Mobile phones, iPods etc are switched off and not used from the moment we gather until we disperse

¹ = 'Fellowship Father/Mother'

² = 'Fellowship Centre' = a quarterly informal forum to which all CPS members are invited

³ = 'families'

⁴ = 'Family Father/Mother'