



**VICTORIA PARK & CONNSWATER**

**ATHLETICS CLUB**

BASED IN

VICTORIA PARK

Park Avenue, Belfast BT4 1JT

# **CLUB CONSTITUTION**

(As amended in 2023)

## **PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND IDENTITY OF THE CLUB**

- Article 1      The name of the club is Victoria Park & Connswater Athletics Club – Belfast, hereafter referred to as VPCAC
- Article 2      The club motto is “Training with Lions”.
- Article 3      The club colours shall be Maroon and Turquoise and the club emblem shall be the image of a lion.
- Article 4      The club vest shall be the club colours and bear the emblem as outlined in Article 3 of this Constitution and where possible club shorts and bottoms shall be predominantly Black.
- Article 5      VPCAC is a running club for adults (18 years’ old is the minimum age) whose purpose is to provide, in East Belfast, the appropriate structures and culture through which all its members irrespective of their abilities receive the support that they need to continuously improve on their individual and club’s team performances.
- The club objective is to promote strong club’s representation in athletics competitions including championships at local, regional, national and where possible international level.
- The culture and values specific to VPCAC are shared through regular participation both at the club’s training sessions (refer to Article 2) and target club’s competitions where members benefit from the support of each other.
- To achieve its objectives and run the club efficiently (including raising the sufficient funds), VPCAC requires its members to volunteer and to be active ambassadors of the club in its hosting community.
- Article 6      Once a member of VPCAC, the club shall not discriminate against anyone based on age, gender, ability, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Article 7      VPCAC shall be affiliated to Athletics Northern Ireland and be bound by its rules and regulations.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- Article 8      Applications for membership of VPCAC shall be open to everyone and anyone. The club shall not discriminate against anyone based on age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation. However, the club will be

mindful, before accepting applications for membership, of inclusivity and diversity values. The club will also be mindful of the spectrum of abilities as well as number of athletes it is capable to accommodate at the time of the application, always bearing in mind the club's objectives in Article 5.

- Article 9 A candidate for membership must first fill out the VPCAC Membership Application Form. This form shall then be submitted to the Committee for approval. The Committee will review the application. Upon approval of membership, the candidate becomes full member of VPCAC and is subsequently required to uphold the Constitution and Code of Conduct as well as to promote the club objectives as outlined in Articles 5 and 6 of this Constitution.
- Article 10 Each member of VPCAC shall be required to pay an annual club membership fee to be proposed by the Committee based on the finance and budgetary status of the club. Proposed changes to the fee structure shall be put to a vote at the AGM.
- Article 11 The membership fee structure shall be divided into two classes:  
[a] The full fee shall apply to all members at the exception of those members falling in the classes [b] and [c]  
[b] A reduced fee shall apply to students, unemployed and junior (18-21 years old) members. At the discretion of the Committee, a reduced fee may also apply to members with special circumstances.  
[c] No membership fee shall be charged to the club's founder and the club's president and the club shall pay for their annual registration with ANI.
- Article 12 Personal disputes between members must be kept personal and must not become club issues in order to maintain the cohesion and unity of VPCAC.
- Article 13 Any member who knows of another member having broken the VPCAC Code of Conduct or the VPCAC Constitution has a responsibility to inform a member of the Committee regarding the alleged breach.
- Article 14 All members must declare when taking or renewing the membership that they shall adhere to VPCAC's Constitution and Code of Conduct.

#### **COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE AND NON-COMMITTEE ROLES**

- Article 15 All competitive members of good standing and having held a non-Committee officer role for at least six months are eligible to be considered for election to the VPCAC Committee.
- Article 16 The Committee shall consist of the following persons:

Chairperson  
Club Secretary  
Treasurer  
Membership Secretary  
Club Captain

The Committee reserves the right to create sub-committees and non-committee roles as appropriate to meet the needs and objectives of the club.

The person appointed by the Committee to be the coordinator of a sub-committee will automatically be co-opted (with voting rights) to the main Committee.

Non-Committee roles may include:

Head Coach  
Club Coach  
Welfare Officer  
Information, Marketing & Media Officer  
Community and Social Officer  
Environmental Officer  
Kit, Equipment and Merchandising Officer  
Jog Belfast Coordinator  
Connswater 5 Mile Race Director  
Relays Race Director

The Committee may temporarily co-opt any of the non-committee officers as and when required at its sole discretion, but the co-opted persons would normally have no voting rights unless the Committee unanimously approves otherwise.

Article 17      The Committee shall meet generally monthly but no less than ten times per year. There shall be a quorum of minimum three voting members.

Article 18      The Chairperson shall be responsible for chairing the Committee meetings as well as club's AGM and EGM meetings. The Chairperson shall be responsible for representing the club externally and with Athletics NI. He will ensure that the club objectives detailed in Article 5 and 6 of this Constitution are upheld. The VPCAC Role Descriptions document details further the responsibilities of the Chairperson. Any member elected to the position of Chairperson will have been considered to have forfeited its voting rights for the duration of the tenure. In the event of a deadlock vote, the Chairperson may be bestowed with a casting vote if either of the Committee or the members represented at the AGM and EGM deem it appropriate.

- Article 19 In the event the chairperson is unavailable for a meeting, the remaining Committee members shall agree the Acting Chairperson from this group. The Acting Chairperson shall have no voting rights unless a deadlock situation arises.
- Article 20 The VPCAC Role Description document details the responsibilities of the other Committee members i.e., for the roles of Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary. The Role Description document also outlines the responsibilities of the non-Committee roles. The Committee reserves the right to amend the role descriptions document as it deems appropriate. The club Secretary is the custodian of the Role Description document which shall be shared upon request from any member.
- Article 21 The Committee shall promptly inform the members the persons it appoints for non-Committee officers.
- Article 22 The Committee shall call an EGM should a Committee role becomes vacant and requires to be backfilled before the next AGM, in order to submit a replacement to the vote of the members.
- Article 23 VPCAC shall aim at limiting the tenure of the Chairperson to two or three years, It shall also adopt a Committee appointment and rotation policy that reflects diversity and inclusivity.
- Article 24 No Committee member shall hold more than one position, however where circumstances prevail, existing Committee members can hold a maximum of two positions until all positions are filled. Committee members may also fulfil non-Committee roles in addition of their Committee roles when there are difficulties to fill such roles with appropriate candidates.
- Article 25 Any person in a Committee or non-Committee role shall see its position suspended should that person be subject to a disciplinary investigation. Should the investigation results in the alleged disciplinary breach being confirmed, the concerned person will permanently lose its position and will not be eligible for election to the Committee or hold a non-Committee role until the Committee allows otherwise.

## **THE AGM AND ELECTION PROCEDURES**

- Article 26 For a candidate to be eligible to any of the positions on the Committee, a member must first propose their nomination, and another member (who is neither the proposer nor the candidate) must second the nomination. The

proposer and the seconder must be themselves be members in good standing.

- Article 27      Members who
- have fees outstanding, or
  - who are subject to a disciplinary procedure, or
  - have been disciplined, or
  - have been members of the club for less than six months.
- shall not be deemed to be in good standing.
- Article 28      All applications for election to the Committee must be submitted to the Secretary no less than 2 weeks before the date of the AGM. Any applications received after this date will be considered null and void, unless there are no candidates for that position.
- Article 29      It will be the responsibility of the Secretary to compile the list of candidates and ensure the good running of the election procedure.
- Article 30      After the presentation of the Annual Financial Report by the Treasurer and the Annual Report by the Chairperson, all positions on the Committee will be declared vacant and the Secretary will propose a member in good standing to act as the Clerk whose role shall be to count the votes by show of hands. Elections shall then take place one at a time for each position in the order they appear in Article 16. The Clerk shall count the for and against votes in each election and declare the position filled by the successful candidate.
- Article 31      The election of the VPCAC Committee roles shall take place once a year at the club AGM.
- Article 32      The AGM shall be held before the 30th April of each year, but no sooner than 10 months after the last AGM.
- Article 33      The AGM shall have a quorum of 25 % of the total number of members in good standing

## **MOTIONS**

- Article 34      Any member in good standing may propose a motion for discussion at a general meeting in writing seconded by another member in good standing. Committee members may propose a motion for discussion without a seconder. All proposals for motions must be submitted to the Secretary no later than 7 days before the date of the AGM.
- Article 35      Motions shall be discussed in an open floor format after the presentation of the motion by the proposer. All comments are to be made through the Chair.

When all comments have been suitably expressed, the motion shall be moved to vote. For and against votes shall be counted by the Secretary via a show of hands.

Article 36 All motions must comply with the Constitution, the Code of Conduct, and the rules and regulations of Athletics Northern Ireland. Any motion which does not comply to these three shall be considered null and void, regardless of the outcome of the vote.

## **CLUB DISCIPLINE**

Article 37 Any member alleged or found to have broken the VPCAC Code of Conduct shall be invited to meet with the Committee or a disciplinary panel appointed by the Committee to give their account. Members of the Committee or any proposed person in the proposed panel shall declare any conflict of interest. When a conflict of interest exists or is alleged, the person at risk of being conflicted shall not be allowed to participate in the disciplinary proceedings. Failure to declare a conflict of interest shall in itself constitute a disciplinary matter.

Article 38 The Committee shall determine whether or not the rules have been broken and decide which follow up action is appropriate.

Article 39 If the Committee is satisfied that an offence or misconduct has been committed by a member, then it may impose one or more of the following actions:

- i. Formally warn the member concerned as to future conduct;
- ii. Suspend or disqualify the member from club training, competition, club coaching and/or administration for some definite or indefinite period;
- iii. Recommend to Athletics Northern Ireland that the member be disqualified from any involvement in athletics for some definite or indefinite period and/or;
- iv. Terminate the membership;
- v. Notifying Police and/or taking legal action;
- vi. If the complaint is deemed malicious, the Committee have the right to suspend or disqualify the complainant from the club.

Irrespective of the severity of the offence or misconduct, a member found having broken the rules shall lose its good standing status until the Committee is satisfied that the suspension can be lifted.

Article 40 Any club member subjected to disciplinary proceedings shall not be considered as either in good standing or as holding full membership until the disciplinary proceedings is concluded.

## **EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

- Article 41 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) can be called through a majority vote by the Committee members.
- Article 42 Once called, the EGM must be held no later than one month later.
- Article 43 The EGM will require a quorum of 20% of the total competitive members in good standing.

## **VOTE RULES, AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND CLUB CONSTITUTION**

- Article 44 All decisions at either the AGMs or the EGMs shall be passed by a simple majority of votes via a show of hands.
- Article 45 The Code of Conduct may be amended by tabling a motion to that effect.
- Article 46 The club Constitution may only be amended through the calling of an AGM, following the rules for quorum' and voting as outlined in Article 48, 49 and 50 of this Constitution.
- Article 47 No amendments to either the VPCAC Code of Conduct or the Constitution may conflict with the rules and regulations of Athletics Northern Ireland

Belfast, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023