

Constitution of
Pagan Life Rites Ireland

1. The name of the body is Pagan Life Rites Ireland, otherwise abbreviated as Pagan Life Rites.

2. The primary objective is to serve the Pagan community of the island of Ireland by way of providing trained clergy for the administering of traditional religious rites pertaining to birth, marriage, death and rites for other passages in life. In the case of marriage, the traditional religious rite is referred to as Handfasting which is a continuation of Ireland's indigenous wedding rite being that custom first recognised in Brehon law.
 - a) Where an opposite-sex or same-sex couple wishes for their union to be legally recognised in the Republic of Ireland the wedding rite shall be solemnised, in accordance with the Marriage Act, 2015, by a Priestess or Priest whom is registered as a Solemniser with the General Register Office of that jurisdiction in accordance with the Civil Registration Act, 2007.

 - b) Where an opposite-sex couple wishes for their union to be legally recognised in Northern Ireland the wedding rite shall be solemnised, in accordance with the Marriage Order (NI), 2003, or future legislation, by a Priestess or Priest whom is accordingly registered as an Officiant with the General Register Office of that jurisdiction.

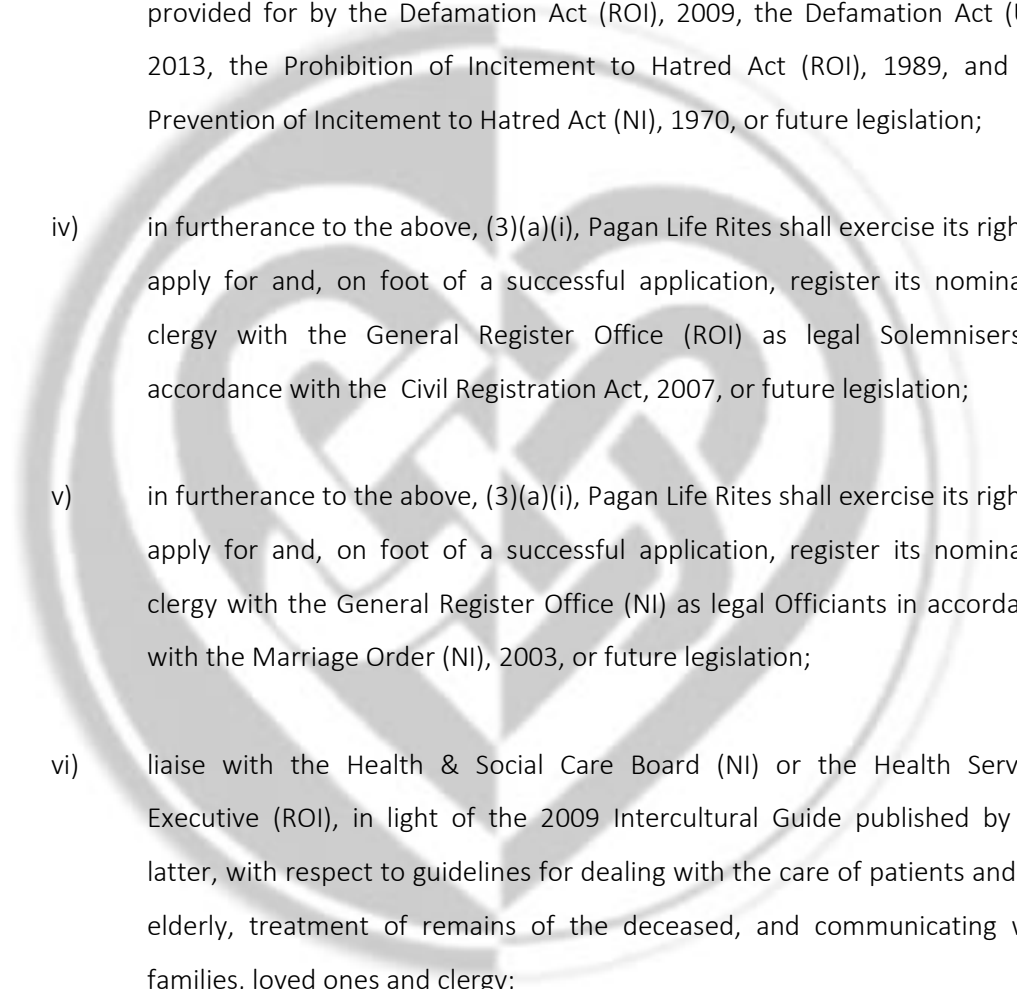
 - c) Clergy registered as a Solemniser with the General Register Office (ROI), or as an Officiant with the General Register Office (NI), shall retain the right to continue conducting *traditional religious rites* of marriage for;
 - i) couples who do not wish for their union to be legally recognised within the jurisdiction of abode;

 - ii) couples seeking to renew vows initially made during their wedding rite;

- iii) same-sex or opposite-sex couples, including transgendered persons, in Northern Ireland who wish to supplement their Civil Partnership with a spiritual dimension.
- d) Should future legislative amendments provide for equal civil marriage in Northern Ireland, registered clergy of Pagan Life Rites shall be happy to oblige in solemnising, in the like manner and to the like extent in all respects of opposite-sex couples, the civil marriages of same-sex couples and transgendered persons.
- e) Couples wishing for their union to be *legally* recognised shall have their requests facilitated where possible without prejudice on the grounds of biological sex, race, ethnicity, disability, family status, political affiliation etc. and subject to the legal criteria for marriage in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. With regard to gender identity, in respect of transgendered persons, or sexual orientation, in respect of same-sex couples, the reader is referred to sections 2(c) and 2(d).
- f) Subject to section 2(e) member clergy shall retain the right to decline requests on a case by case basis or refer requests to another Priestess or Priest.
- g) Clergy registered as Solemnisers with the General Register Office (ROI) shall facilitate ceremonies in a building open to the public or in an outdoor setting in accordance with Section 16 of the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act, 2014.

3. In furtherance exclusively of the foregoing primary object, Pagan Life Rites shall have the following subsidiary objects:

- a) While Pagan Life Rites shall operate primarily as an apolitical entity it shall, should the need arise, engage with media, State agencies, and non-governmental organisations to advocate, assert and protect the rights of the Pagan community of Ireland. In particular, it shall exercise, draw attention to, or initiate any of the following;
 - i) the freedom of religious belief set out in Articles 2 & 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as reflected in Articles 40 (1, 3) & 44 (2) of the Constitution of Ireland, 1937, and Articles 9 & 16 of the Human Rights Act (UK), 1998;

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- ii) the freedom to invoke the protections against religious discrimination in the work place as provided by the Employment Equality Acts (ROI) of 1998 to 2011, the Equal Status Acts (ROI) of 2000 to 2011, Northern Ireland Act, 1998, and the Equality Act (UK), 2010, or future legislation;
 - iii) the right to defend the Pagan community, or individuals therein, from misrepresentation, slander or libel by employing measures of redress provided for by the Defamation Act (ROI), 2009, the Defamation Act (UK), 2013, the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (ROI), 1989, and the Prevention of Incitement to Hatred Act (NI), 1970, or future legislation;
 - iv) in furtherance to the above, (3)(a)(i), Pagan Life Rites shall exercise its right to apply for and, on foot of a successful application, register its nominated clergy with the General Register Office (ROI) as legal Solemnisers in accordance with the Civil Registration Act, 2007, or future legislation;
 - v) in furtherance to the above, (3)(a)(i), Pagan Life Rites shall exercise its right to apply for and, on foot of a successful application, register its nominated clergy with the General Register Office (NI) as legal Officiants in accordance with the Marriage Order (NI), 2003, or future legislation;
 - vi) liaise with the Health & Social Care Board (NI) or the Health Services Executive (ROI), in light of the 2009 Intercultural Guide published by the latter, with respect to guidelines for dealing with the care of patients and the elderly, treatment of remains of the deceased, and communicating with families, loved ones and clergy;
 - vii) make clergy of Pagan Life Rites available to hospitals, retirement homes, and prisons in the capacity of visiting chaplaincy where support is requested.
- b) Pagan Life Rites supports interfaith dialogue amongst Ireland's various indigenous, mainstream and newly arrived spiritual traditions. It celebrates diversity and recognises the deeper and richer cultural capital this offers future generations.

c) Pagan Life Rites is open to engaging with the Department of Education and Skills (ROI), the Department of Education (NI), and the various State agencies and educational institutions thereof, to aid personnel in understanding students and families of Pagan faith amongst school communities. Pagan Life Rites will work to ensure fair and accurate information is used in religious education syllabi where Pagan faith is referred to and included where omitted.

d) Pagan Life Rites is open to requests from media outlets seeking interviews or accurate information on Pagan faith and the nature of the community in Ireland. Pagan Life Rites reserves the right to address any misrepresentation in traditional or digital media platforms, by way of seeking written clarifications or apologies from the author, their employers or the hosting media outlet. Pagan Life Rites reserves the right to invoke appropriate or further measures of redress as outlined in the Defamation Act (ROI), 2009, the Defamation Act (UK), 2013, the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (ROI), 1989, and the Prevention of Incitement to Hatred Act (NI), 1970, or future legislation.

4. To the extent that the same are essential or ancillary to the promotion of the subsidiary objects, (3), Pagan Life Rites hereby sets out the following powers which it may exercise;

a) the right to register, establish and operate as a charitable entity in accordance with the Charitable Status Act, 2009, or future legislation, to raise funds where necessary to support and further current and future objects of the organisation. Current objects, (2, 3), fall within three of the four categories of charity expressed by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, namely;

- i) the advancement of religion;
- ii) the advancement of education;
- iii) other purposes beneficial to the community.

- b) if in the instance of the above, (4)(a), Pagan Life Rites may exercise the right to invite and receive contributions in furtherance of the current objects, (2, 3), and to open a bank account to manage such funds;
- c) to publicise and promote the work of Pagan Life Rites and organise meetings, training courses, events and seminars;
- d) to engage with media, State agencies, and non-governmental organisations, to co-operate with groups of a similar nature, and to cultivate an exchange of information, advice and knowledge;
- e) to commission or conduct research projects deemed relative to the primary and subsidiary objects;
- f) take any form of action that is lawful which is necessary to achieve the primary and subsidiary objects of Pagan Life Rites.

5. The current organisation structure and rules of governance of Pagan Life Rites are as follows:

- a) Of the membership thirteen clergy serve as regional Officers. These positions are rotated annually and succeeded by nominated and willing Priestesses or Priests of the membership.
- b) Such Officers serve the community in their respective regions of abode; the Greater Dublin Area, the South-East, the South, the West, and Northern Ireland.
- c) Member Priestesses and Priests, including nominated Officers, who are registered as Solemnisers with the General Register Office (ROI) may only, in accordance with the Marriage Act, 2015, legally solemnise marriages within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland.
- d) Member Priestesses and Priests, including nominated Officers, who are registered as Officiants with the General Register Office (NI) may only, in accordance with the

Marriage Order (NI), 2003, or future legislation, legally solemnise marriages within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland.

- e) The Board shall preside over the operations of Pagan Life Rites for the duration of its annual tenure. Membership of the Board shall comprise of four willing nominees from the thirteen clergy serving as regional Officers. These positions are rotated annually and determined not more than seven days following determination of the composition of regional Officers. The tenure of the outgoing Board ceases no more than seven days subsequent to the determination of the composition of the incoming thirteen regional Officers.
- f) Pagan Life Rites reserves the right to increase the number of regional Officers in response to community growth and need. The Board shall not comprise of more than four individuals at any time.
- g) Member clergy wishing to register as a Solemniser with the General Register Office in the Republic of Ireland, or register as an Officiant with the General Register Office in Northern Ireland, shall submit a written application to the Board. Recommendations shall be sought and assessments conducted in accordance with the private customs of our traditions. Interested parties shall only be nominated by Pagan Life Rites for registration following deliberation by the Board and on foot of a unanimous decision to proceed. Applicants declined by the Board solely on the grounds of inexperience may submit a subsequent application for consideration following a period of no less than three years. Other than this, decisions are final and cannot be overturned by future Boards.
- h) Subject to character references, clergy registered as a Solemniser with the General Register Office in the Republic of Ireland, or registered as an Officiant with the General Register Office in Northern Ireland, through affiliation with other organisations are free to join Pagan Life Rites. However, such persons wishing to operate as such under the auspices of Pagan Life Rites must officially resign as Solemniser, or Officiant, of the organisation by way of immediate written confirmation to both the organisation and the General Register Office in the relevant jurisdiction. Such persons may then submit an application to the Board of Pagan Life

Rites for nomination as Solemniser or Officiant. The standard assessment procedures of Pagan Life Rites shall apply in all cases and nominations shall only be submitted to the General Register Office in the Republic of Ireland, or the General Register Office in Northern Ireland, if community growth demands additional Solemnisers or Officiants.

- i) Any member is free to terminate their membership with Pagan Life Rites. Those who are clergy and registered as a Solemniser with the General Register Office in the Republic of Ireland, or registered as an Officiant with the General Register Office in Northern Ireland, must submit their resignation in writing to Pagan Life Rites with notice of one calendar month where possible. Pagan Life Rites shall comply with its legal obligations to inform the respective Office immediately. Resigned clergy shall have no power thereafter to legally solemnise marriages in any jurisdiction or hold claim to operate under the auspices of Pagan Life Rites.
- j) Any member may be subject to having their membership with Pagan Life Rites terminated by the Board for criminality or other serious transgressions made in a professional capacity or in other aspects of life. Following consultation with regional Officers, and a fair hearing of the member, a decision shall be made by the Board. Where such a member serves as a regional Officer the remaining regional Officers shall be consulted and a decision shall be made by the Board following a fair hearing of the regional Officer. Where such a member is a serving Board member, the remaining Board members shall consult with all regional Officers and, following a fair hearing of the Board member, a collective decision shall be made. In all such instances a member shall be offered the right of appeal. All appeal decisions are final and cannot be overturned by future Boards. Expelled members who are clergy and registered as a Solemniser with the General Register Office in the Republic of Ireland, or registered as an Officiant with the General Register Office in Northern Ireland, shall have no power thereafter to legally solemnise marriages in any jurisdiction or hold claim to operate under the auspices of Pagan Life Rites. In compliance with legal obligations Pagan Life Rites shall contact the respective Office and request the immediate removal of the expelled member from its register.

6. The income and property of Pagan Life Rites shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the primary and subsidiary objects as set forth in this Constitution. No portion of income or property of Pagan Life Rites shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to the members of Pagan Life Rites. No Officer shall be appointed to any office of Pagan Life Rites paid by salary or fees, or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth from Pagan Life Rites. However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by Pagan Life Rites of:

- a) reasonable and proper remuneration to any member (not being an Officer) for any services rendered to Pagan Life Rites;
- b) interest at a rate not exceeding 5% per annum on money lent by Officers or other members to Pagan Life Rites;
- c) reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any member (including any Officer) to Pagan Life Rites;
- d) reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any Officer in connection with their attendance to any matter affecting Pagan Life Rites;
- e) fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any company of which an Officer may be a member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such company.

7. If upon the winding up or dissolution of Pagan Life Rites there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of Pagan Life Rites. Instead, if Pagan Life Rites has acquired legal charity status by this time, such property shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having primary or subsidiary objects similar to the primary or subsidiary objects of Pagan Life Rites. The institution or institutions to which the property is to be given or transferred shall prohibit the distribution of its or their income and property among its or their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on Pagan Life Rites under or by virtue of the above clause, (6), hereof. Members of Pagan Life Rites shall select the relevant institution or institutions at or before the time of dissolution, and if

and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the property shall be given or transferred to some charitable object.

8. Should Pagan Life Rites acquire legal charity status, no addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to or in the provisions of this Constitution for the time being in force unless the same shall have been previously approved in writing by the Revenue Commissioners.

9. Should Pagan Life Rites acquire legal charity status, the keeping of Accounts Annual audited accounts shall be kept and made available to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners on request.

